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Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects

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Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects

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To my parents

Roger William Rocknak and
Lucinda Allerton Rocknak

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General Introduction

> *But Hume suffered the usual misfortune of metaphysicians, of not being understood. It is positively painful to see how utterly his opponents, Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and lastly Priestley, missed the point of the problem; for while they were ever taking for granted that which he doubted, and demonstrating with zeal and often with impudence that which he never thought of doubting, they so misconstrued his valuable suggestion that everything remained in its old condition, as if nothing had happened.*
>
> (Prolegomena, p. 5)

General Overview

By Hume's own account, his most ambitious project, the *Treatise on Human Nature*, was a notoriously immature undertaking, choked with immutable difficulties (Norton 1993, p. 349). Perhaps as a result of this immaturity, and perhaps because, as Kant suggests above, Hume is perpetually misread, his view on objects remains obscured. What are they? Are they ideas? Impressions? Mind-independent objects? All three? None of the above? To date, scholars have not provided a unified, much less exhaustive, answer to these questions. Rather, four somewhat fragmented interpretations have been circulating in the literature. We may characterize them (in partial response to Grene (1994)) as follows: (1) The phenomenonalist reading, where objects *are* impressions (e.g. Grene 1994; Bennett 1971; Steinberg 1981; Dicker 2007). (2) The intentional reading, where objects are the objects of thought (e.g. Salmon 1983). (3) The realist reading, where objects are mind-independent things (e.g. Wilson 1989; Flage 1990; Costa 1989; G. Strawson 2007; Wright 2007). (4) The imagined, but non-causal reading, where objects, to varying degrees (depending on the scholar at hand) are imagined, but are not imagined as causes (e.g. Price 1940; Kemp Smith 1941; Wilbanks 1968; Waxman 1994).

This book presents a new interpretation of Humean objects, where I focus on just Book I of the *Treatise*. In the course of doing so, I show that although in places Hume surely does suggest that objects are impressions, or are intentional, or are imagined but are not imagined as causes, these intermittent uses of the word 'object' do not reflect Hume's more comprehensive position. Nor does Hume think that objects are mind independent things; he is not a realist.

Rather, throughout Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume struggled with two positions on the nature of objects. On the one hand, Hume believed that despite what we, in our common, i.e. "vulgar" state of mind, or alternatively, in our more sophisticated "philosophical" state of mind, *think* that objects are, what we actually and *always* do is imagine that objects are the causes of our various and interrupted perceptions. Objects are nothing more than complex, imagined *ideas*, as such, they are perceptions. Moreover, objects are necessarily imagined (as causes) because they constitute certain conditions of possibility for experience, making them functions of what we may refer to as a "transcendental" faculty of the imagination: "we *always* imagine that there is some cause that separates or unites [objects]" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; emphasis added). In this very general respect, Hume anticipates the Kantian transcendental turn.

But Hume also seemed to think that we *only* imagine causes (although unwittingly) when we reach a certain "philosophical" level of thought. Thus, when we imagine a cause of a set of interrupted and varying perceptions—where we believe that this cause is a real mind-independent thing—we are "philosophers," as they are described at the end of 1.4.2 ("Of skepticism with regard to the senses"). However, such philosophers are *not* aware that they are imagining causes. Instead, they mistakenly think that they are using *reason* to conclude that objects are real, mind-independent things. As a result, on this second reading, imagining causes is a natural, although unacknowledged, *culmination* of human thought, as opposed to being something that all of us, *alway*s—although unknowingly—do.

The tension between these two positions on objects manifests itself in Hume's much discussed account of personal identity, presented in 1.4.6 of the *Treatise*. In fact, Hume openly acknowledges this tension in the Appendix to the *Treatise*. Here, he suggests that the philosophical account of perfect identity is *mistaken*, while his account of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity is correct—at least in regard to the "self." However, this is not a definitive solution to the conflict. In fact, this conflict is never resolved in the *Treatise* (nor anywhere else in Hume's work).

Regardless of this rift in his thought, it may be shown that Hume thought that *some* objects are imagined to be causes in a manner that is more "justified" than others. Generally speaking, this justification turns on how empirically grounded the given imagined cause is in sense impressions. This "grounding" occurs much in the same way that Hume thinks we come up with an idea of an abstract, general idea. A *particular* object is imagined as the cause of a set of resembling impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions. This imagined cause indirectly represents one of those impressions, making it "real"—in a manner to be explained in great detail in this book. Accordingly, Hume writes off the "antient" (T 1.4.3) and "modern" (T 1.4.4) conceptions of objects, as well as notions of "immaterial souls" (T 1.4.5) as

*un*justified. *These* philosophical "objects" are perverted cases of imagining causes; their "objects" do not represent (indirectly or not) any impression and/or any idea that exactly represents an impression, and thus, they are completely incomprehensible. Meanwhile, the "philosophical" position presented at the end of 1.4.2 may be interpreted as the generic, *justified* version of imagining causes.

In the course of showing that some ideas of particular objects are justified, we see that some causal inferences are justified. This justification is a function of the constancy and coherence that obtains of our impressions, and ideas that exactly represent our impressions. As such, justified causal relations reflect "reality" much in the same way that justified ideas of particular objects reflect reality. Relatedly, we see that Hume must be interpreted as an "agnostic" in regard to the mind-independent existence of objects and causality, contrary to the recent tendency to interpret Hume as a "skeptical realist."

In the course of this analysis, we review seven kinds of belief at work in the *Treatise*, five kinds of reason, three kinds of causation, Hume's two systems of reality, and two fundamental kinds of objects, i.e., those that may be identified with impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions, and those that admit of what Hume refers to as a "perfect identity."

Finally, the reader should be warned that although, where appropriate, I discuss Hume in regard to his general historical context, this book is not meant to give a detailed historical account of objects and any related concepts. Rather, first and foremost, this book is a conceptual analysis of the text, where at times, I proceed line by line. By doing so, I hope to provide the groundwork for a broader historical project. Moreover, to keep the length and complexity of this book within manageable limits, I focus on just Book I of the *Treatise.*

Structure of This Book

To best organize Hume's very complicated account of objects, I have divided this book into four parts. In the first part, I explicate a number of basic ideas, including Hume's notions of representation, cause and effect, belief and "reality." As a result of surveying these fundamental notions, the reader will be better able to understand just what Hume means when he talks about an object being "real," and why we believe in its reality.

In Part II, I explain why Hume seems to think that we *always* imagine particular objects as the causes of our interrupted and varying interruptions. Doing as much is, I show, a condition of possibility for our everyday experience. Accordingly, objects are the products of a transcendental imagination.

In Part III, we come face to face with what I take to be the fundamental tension in Hume's position on objects. Here, we see that in addition to thinking that particular objects are transcendentally imagined, Hume also thought that we may *only* imagine objects as a result of our inadvertent "philosophical" reaction to the

vulgar perspective on objects. I show that this tension manifests itself in Hume's much-discussed account of personal identity; a tension that, I argue, Hume acknowledges in the Appendix to the *Treatise.*

In the final and fourth part, I argue that Hume clearly thought that some of our ideas of objects are justified while others are not. In the course of doing so, we see that some causal inferences are justified while others are not.

Part I
Laying the Groundwork

Introduction to Part I

As noted in my general introduction, before we can determine just what Hume's thoughts on objects are, we need to get a handle on the basic structure of his system. In particular, we need to take a careful look at Hume's understanding of impressions v. ideas, the memory v. the imagination, belief, causality and reality.

Thus, in Chap. 1, I focus on examining the general distinctions and relationships that Hume makes between (i) impressions v. ideas and (ii) the memory v. the imagination. In the course of doing so, I remind the reader that according to Hume, impressions must cause ideas; in fact, this claim comprises Hume's "first principle … in the science of human nature" (T 1.1.1.12; SBN 7). We also examine what is often referred to in the literature as the "Copy Principle," i.e. the notion that according to Hume, all ideas must "copy" impressions, which means that in some fundamental way, they must "represent" impressions. In particular, we see that only those ideas that are caused by impressions that have *not* been manipulated by the faculty of the imagination "exactly represent" (T 1.1.1.7; SBN 4; emphasis added) the impressions that they are caused by. Meanwhile, any idea that does *not* "exactly represent" an impression or impressions will either be a compilation of ideas that have been manipulated by the imagination (e.g. the idea of a "winged horse" (T 1.1.3.4; SBN 10)) and/or will be an idea that has at least some properties that are *imagined*. As we will see in Part II of this book, examples of such imagined properties include continuity and distinctness, as well as invariability and uninterruptedness. These properties are important to highlight because, according to Hume, they are imagined to belong to our properly conceived of ideas of objects.

In Chap. 2 we take an in-depth look at Hume's notion of cause and effect. In particular, we examine what Hume refers to as the "natural" relation of cause and effect. Here, I argue that our ability to think in terms of the "natural" relation of cause and effect is nothing more than a conditioned *reflex*. As a result, according to Hume, we do not, technically speaking, *believe* in the natural relation of causality, although we can certainly come to believe in what Hume refers to as "*philosophical*"

relations of cause and effect, where such belief amounts to belief in causal principles (e.g. the principle of uniformity). Moreover, the philosophical relation of causality is derivative of the natural relation of causality; viz. the former presupposes the latter.

However, although we do not *believe* in the natural relation of causality, but instead, are merely conditioned to think in a causal manner, the natural relation of causality is, in part, comprised of what we may refer to as "elementary beliefs." Although "elementary belief" is not Hume's term, it is clear that he had such a phenomenon in mind. Elementary beliefs are comprised of the vivacity that occurs in virtue of being an impression, or being an idea that exactly represents an impression. Such belief enables us to become reflexively conditioned to think in a causal manner, i.e. to think in terms of natural causal relations. This means that our ability to think in a causal manner presupposes our ability to have elementary beliefs (and so, by transitive reasoning, we see that any beliefs that we might have in philosophical relations of causality (causal principles) also presuppose our ability to have elementary beliefs).

In Chap. 2, we also examine a much more complicated notion of belief, i.e. what I refer to as "causally produced belief" (which corresponds to what Owen refers to as "simple belief" (Owen 1999, p.160). Again, this is not Hume's term, but as is the case with the term "elementary belief," it helps to clarify Hume's sometimes overwhelmingly-difficult thoughts regarding objects. This more complex version of belief occurs as a *result* of our being conditioned to think in a causal manner, i.e. our ability to think in terms of the natural relation of causality. As a result—again, by transitive reasoning—we see that causally-produced belief turns on our ability to have elementary beliefs, viz. complex belief *presupposes* our ability to (a) think in a reflexive (i.e. natural) causal manner, and so, (b) our ability to have elementary beliefs.

In Chap. 3, I call attention to the fact that Hume thought that our conceptualization of reality is split into two levels, or as Hume puts it, two "systems," (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 107–8), where here, we *can* appeal to Hume's own terminology. In fact, not coincidentally, his terminological distinction corresponds to the distinction between elementary beliefs v. causally produced beliefs. The first system of reality is a conceptual "system" consisting just of beliefs that are comprised of impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions, i.e. it is comprised of elementary beliefs. Meanwhile, the second system of reality turns on our having been conditioned to think a causal manner. As a result, the second system of reality presupposes the first, just as causally produced belief presupposes elementary belief.

Chapter 1
Four Distinctions

1 Introduction

We begin by reacquainting ourselves with the distinction between impressions and ideas. In the course of doing so, we examine impressions of sensation *v.* impressions of reflection, simple *v.* complex reflections and memory *v.* imagination. Although these distinctions are fairly straightforward, they are not without controversy. One commentator has even suggested that Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas is "idio[tic]" (Bennett 1971, p. 225). Another scholar, being a bit more generous, finds it "not very plausible" (Stroud 1977, p. 28). However, if we realize that Hume is primarily engaged in a psychological, naturalistic project we see that these accusations are misplaced (where by 'naturalistic' I simply mean empirical).

It is also shown in this chapter that an idea's "exact representation" of an impression is not its *replication*. For instance, I argue that according to Hume, the idea of a smell of a rose does not actually *smell*. This point comes into play in Chaps. 2 and 4, where we discuss, respectively, what I call "elementary beliefs" and "proto-objects." Both terms refer to impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions.

2 Distinction #1: Impressions v. Ideas

What is an impression? An idea? On the very first page of the *Treatise*, Hume announces that "All perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call Impressions and Ideas" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1). Setting aside any immediate objections to this claim, this means that when Hume uses the word 'perception' he could be referring to either an impression or an idea. Or more

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usually, both. It is up to us to interpret the word 'perception' with care, depending on the context in which it is used.[1]

The distinction between impressions and ideas consists of differences in degrees of "liveliness," (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1) or "vivacity" (T 1.1.1.3; SBN 2). According to Hume, "feeling[s]" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1) of sensation, passion and emotion tend to affect the human being in a much livelier, or vivacious way, than say, thinking about such things would. Thus, when we *think about*, or *reflect* about our impressions, or when we reason in general, we are engaged in the more removed realm of *ideas*, not impressions. For example, it is simply less intense to think about climbing a steep mountain, than to actually climb a steep mountain.

Hume takes this fundamental distinction between impressions and ideas to be so obvious that he remarks: "I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt *feeling* and *thinking*" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1–2; emphasis added). However, handling every freshman's objection, he continues: "in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions: As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2). Indeed, sometimes it seems like our ideas are much more intense than our impressions, i.e., our sensations, our passions and our emotions. However, Hume adds, such cases are exceptions to the rule, and so, he is confident that his general distinction still holds: "notwithstanding this new resemblance in a few instances [impressions and ideas] are in general so very different, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign them each a peculiar name to mark the difference" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2).

But, we have to ask, how could this be a "rule" if there are exceptions? Hume's answer: This really isn't a rule, at least not a *necessary* rule. He explicitly tells us in the introduction to the *Treatise* that his method does not entail necessary principles, nor does it seek to discover them. Rather, he employs what Garrett (1997) calls "methodological empiricism" (p. 30), writing in the introduction that, "the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation" (T Intro. 7; SBN xvi). And, a page later he adds, "the writer [i.e. Hume] may derive a more delicate satisfaction from the free confession of his ignorance, and from his prudence in avoiding that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the *most certain principles*" (T Intro. 9; SBN xviii; emphasis added). None of the "principles" or "maxims" that Hume lays out in the *Treatise* are meant to be *certain*; it would be an "error" for Hume to think as much. In fact, he writes:

> if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles shou'd be esteem'd a defect in the science of man, I will venture to affirm, that 'tis a defect common to it with all the sciences, and all the arts, in which we can employ ourselves, whether they be such as are cultivated

[1] Hume's use of the term 'perception' is similar to Locke's use of the word 'idea,' which pertained to *both* impressions and ideas. Thus, Hume writes in a footnote on the second page of the Treatise: "I … restore the word idea, to its original sense, from which Mr. *Locke* had perverted it, in making it stand for *all* our perceptions" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2, note 2; emphasis added).

> in the schools of the philosophers, or practiced in the shops of the meanest artisans. *None of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority.* (T Intro. 10; SBN xviii; emphases added)

We cannot, Hume insists, go beyond experience, and so, we have the subtitle of the *Treatise*: *An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. It should be no surprise then, that Hume's maxims admit of counterexamples. This method is squarely opposed to Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz (c.f. Garrett (1997, pp. 30–33), reflecting instead, a naturalistic, Newtonian approach to the world (c.f. Millican 2002b).[2] Many scholars have distinguished between specific kinds of "naturalism," but our usage of the word will be quite general. Hume's method is naturalistic in the respect that it relies on "principles' that are derivate of experience, and so may admit of counterexamples, if such counterexamples are infrequent and inconsequential when compared to experience taken as a whole (c.f. Stroud (1977, pp. 6–7), Frasca-Spada (1998, pp. 60–65) and Baxter 2008).[3]

Regardless of Hume's self-avowed naturalism, some commentators, as mentioned above, complain that Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas, and likewise, the distinction between feeling and thinking is, at worst, simple to the point of being idiotic (Bennett 1971). Or, at best, is hopelessly vague (Stroud 1977).[4] But, as just explained, Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas is not meant to be precise. Rather, it is meant to be a *general guideline* for how we might divide the operations of the mind. Experience shows Hume that all our thought is, ultimately, derivative of impressions (T 1.1.1.6–9; SBN 4–5). However, remembering and imagining impressions does not, for the most part, produce the same experience as actually having an impression. Thus, generally speaking, the operations of the mind may be split into two categories: experience (i.e. impressions, or feelings) and ideas (i.e. thought).

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[2] Granted, the story is a bit more complex than this. For as pointed out by DePierris (2002), it does seem that in places, Hume has a kind of exceptionless universality in mind when he employs his rules (i.e. "maxims" or "principles") of human nature. And so, according to De Pierris, inductive scientific formulations do admit of a kind of necessity (a "kind" in the respect that this necessity does not reflect an unknowable ontological necessity of the world, as is claimed by recent "skeptical realists, " e.g. Wright (1983, 2007), Strawson (1989, 2007) and Kail (2007a, b)). However, De Pierris explains that even the necessity that is "projected" onto inductive rules by the scientist is, ultimately, *revisable* (2002, p. 540). By and large, I agree with this "projectivist" interpretation of necessity (see Chaps. 2 and 3 for more detail on causality and necessity, and Parts III–IV of this book for more on Hume's skepticism).

[3] And thus, I am not using the term 'naturalistic' in the sense that "natural" beliefs are to be distinguished from "rational" beliefs. This usage began with the Scottish Naturalists, e.g. Shaftesbury, Hutchenson, Turnbull, Kames, Reid and Hamilton. See also Kemp Smith (Smith 1905a, b, 1941).

[4] I find it ironic that on the one hand, Stroud defends Hume's naturalistic method (1977, pp. 6–7), but on the other hand, criticizes the impression (feeling)/idea (thinking) distinction for being vague enough to admit of counterexamples (1977, pp. 28–29); c.f. Broughton (2006, p. 45). Granted, Stroud does claim that "such [counterexamples] seem to happen often" (p. 29), which would be too much for even a naturalist. For when the theory admits of too many counterexamples, or of a counterexample that just can't be ignored, then the theory should be amended/clarified in light of them (see Newton's Rule IV). But Stroud only gives us one such counterexample (the detective at the fireplace (p. 29)). Moreover, Everson (1988) seems to adequately dismiss this example, and others like it.

2.1 A Note on Hume's Psychological Method

Very generally put, a purely metaphysical and/or epistemological project appeals to logical rules and principles where certain conclusions necessarily follow from such rules and principles. For instance, Roth (2000) writes: "a metaphysical project is concerned with demonstrating how some item whose metaphysical status is in question or somehow deemed problematic, turns out to be a 'logical construction' from other items whose status is for some reason or other deemed less problematic" (p. 98). However, as just explained, Hume is *not* concerned with necessary conclusions, nor are any of his principles necessarily true. Rather, because his goal is merely to observe certain tendencies of "human nature" via the experimental method, he is engaged in what we generally call *psychology* (c.f. Roth, p. 98). As a result, a number of recent commentators focus on explicating Hume's psychology in the *Treatise*, rather than his "epistemology" or his "metaphysics" (e.g. Garrett 1997; Owen 1999; also see Millican 2002b). I follow suit. However, we will see in Part IV of this book that doing psychology (i.e. explaining certain tendencies of human thought) does not rule out an explanation of why some of those tendencies are *justified*, while others are not, *contra*, at least (Garrett 1997; Owen 1999).

3 Distinction #2: Impressions of Sensation v. Impressions of Reflection

Hume divides the three kinds of impressions noted above (sensations, passions and emotions) into two categories: impressions of sensation, which include all sensations (as well as pleasures and pains) v. impressions of reflexion, which include just impressions of passion and emotion: "Impressions may be divided into two kinds, those of SENSATION and those of REFLEXION" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7).[5]

Furthermore, "The first kind arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived in a great measure from our ideas" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7). Impressions of *sensation* have strictly *unknown causes.*[6] Meanwhile, impressions of

[5] In some instances Hume also seems to speak of "impressions of memory," viz. T 1.3.4.1; SBN 82, T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108. However, as we see in Sect. 4 of this chapter, this is somewhat misleading. According to Hume, impressions are not re-experienced when they are remembered; a memory of an impression is an idea. Yet in some instances, memories may play the same role as impressions (see Sect. 4 for more detail).

[6] As a result, Hume could not think that "corpuscles" cause our impressions, although Flage (1990) and Wilson (1989) argue to the contrary. Note another passage where Hume makes this point: "As to those *impressions*, which arise from the *senses*, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, *perfectly inexplicable* by human reason, and 'twill always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produc'd by the creative power of the mind, or are deriv'd from the author of our being. Nor is such a question any way material to our present purpose. We may draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions, whether they be true or false; whether they represent nature justly, or be mere illusions of the senses" (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84; emphases added). Here again Hume claims that impressions of sensation have strictly *unknown* causes.

Impressions

Impressions of Sensation	*Impressions of Reflexion*
Sight, sound, touch, taste, smell	Passion Emotion (desire)
Source: "unknown" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7)	Source: "derived in great measure from ideas" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7)

Fig. 1.1 Impressions

reflexion do not have unknown causes. Rather, they are caused, "in great measure" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7) by *ideas* of impressions of sensation, viz. by ideas of pleasure or pain (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7–8). In particular, according to Hume, certain impressions (the effects of unknown causes) constitute certain sensations of pleasure or pain. We proceed to "copy" [7] such sensations in our mind, a process that produces ideas of pleasure or pain, where we may think about such ideas after the original sensation has ceased. For instance, we may think about the pin prick on our thumb that happened 2 days ago without reliving the actual sensation. As a result of doing so, a new emotion may arise, such as aversion, where this emotion is an impression of reflexion, caused by the idea of the painful pin prick.[8]

This means that impressions of reflexion are generally *caused* by ideas of pleasure or pain, and tend to be passions, desires[9] and emotions, while impressions of sensation have *unknown* causes and consist of the information that we receive directly through our five senses. (see Fig. 1.1).

4 The Scope of the Memory and Imagination

According to Hume, our memories do not consist of sense impressions. Instead, they are ideas of impressions.[10] For example, if we remember getting our thumb pricked, *we do not relive the actual sensation*. Instead, we remember an idea. This is why

In fact, determining a.) What such causes are or b.) If they are "true or false" or c.) If "they represent nature justly" is *irrelevant*. Rather, all that matters is explaining how and why we "draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions."

[7] The "representation" that is behind this copying process is explained in more detail in Sect. 7 of this chapter.

[8] Hume's more extensive discussion of impressions of reflexion is located in Book II of the *Treatise*, which we do not discuss here.

[9] Hume somewhat abruptly adds "desire" to the list of impressions of reflexion on T 1.1.2.1; SBN 8.

[10] A similar argument may also be given for reflexive impressions, but such a discussion falls outside the scope of our project.

Hume only discusses ideas when he discusses the memory and the imagination in 1.1.3, "Of the *ideas* of the memory and the imagination" (emphasis added)—these faculties do *not* apply to impressions. Note, for instance, the following description he gives of the memory, presented in conjunction with his description of the imagination:

> We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, *it again makes its appearance there as an idea*; and this it may do after two different ways: Either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea; or when it entirely loses that vivacity and it is a perfect idea. The faculty, by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called the MEMORY, and the other the IMAGINATION. (T 1.1.3.1; SBN 8–9; emphases added)

Although what is remembered has more vivacity than what is imagined (evidently, because what is remembered actually happened while what is imagined did not),[11] and so is more "like" an impression (and so, is "*somewhat* intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea"), it is nevertheless an *idea*; "it … makes its appearance there as an ***idea***" (emphasis added). Thus, if we relive any event or activity consisting of impressions, we do not relive those actual impressions, but instead, ideas *of* them. For example, remembering how the sun felt on my face is surely not the same as actually *feeling* the sensation of the sun on my face. The latter can cause actual skin damage while the former constitutes no danger whatsoever (and there would be no need for tanning salons—everybody could just sit at home and *think about* getting tan).

Thus, when Hume speaks of "ideas of the memory [being] equivalent to impressions" further on in Book I (T 1.3.4.1; SBN 82), he does not mean that there are impressions of memory. Rather, he is pointing out that memories may play the same *role* as impressions, particularly when it comes to causal reasoning (see Chap. 2 for more detail). Also, on T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108, he writes: "of these impressions or ideas of the memory we form a system," where it seems as though he is referring to "impressions … of memory." However, we see that this is not the case if we consider this sentence in context with the sentence that immediately precedes it:

> 'Tis evident that whatever is present to the memory, striking upon the mind with a vivacity, which *resembles an immediate impression*, must become of considerable moment in all operations of the mind, and must easily distinguish itself above the mere fictions of the imagination. Of these impressions or ideas of the memory we from a kind of system, comprehending whatever we remember to have been present, either to our internal perception or senses; and every particular of that system, join'd to the present impressions, we are pleas'd to call a *reality*. (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 107–8; emphases added)

An "impression…of the memory" is an *idea* that is so vivid, that it *resembles* an immediate impression, and so, it is to be distinguished from a merely *imagined* idea.

[11] See also T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85 where Hume makes a similar distinction between the imagination and memory: "the difference betwixt [the memory] and the imagination lies in [the memory's] superior force and vivacity." Also realize that at this point, our discussion of the imagination is introductory—merely serving to get our foot in the door. See Sect. 6 of this Chapter and Part III of this book for more detail.

As a result, this vivid idea belongs to what Hume calls a "reality" (see Chap. 3 where we discuss Hume's notion of "reality" at length).

The same reasoning applies to the imagination; ideas may be imagined, but impressions of sensation may *not* be. For instance, in the spirit of Hume's thought, we might say that to *imagine* that one is falling off a cliff is surely not the same as actually falling off a cliff.[12] However, I *can* imagine a horrific scene and as a result, experience a reflexive impression of inadvertent revulsion. Yet such an impression would *not* be imagined. Rather, it would be a result—or in other words, an effect—of an imagined idea.

As a result, we may conclude that according to Hume, when we remember and imagine *ideas* of sense impressions, we do not re-experience the impressions that these ideas represent.[13]

5 Distinction #3: Simple Perceptions v. Complex Perceptions

5.1 General Overview

Hume tells us in the opening pages of Book I that there is a distinction between "simple" and "complex" impressions and ideas. This distinction, he tells us, is as follows:

> Simple perceptions or impressions and ideas are such as *admit of no distinction or separation*. The complex are the contrary to these, and may be distinguished into *parts*. Tho' a particular colour, taste and smell are qualities all united together in this apple, 'tis easy to perceive they are not the same, but are at least distinguishable from each other. (T 1.1.1.2; SBN 2; emphases added)

Simple impressions and ideas *cannot* be divided into "parts" while complex impressions and ideas *can* be divided into parts. For instance, the complex impression

[12] Of course, one might claim that certain hallucinations will cause the very same impressions that one might have if the actual event took place. For instance, if one hallucinates, say, a dragon, one might conceivably say that [s]he actually *sees* that dragon. And thus, it might seem that impressions may be "imagined" after all. However, although Hume might agree that this is the case, he could write it off as an exception to the general rule, as he did earlier in regard to the distinction between impressions and ideas in terms of vivaciousness (recall T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2).

[13] To further support this reading, note that in the following passages, all taken from 1.1.3, where Hume discusses what the imagination and memory manipulate, he specifically uses the word 'idea,' not 'impression:' "When we remember any past event, the *idea* of it flows on upon the mind in a forcible manner; whereas in the imagination the perception is faint and languid … Here then is a sensible difference betwixt one species of *ideas* and another…There is another difference betwixt these two kinds of *ideas* which is no less evident, namely that tho' neither the *ideas* of the memory nor imagination, neither the lively nor faint *ideas* can make their appearance in the mind, unless their correspondent impressions have gone before to prepare the way for them" (T 1.1.3.1–2; SBN 9; emphases added) See also Sect. 6 above, where we discuss the principle of memory v. the principle of imagination—in both cases, it is made clear that according to Hume, the memory and the imagination apply to ideas, not impressions.

of an apple can be divided into multiple parts. However, to the normal human being (unassisted with microscopes and/or other devices),[14] each of these "parts," or what we may understand as properties, is not itself divisible. To the naked eye, the color of the apple is *not* divisible into multiple "parts"—assuming that its color is even, and so, may not be divided according to its varying shades. In this respect, simple impressions and their correspondent ideas have no parts. Rather, simple impressions seem to *be* "parts" of complex impressions. For example, the simple impression "red," or the simple impressions of respectively, "scarlet or orange or sweet or bitter" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5) are parts of more complex impressions. As a result, although Hume does not explicitly identify this phenomenon as a "principle" in his "science of nature,"[15] we may, for ease of reference, identify it as the **principle of simple impressions/ideas in regard to their nature as respectively, parts and representations of parts** (keeping mind that all Humean "principles" are not necessary, i.e. are not "certain" (T Intro. 9; SBN xviii), but instead, are general rules of thumb).

5.2 The Origin of Simple Ideas

How are impressions related to ideas? In particular, how is it that we have ideas that are direct "copies" of impressions? In what respect do ideas "represent" impressions? Hume explains in Book 1, Part 1, Sections 1–3, that a simple impression is directly associated with a simple idea. In this respect, the given impression is, so to speak, the "author" of the associated idea, although it is not to be *identified* with it. In Hume's vernacular: "*all our simple ideas in their first appearance are **deriv'd** from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they **exactly represent***" (T 1.1.1.7; SBN 4; emphases added). So, it seems that according to Hume, simple ideas are somehow *caused* by correspondent simple impressions, if we may interpret 'derive' as such.

This causal interpretation is in fact validated by Hume's following explanation, which begins immediately after the passage just cited:

> every simple impression is attended with a correspondent idea, and every simple idea with a correspondent impression. From this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions I immediately conclude, that there is a great connexion betwixt our correspondent impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon that of the other. (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 4)

After some reflection, it is clear to Hume that *every* simple impression has a correspondent simple idea and *vice versa*. As a result, simple ideas are always

[14] See Stroud (1977, p. 20) where he points out that Hume is rather vague in regard to what simplicity consists of (e.g. is a simple idea a *color*, or the *hue* of a color, or the *tone* of the color, etc.?); c.f. Broughton (2006, pp. 54–55). Regardless of this vagueness, it is clear that Hume did not think that simple ideas could be *divided*. For our purposes, that is as far as we need to go.

[15] As he does in regard to, for instance, the origin of simple ideas and the nature of the imagination and the memory (see, Sect. 6 below).

"constantly conjoined" with simple impressions (although, again, there may be counter-examples—recall Hume's naturalism). He continues: "Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise from chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 4). Moreover, experience shows that in order to produce an idea of a given sensation, the sensation must be present *first*. Thus, it would seem clear enough that ideas are dependent on impressions and not *vice versa*. Hume writes: "The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions is a convincing proof, that the one are *causes* of the other, and this priority of the impressions is an equal proof, that our impressions are the *causes* of our ideas, not our ideas of our impressions" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5; emphases added). Impressions "cause" ideas and not *vice-versa*.[16] And so, Hume concludes: "We cannot form to ourselves a just idea of the taste of a pine-apple, without having actually tasted it" (T 1.1.1.9; SBN 5).

Yet, he concurs, there is perhaps one exception, which has been much discussed in Hume scholarship. Suppose that a person is presented with a gradated chart of a particular colour, where (1) One of those shades is missing and (2) The person observing the chart has never seen the missing shade before. "Now," Hume asks,

> whether 'tis possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, tho' it had never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can; and this may serve as a proof, that the simple ideas are not always deriv'd from the correspondent impressions; tho' the instance is so particular and singular, that 'tis scarce worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we shou'd alter our general maxim. (T 1.1.1.10; SBN 6)

In such cases, it seems that one *could* come up with a simple idea that is not caused by a simple impression. However, as was the case with the particularly vivacious idea (recall Sect. 2 of this chapter) this phenomenon may be written off as an exception to the rule; "'tis scarce worth our observing" (T 1.1.1.10; SBN 6). As a result, he concludes that the maxim still holds. It is not meant to be a *necessarily* true law. Rather, it's a general rule of thumb, derived from experience.[17]

With this in mind, Hume characterize this maxim as "the first principle … in the science of human nature" (T 1.1.1.12; SBN 7), which states that all simple ideas are *caused* by correspondent simple impressions (at least for the most part). And "nor ought we to despise [this first principle] because of the simplicity of its appearance" (T 1.1.1.12; SBN 7). For the sake of clarity, we may refer to this principle from here on out as the **principle concerning the origin of simple ideas**. Moreover, we must note that Hume explicitly claims that every simple idea p'—at least initially—*exactly*

[16] The word 'cause' is put in scare quotes here because Hume argues elsewhere in Book I that we do not have knowledge of any genuine "causes." Rather, our knowledge of causes consists of habituated belief in constant conjunction, where the necessity that allegedly obtains of a causal relation is imagined (see Chap. 2 for more detail).

[17] And so, any attempts to "fix" the maxim such that it remains necessarily true are misguided. See for instance, Ayer (1980, pp. 32–33).

represents the simple impression p that caused it (insignificant counter-examples aside).[18] Hume refers to this phenomenon as a "general proposition" which, for ease of reference, we may refer to as the **principle of exact representation between simple impressions and simple ideas:** "we shall here content ourselves with establishing one general proposition, *that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them and which they exactly represent"* (T 1.1.1.7; SBN 4). This means that no simple impression is imagined; in virtue of originating in impressions, they could not originate in the imagination (c.f Sect. 6 of this chapter). Relatedly, all simple ideas must exactly resemble a corresponding simple impression, i.e. the impression that caused it (T 1.1.1.5; SBN 3). Recent Hume scholars often refer to this as the Copy Principle, which we will discuss in more detail in Sect. 7 of this Chapter.

5.3 The Separability of Simple Ideas

According to Hume, *all* different simple perceptions (impressions and ideas) are *separable*—i.e. may be sensed and/or thought of independently of each other. In part, this comprises what has been referred to in recent literature as the "Separability Principle" (c.f. Sect. 6 of this Chapter). In contrast, it is instructive to note that Locke maintained that some different simple ideas *are* necessarily conjoined with other simple ideas (ECHU I.vii.I, c.f. Bolton 2007, p. 75; Garrett 1997, p. 60), e.g. the idea of figure must be thought of in conjunction with the simple idea of extension.[19]

5.4 The Origin of Complex Ideas

As we saw above, according to Hume, no simple idea may be imagined. Concomitantly, all the simple ideas that comprise a given complex idea could not be imagined. However, Hume tells us that simple ideas *can* be arranged by the

[18] Throughout this book, I use the following symbolization to better organize Hume's thought: A capital letter with no prime mark, e.g. A, will represent a particular impression (simple or complex), while the same capital letter *with* a prime mark, e.g. A', refers to the *idea* of this particular impression. To represent *variable* impressions and ideas (as is the case above), I use lower case English letters, such as p and q, and respectively, p' and q'.

[19] See Garrett (1997, pp. 60–63) for a convincing account of why Hume's notion of simple perceptions must differ from Locke's. In particular, Garrett argues that on T 1.1.7.18; SBN 25, Hume does not suggest that two *different* simple impressions (whiteness and shape) are inseparable. Rather, Hume argues here that whiteness and shape are in fact one inseparable complex impression. Garret writes: "Like any true identical, these complex perception-tokens are neither separable, distinguishable nor different" (63). However, the general ideas of "whiteness" and "shape" are abstractions, which as such, are products of what Hume calls as "distinction of reason." Thus, unlike Locke, Hume did not think that some simple impressions are necessarily conjoined with other simple impressions, and thus, the Separability Principle applies to ideas *and* impressions.

imagination such that the resulting complex idea does not necessarily correspond to a complex impression. Consider, for instance, the complex imagined idea of the city of New Jerusalem, which is paved in gold and lined with ruby walls. This idea, Hume explains, does not correspond to an impression (T 1.1.1.5; SBN 3). However, some complex ideas *may* resemble and represent complex impressions, since according to Hume—and opposed to Locke—we may apprehend complex impressions directly through our senses (T 1.1.1.5–6; SBN 3).[20] In such cases the following must hold: (1) The imagination has not added or subtracted any part of the complex idea caused by the respective complex impression. (2) Nor has the imagination adjusted the order in which the simple ideas which comprise the complex idea originally occurred.

Just how this occurs, in a bit more detail, is best understood by taking another look at the difference between memory and imagination.

6 Distinction #4: The Principle of Imagination v. the Principle of Memory

The discussion of the origin of complex ideas (where they may or may not exactly represent impressions) leads Hume to formulate two more principles, which respectively apply to the memory and the imagination. Given our preceding discussion of imagined complex ideas, it is helpful to consider the second principle first:

> Thus we find, that all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and as the complex are form'd from them, we affirm in general, that these two species of perception are exactly correspondent (T 1.1.1.6; SBN 4)… The same evidence follows us in our **second principle**, *of the liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas.* The fables we meet within poems and romances put this entirely out of question. (T 1.1.3.4; SBN 10; boldness added)

In the respect that all complex ideas may be reduced to simple ideas, the process of perceiving simple ideas and complex ideas "are exactly correspondent." However, according to the principle just cited, the imagination can take ideas, simple or complex, and not only arrange them in any fashion it so chooses ("transpose" them) but it can also add or remove the properties of complex ideas. As a result, it can change the complex idea or ideas at hand.[21] Thus, as noted above, we are bound to run across complex ideas that do not exactly represent complex impressions. This fact, Hume announces in the passage cited above, is "put out of question" by the existence of fantastic fables, poems and romances. Surely none of these tales correspond to sets of impressions; they were never actually experienced by anyone.

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[20] According to Locke, all complex perceptions must be compiled by certain mental operations (ECHU II.xii.I: 163, c.f. Bolton (2007, p. 87)).

[21] Squaring with what we saw earlier in Sect. 4, note that Hume discusses the imagination in terms of manipulating ideas, not impressions, strengthening the reading that according to Hume, ideas, not impressions, are imagined.

Hume immediately proceeds to tell us that the liberty that the imagination takes with our various ideas is not so strange if we realize that: (1) According to the principle concerning the origin of simple ideas (recall Sect. 5.2 of this chapter) "all our ideas are copy'd from our impressions." Moreover, as noted earlier, (2) No two impressions are "perfectly inseparable." As result, no two ideas respectively corresponding to two impressions *must* be thought together.[22] For instance, because I do not necessarily have to feel cold and ice together, my *ideas* of the respective impressions (cold and ice) are not inseparable. As a result (3), there is nothing to prevent the imagination from combining ideas in any way that it sees fit, and thus, "where-ever the imagination perceives a difference among *ideas*, it can easily produce a separation" (T 1.1.3.4; SBN 10; emphasis added). So, we could imagine the hot ice of hell, or perhaps, cold fire rather than cold ice. This is how, according to Hume, fables, poems and romances are generated.[23] For the remainder of this book, this principle of separation and combination of ideas is referred to as the **principle of the imagination** (where again, this principle is a general rule of thumb, not a necessary law).

The separability aspect of this principle is related to the Seperability Principle, which we briefly discussed above. In regard to this principle, Hume writes:

> whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by the thought and imagination. And we may here add, that these propositions are equally true in the *inverse*, and that whatever objects are separable are also distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are also different. (T 1.1.7.3; SBN 18)

Here, he implies that "thought," i.e. what he seems to mean by "reason," as well as the imagination, may separate all those "objects" that are different, i.e. are distinguishable. The reverse also holds, i.e. if certain "objects" are separable by "thought," then they are different. However, what Hume means by "thought" ("reason") and "object" here cannot be understood until we progress much further into this book. Thus, for now, let his principle stand noted, where, as shown by Garrett (1997, pp. 60–63), we know that it applies to simple and complex ideas and impressions (c.f. Sect. 5.3 and fn 19 of this chapter).

This brings Hume's principle regarding the memory into play. Unlike the imagination, he claims, the memory is obliged to maintain the order of the ideas to correspond to the order in which the relevant impressions originally occurred (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9).

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[22] However, it seems that according to Hume, a complex idea and its parts must be thought together, although not *vice versa*, i.e. a simple idea that is part of a complex idea is not necessarily thought of in conjunction with that complex idea. For instance, if I have a complex idea of a day at the beach, I must think of all the parts of that idea. Otherwise, my complex idea of the day at the beach would change (c.f. T 1.3.7.5; SBN 96). However, I can think of the simple idea of say, sand, without thinking of the complex idea of the day at the beach.

[23] Or in Hume's words: "Nature is … totally confounded [in fables, poems and romances], and nothing mention'd but winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants. Nor will this liberty of the fancy appear strange, when we consider, that all our ideas are copy'd from impressions, and that there are not any two impressions which are perfectly inseparable. Not to mention, that this is an evident consequence of the division of ideas into simple and complex. Wherever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily produce a separation" (T 1.1.3.4; SBN 10).

For instance, if I remember the ice being cold and the fire being hot last weekend, my memory will preserve the respective order of relations (i.e. their "positions" (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9)); ice occurs with cold and fire occurs with hot. Further, it would seem that the memory preserves the order of events as well. For instance, I recall the cat chasing the bird and not *vice versa* (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9).[24] So, from now on, this principle—where the order and association of ideas is maintained, as reflected by the order and the association of the respective impressions that caused them—may be referred to as the **principle of memory** (where again, this principle is meant to be a rule of thumb, not a necessary law).

7 Representation[25]

According to Hume, when an idea "represents" or "copies" a sensation, i.e. an impression, it could *not* be the muted, less "vivacious" *replication* of the sensation. If this were the case, Hume would, I think, be committed to a rather absurd theory of representation. It would mean that just thinking about getting a sunburn would give you a slightly less vivacious sunburn. Similarly, just thinking about what would happen if you jumped off the Empire State Building would put you in the morgue (although, somehow, you would be less vivaciously dead). But I don't think that Hume is guilty of such absurdities. However, many well-known scholars, have, I think, misread Hume on this point, beginning with Hume's contemporary, James Beattie (Essay). More recently, Falkenstein (2006) and Garrett (2006) also seem to defend a replication theory of representation, although they certainly do not think

[24] Hume writes: "An historian may, perhaps, for the more convenient carrying on of his narration, relate an event before another, to which it was in fact posterior; but then he takes notice of this disorder, if he be exact; and by that means replaces the idea in its due position. 'Tis the same case in our recollection of these places and persons, with which we were formerly acquainted" (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9). Note that he makes this point again on T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85. However, he concludes here that the more substantive difference between memory and the imagination is a function of vivacity, as explained earlier (see Sect. 4). For although the memory might preserve the order of events, relations, etc., we cannot go back into the past to confirm this order. For a clever imagination could easily feign an order of events that makes as much sense as the memory's portrayal. And if this happened, how would we know the difference? Hume responds: "the difference betwixt [the memory] and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity. A man may indulge his fancy in feigning any past scene of adventures; nor wou'd there be any possibility of distinguishing this from a remembrance of a like kind, were not the ideas of the imagination fainter and more obscure" (T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85).

[25] Parts of this section were presented at the *5th Biennial Margaret Dauler Wilson Philosophy* Conference, University of Colorado, Boulder (2010), and at the *Upstate New York Workshop on Early Modern Philosophy*, Syracuse University (2010). I am grateful for the comments I received at those conferences, particularly those given my commentator at the Syracuse presentation, Wade Robison. I am also grateful for the comments/criticism I received from Don Garrett on an earlier draft of this section.

that Hume is committed to the absurdities noted above. Rather, both Falkenstein and Garrett argue that a replication theory of representation plays an essential, informative role in Hume's philosophy. I have chosen to focus on these scholars because, as I see it, they respectively present the three most important arguments in favor of a replication theory, viz., what I call the Precision Argument, the Relational Argument, and the Qualitative Argument.

7.1 The Precision Argument: Beattie

In *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,* Beattie claims that according to Hume, impressions are identical to mind-independent objects (Essay, pp. 251–52). Moreover, according to Beattie, Hume thought that ideas are the less vivacious *replications* of impressions:

> every idea should be a copy and a resemblance of the impressions whence it is derived;—that for example, the idea of red should be a red idea; the idea of a roaring lion a roaring idea; the idea of an ass, a hairy long-eared sluggish idea, patient of labour and much addicted to thistles; that the idea of extension should be extended and that of solidity solid. (Essay, p. 251)

Beattie's evidence for concluding as much is as follows, where we may assume that he is citing from the first edition of the *Treatise*[26]:

> Thus, when I sit by the fire, I have an impression of heat, and I can form an idea of heat when I am shivering with cold. In the one case I have a stronger perception of heat, in the other a weaker. Is there any warmth in this idea of heat? There must, according to Mr. Hume's doctrine, only the warmth of the idea is not quite as strong as that of the impression. For this profound author repeats it again and again, that an idea is by its very nature weaker and fainter than an impression, but is in every other respect (not only similar) the same (*Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 1, p. 131). Nay, he goes further and says, that whatever is true of the one must be acknowledged concerning the other (Ibid, p. 41). (Essay, pp. 249–250)

With this reading in mind, Beattie concludes that according to Hume, it must be the case that:

> every *idea* of any particular extension is equal in length to the extended object. The same reasoning holds good in regard to the other dimensions of breadth and thickness. All ideas, therefore, of solid objects, must be (according to this philosophy) equal in magnitude to the objects themselves. (Essay, pp. 252–253; emphasis added)

Beattie is using simple transitive reasoning here: (a) impressions are identical to mind-independent objects, (b) ideas are identical to impressions in the respect that they "exact[ly] resemble" them, i.e. *replicate* them, therefore, (c) ideas are identical

[26] And thus, the pagination is not the same as the Selby Bigge edition (1978) nor any other recent editions.

to mind-independent objects.[27] Thus, according to Beattie's reading of Hume, it must be the case that in order to think an idea of say, a man of war or St. Paul's Cathedral (Essay, p. 253), one must physically reproduce that very large object in one's relatively small head. Clearly this is absurd.

Thus, according to Beattie, Hume's position is plagued with two levels of absurdity: (1) Because ideas are the less vivacious replications of impressions, they may affect the body in the same way that an impression will, e.g. an idea of warmth will literally warm us up. (2) Because Hume did not properly distinguish between impressions and mind-independent objects, Hume is committed to the view that mind-independent objects, e.g. St. Paul's Cathedral, paradoxically exist in our minds.[28]

7.2 Response to Beattie

Recall that Beattie first refers to an instance where Hume claims that an idea is "weaker" than an impression, but "in every other respect (not only similar) the same" (Essay, pp. 249–250). The sentence he has in mind seems to be a part of T 1.3.1.7; SBN 73: "An idea is by its very nature weaker and fainter than an impression; but being in every other respect the same, cannot imply any very great mystery." This sentence occurs at the end of a section called "Of knowledge." Here, Hume briefly examines the nature of "knowledge," or what he refers to elsewhere as "demonstrations"

[27] Beattie explores this point still further in the following passage: "Now mark the consequence. I am just now in an apartment containing a thousand cubic feet, being ten feet square and ten high; the door and windows are shut, as well as my eyes and ears. Mr. Hume will allow, that, in this situation, I may form ideas, not only of the visible appearance, but also of the real tangible magnitude of the whole house, a first-rate man of war, of St. Paul's Cathedral, or even of a much larger object. But the solid magnitude of these ideas is equal to the solid magnitude of the *objects* from which they are copied [i.e. assuming that impressions = objects]: Therefore I have now present with me an idea, that is, a solid extended thing, whose dimensions extend to a million of cubic feet at least. *The question now is, where is this thing placed?* For a place it must have, and a pretty large one too. I should answer, *in my mind*; for I know not where else the ideas of my mind can be so conveniently deposited" (Essay, p. 253; emphasis added).

[28] As a result, Beattie contends that Hume makes the allegedly "vulgar" mistake, and moreover, no "common" person (which Hume attributes the "vulgar" reading to) would ever make such a bizarre mistake. Rather, it is philosophical fancy run terribly amuck. See the footnote on p. 256 of Beattie's *Essay*, as well as the following passage: "here is an unquestionable proof, that the vulgar, and indeed all men whom metaphysic has not deprived of their sense, *do* distinguish between the object perceived, the faculty perceiving, and the perception or impulse communicated by the external object to the mind through the organ of sensation. What though all the three are sometimes expressed by the same name? This only shows, that accuracy of language is not always necessary for answering the common purposes of life. If the ideas of the vulgar are sufficiently distinct, notwithstanding, what shall we say of that philosopher, whose ideas are really confounded by this inaccuracy, and who, because there is no difference in the signs, imagines that there is none in the things signified!" (pp. 259–260; emphasis added).

(e.g. T 1.2.26; SBN 31–32, T 1.3.14.13; SBN 161–162). Knowledge, he claims, depends solely on the comparison of ideas. For instance, he explains, we know that the three angles of a triangle are equivalent to two right angles, "as long as our idea [of the triangle] remains the same" (T 1.3.1.1; SBN 69). Geometry and Arithmetic both yield such knowledge. However, unlike certain rationalists, e.g. Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza, Hume does not believe that thinking in a demonstrative manner means that we are employing some kind of "pure intellect" (c.f. Garrett 1997, p. 20):

> 'Tis usual with mathematicians, to pretend, that those ideas, which are their objects, are of so refin'd and spiritual a nature, that they fall not under the conception of the fancy, but must be comprehended by a pure and intellectual view, of which the superior faculties of the soul are alone capable. (T 1.3.1.7; SBN 72)

In fact, he explains, those philosophers who are prone to believe in "pure intellects" inevitably talk themselves into absurdities. For instance, there are those who think that an abstract, general idea of a triangle exists, where this idea does not represent any particular triangle with a definite shape and size. Thus, Hume claims, this idea is "obscure and uncertain" (T 1.3.17; SBN 72). However, he continues, because "*all our ideas are copy'd from impressions*" (T 1.3.17; SBN 72), it follows that because "all impressions are clear and precise," it must be the case that "the ideas, which are copy'd from them, must be of the same nature." Thus, ideas cannot be obscure, unless we *make* them obscure; an idea "can never, but from our fault, contain anything so dark and intricate" (T 1.3.17; SBN 72–73). Thus, the obscure idea of a general, abstract triangle must be the result of our own muddled intervention, an intervention that is funded by the imagination, i.e. by the "fancy," and not anything like a "pure intellect."[29] Thus, if, unlike the rationalists, we stick to thinking about ideas that have *not* been altered by the imagination, our thoughts will inevitably be much clearer.

It is precisely at this point that Hume writes the passage that Beattie cites: "An idea is by its very nature weaker and fainter than an impression; but being in every other respect the same, cannot imply any very great mystery." In line with the complaints noted above, Hume immediately continues: "If its weakness render it obscure, 'tis our business to remedy that defect, as much as possible, by keeping the idea steady and precise; and till we have done so, 'tis in vain to pretend to reasoning and philosophy" (T 1.3.17; SBN 73). Because ideas exactly represent impressions, they must be as clear as impressions. Thus, if we come across a weak and obscure idea, we must make every effort to determine how, exactly, it represents the impression that caused it. Until we have done so, we should avoid any attempts to "reason" or to do philosophy.

In no way though, do Hume's remarks necessarily imply that an idea must *replicate* an impression. For instance, an idea of a particular triangle may precisely represent an impression of a triangle by being an exact description of it, e.g. "a blue triangle with equal sides that are 24 feet long." This description could easily be accompanied by an image of a triangle that we assume to be 24' × 24' × 24' and blue.

[29] Also see T 1.1.7 and 1.4, c.f. Garrett (1997, Chapter 1) and Part IV of this book.

This image precisely represents an impression of a 24' × 24' × 24' blue triangle without actually *being* a 24' × 24' × 24' blue triangle that, somehow, resides in our heads.[30] Moreover, this idea would entail an image, and thus, would not be an instance of an imageless, pure intellect. As we see in Parts II–IV of this book, this idea is a kind of abstract idea. However, we cannot effectively understand why this is the case until we examine Hume's notion of an "object." Until then, let this stand as a viable alternative to replication.

Beattie's second reference, where he cites Hume as claiming that "whatever is true of the one [impression] must be acknowledged concerning the other [idea]" (Essay, p. 250) occurs on T 1.1.7.5; SBN 19, in the course of Hume's account of abstract ideas. Here Hume claims, in agreement with Berkeley, that "all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annex'd to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals" (T 1.1.7.1; SBN 17). To defend this position, he must, he tells us, do two things: (1) Show that we cannot conceive of a "quantity or quality" without simultaneously conceiving of an exact, particular quantity and quality, (2) Although the capacity of our minds is not infinite, we *can* "form an [imperfect] notion of all possible degrees of quantity and quality" (T 1.1.7.2; SBN 18).

To defend (1), Hume argues that certain qualities and quantities are not distinguishable from certain objects. For instance, "the precise length of a line is not different nor distinguishable from the line itself, nor the precise degree of any quality from the quality" (T 1.1.7.3; SBN 18–19). Next, he argues that all impressions must admit of a precise quantity and quality. For instance, an impression of a line must have a particular quantity (i.e. the line must have a particular length) and have a particular quality (i.e. the line must be straight, or curved, etc). It is at this point that he writes the passage that Beattie cites:

> Now since all ideas are deriv'd from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them, *whatever is true of the one must be acknowledg'd concerning the other*. Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. The foregoing conclusion is not founded on any particular degree of vivacity. It cannot therefore be affected by any variation in that particular. An idea is a weaker impression; and as a strong impression must necessarily have a determinate quantity and quality, the case must be the same with its copy or representative. (T 1.1.7.5; SBN 19, emphases added)

Hume's point here is very similar to the point he made on T 1.3.1.7; SBN 73 discussed above; the precise quantity and quality that belongs to an impression must belong to any idea that represents that impression. However, as already suggested above, this may occur without an idea necessarily replicating an impression. We may have an image in our heads of a line, and at the same time, believe that this line has a certain quantity, i.e. is a mile long, and has a particular quality, i.e. is straight, without literally having a straight, mile long line in our heads.[31] However, exactly

[30] Furthermore, as we will see further on, the impression of a triangle is not literally 24' × 24' × 24' either, although it may be blue and triangular (see Sect. 7.4).

[31] Nor is the impression a mile long; see Sect. 7.4 for more detail.

how this cashes out for Hume cannot be fully explained until we understand his notion of an object.

Thus, what I refer to as the "precision" argument, i.e. the notion that an idea must precisely represent its parent impression, does not mean that according to Hume, an idea *must* replicate an impression. Thus, I don't think that the passages that Beattie cites to support a replication theory do the work that he needs them to do.

7.3 The Relational Argument: Falkenstein

In his 2006 paper, "Space and Time," Falkenstein claims that:

> The impression or idea of a colored square is not so much a thought "of" a square as a thought that *is* square or that consists of a square configuration of unextended colored points (T 1.4.5.15; SBN 235–6). Correspondingly, the impression or idea of a time represents time by quite literally taking time to occur. As Hume puts it, five notes played upon a flute give us an impression of time, but the impression of time is not a sixth impression added to the other five. It is rather the compound impression that consists of these five notes occurring successively in that particular order. (T 1.2.3.10; SBN 36–7) (p. 68; emphasis added)

Similar to Beattie, Falkenstein asserts that according to Hume, an idea of an impression, e.g. a colored square, represents the impression by literally replicating it; an idea of a colored square *is* a colored square. Similarly, a complex idea of a period of time *is* in fact a period of time. However, Falkenstein does not claim that this reading is absurd or leads to absurdities. Rather it allows Falkenstein to speak of "component impressions disposed in a certain manner," (p. 68) i.e. composed in a manner that leads to, if not partially comprises, our idea of time.

7.4 A Response to Falkenstein

Falkenstein cites T 1.2.3.10; SBN 36–7 to support a replication theory, which occurs in a section titled "Of the other qualities of our ideas of space and time." Here, Hume examines the nature and origin of the ideas of space and time. In regard to time, Hume tells us that it is "deriv'd from the succession of our perceptions of every kind, ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well of sensation" (T 1.2.3.6; SBN 34–35). In particular, we experience a succession of *different* perceptions that are co-existent. If these successions were always composed of the *same* parts, we could not distinguish between longer and shorter durations (shorter durations would have less parts, and longer durations would have more parts (T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–36)). Moreover, if the parts of successions were co-existent, we could only come up with an idea of extension, and not duration (T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–36). It is at this juncture that Hume writes the paragraph that Falkenstein cites to support a replication theory. Hume writes:

> The idea of time … arises altogether from the manner, in which impressions appear to the mind, without making one of the number. Five notes play'd on a flute give us the impression and idea of time; tho' time be not a sixth impression, which presents itself to the hearing or any other of the senses… These five sounds making their appearance in this particular manner,

> exite no emotion in the mind, nor produce an affection of any kind, which can give rise to a new idea. (T 1.2.3.10; SBN 36–37)

Time, like the idea of extension, arises from the manner in which a succession of impressions appears to us. For instance, the manner in which five notes played on a flute come to our senses *is* our impression of time, and the idea represents the manner in which these five notes are played.

Thus, we must ask, is our idea of time *literally* a succession of ideas, where each of those successive ideas represents an impression of say, a note played on a flute? Or, could we think of this succession *as* a succession, where we simultaneously entertain ideas of all the impressions that occurred in the succession, e.g. note 1, note 2, note 3, note 4, note 5? Although these ideas would be co-existent, we would remember them as *not* being co-existent. For instance, I could simultaneously remember various parts of a 2 hour bike ride all at once, while at the same time remembering that they occurred in succession. Thus, I would effectively remember the time it took to take the bike ride, without it literally taking me 2 hours to do so; this idea would represent the successive nature of the bike ride without *being* a succession itself. Hume does not rule this possibility out in the passage cited above.

Falkenstein also cites T 1.4.5.15; SBN 235–6 to support a replication theory. This passage occurs in a section titled "Of the immateriality of the soul." In the course of explaining why our perceptions do not obtain of an "immaterial substance," i.e. our "immaterial soul," Hume is compelled to discuss the notion of extension. In particular, he must explain the relation of extended things to perceptions (i.e. to "thinking," where some equate "thinking" with a soul). Ultimately, he concludes that some perceptions do not have a "place,"[32] and thus, are not extended. Thus, *contra* the materialists, all thought is not extended. Following, he writes the second passage that Falkenstein cites. The point of this passage is to show that all thought is not *im*material. Here, Hume considers a table.[33] It appears to him by way of an impression, where all of the qualities of that impression, are by definition, qualities of a *perception* (and so, are not qualities of a mind-independent table).

[32] All perceptions but sight and feeling do not have a "place." Hume makes this clear a bit earlier in the text, and then spends four paragraphs defending it: "An object may be said to be nowhere, where its parts are not so situated with respect to each other, as to form any figure or quantity; nor the whole with respect to other bodies so as to answer our notions of contiguity or distance. Now this is evidently the case with all our perceptions and objects, except those of the sight and feeling. A moral reflection cannot be plac'd on the right or on the left hand of a passion, nor can a smell or sound be either a circular or a square figure. These objects and perceptions, so far from requiring any particular place, are absolutely incompatible with it, and even the imagination cannot attribute it to them" (T 1.4.5.10; SBN 235–6).

[33] The complete passage is: "That table, which just now appears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception. Now the most obvious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts. These parts are so situated, as to afford us the notion of distance and contiguity; of length, breadth and thickness. The termination of these three dimensions is what we call figure. This figure is moveable, separable, and divisible. Mobility, and separability are the distinguishing properties of extended objects. And to cut short all disputes, the very idea of extension is copy'd from nothing but an impression, and consequently, must perfectly agree to it. To say the idea of extension agrees to anything, is to say it is extended" (T 1.4.5.15; 239–40).

This impression has parts, which are arranged in such a manner to "afford us the notion of distance and contiguity; of length breadth and thickness" (emphasis added). These "notions," give us a further "notion," i.e. the notion of a "figure," which, in virtue of being a figure, "is moveable, separable and divisible." Following, Hume claims, if something is mobile and separable, then it is extended, at least from a *psychological* point of view. For recall that Hume is explicitly talking about perceptions here, not mind-independent objects. As such, all of the qualities he mentions, including extension, do not belong to mind-independent objects. Thus, they can only be psychological qualities, and thus, they exist in the mind. According to this passage, there are no mind-independent lengths, breadths or thicknesses that obtain of our impression of the table. If there were, we could accuse Hume of identifying impressions with mind-independent objects (an accusation that, recall, Beattie makes). However, further on in this book, we see that there is ample evidence to show that Hume does *not* identify mind-independent objects with impressions (see Parts II–IV). If we *did* mistakenly attribute this reading to Hume, then he surely would be guilty of claiming that an impression of a 20 foot long table is *actually* 20 feet long, which would literally blow our minds.

Thus, when Hume says that "to say that the idea of extension agrees to anything, is to say it is extended" (T 1.4.5.15; SBN 240) and further on he says that "there are impressions and ideas [that are] really extended" (T 1.4.5.16; SBN 240), he means that in both the case of an impression and an idea, we are dealing with a real *psychological*, or mental extension. Thus, *contra* the immaterialists, he may conclude that at least some thought, particularly, perceptions of sight and touch, is extended in the respect that it has a psychological "place." This is opposed to all other impressions, which, Hume argues, have no psychological "place," e.g. "A moral reflection cannot be plac'd on the right or the left hand of a passion, nor can a smell or sound be either a circular or a square figure" (T 1.4.5.10; SBN 236).

But does this conflict with my earlier conclusions? No. Previously, I suggested that an idea could precisely represent an impression without replicating it. This could be done by appealing to some sort of mental image or sign that we think of as having certain qualities, e.g. a blue 24' × 24' × 24' triangle—a notion that will be fleshed out in more detail, as we progress through this book. The passage cited above (T 1.4.5.15; SBN 239–40) supports this interpretation, but with the following caveat: impressions seem to "represent" in the same manner that ideas do. As we just saw, an impression of what we believe to be a 20 foot long table is not *literally* 20 feet long. Rather, it is some kind of mental image that, somehow, we believe to represent a 20 foot long mind-independent table, and so, it too is some kind of visual image that we think of as having particular properties.[34] However, according to Hume, our impressions of the table *are* indeed, colored (and could, potentially, smell, taste and feel like something). But whether or not our *idea* of the table would

[34] We should note that impressions never "represent" a mind-independent object in the respect that we have an impression *of* a mind-independent object. Rather, we imagine that an impression represents a mind-independent object in virtue of imagining a complex idea as its cause. See Parts II–IV of this book for more detail.

share such properties is not clear. For example, does Hume think that we can have a splintery idea? Hume makes no indication that this is the case in this passage. Thus, it is entirely possible that according to this passage, ideas of impressions do *not* replicate them. Moreover, if Hume were to say that an idea of a tactile impression replicates that impression, he would be committed to the view that an idea of a warm touch would literally *be* warm, which, as pointed out by Beattie, is rather absurd (it would mean that no one would ever freeze to death; one would need only recall, say, a pleasant day at the beach to warm up).

We must also consider a passage pertaining to extension that Falkenstein does not cite. Here, Hume seems to suggest that ideas are indeed, "coloured" and "tangible" (i.e. "touchable"). However, here, Hume does not actually say that our ideas are literally colored or touchable. Rather, he consistently refers to our ideas *of* color and tangibility. Note:

> The idea of space is convey'd to the mind by two senses, the sight and touch; nor does anything ever appear extended, that is not either visible or tangible. That compound impression, which represents extension, consists of several lesser impressions, that are indivisible to the eye or feeling, and may be call'd impressions of atoms or corpuscles endow'd with colour and solidity. But this is not all. 'Tis not only requisite, that these atoms shou'd be colour'd or tangible, in order to discover themselves to our senses; 'tis also necessary we shou'd preserve the *idea of their colour or tangibility* in order to comprehend them by our imagination. There is nothing but the *idea of their colour or tangibility*, which can render them conceivable by the mind. Upon the removal of *the idea of these sensible qualities*, they are utterly annihilated to the thought or imagination.
>
> Now, such as the parts are, such is the whole. If a point be not *consider'd as colour'd or tangible,* it can convey to us no idea (T 1.2.3.15–16; SBN 38–39, emphases added)

It is entirely possible that by the "idea of" color and tangibility (touchability), and the "consideration" of color and tangibility, Hume means that we must represent these qualities to ourselves in order for our thought to be psychologically extended (in the manner explained earlier). But the ideas themselves do not have to literally be colored, much less literally be *touchable* —how could we touch an idea?

Thus, what I refer to as the Relational Argument for replication fails. Ideas do not necessarily replicate impressions in virtue of being psychologically extended in the same manner. As for the case of time, we saw that ideas need not necessarily stand in the same successive relations as their correspondent impressions, and thus, the idea of time does not necessarily replicate a series of successive impressions.

7.5 The Qualitative Argument: Garrett

In his recent paper, "Hume's naturalistic theory of representation," (2006), Garrett argues that:

> The difference between impressions and ideas is, for Hume, what we may call a phenomenal difference—that is, one that constitutes a difference in how it feels to have the perception. It is not, however, a difference in what we may call their *qualitative character*—that is, it is not a difference in the intrinsic character determining qualities of perceptions, such as sweetness, redness, squareness, angriness, or approbation. For it is one of Hume's central theses that such

> qualitative characteristics may always be shared equally by an impression and an idea. Rather, the defining difference between impressions and ideas lies in a phenomenal difference of a fundamentally different sort, which he calls a difference in the degree of 'force and liveliness [or vivacity] with which they strike upon the mind. (T 1.1.1.1; see also EHU 2.3) (pp. 302–3)

According to Garrett's Hume, ideas *can* smell. They can also be sweet, red, angry and so on.[35] Moreover, ideas may stand in the same relations that impressions do, just as Falkenstein asserts.[36] But unlike Beattie, and like Falkenstein, Garrett does not think that a replication theory of representation is absurd. Rather, he concludes:

> We are now in a better position to see how ideas having the very same qualitative character can also represent, under different circumstances, bodies, minds, persons, impressions or other ideas. An idea will represent the corresponding impression from which it is copied whenever it plays the causal and/or functional role of that impression, by reliably indicating it and/or modeling it, in virtue of the mental effects and dispositions it produces. (p. 315)

If an idea adequately represents (replicates) an impression (i.e. has the same qualitative character), then it plays the same causal/functional power that the impression does. For instance, if an impression (say, of a rhinoceros charging at me), causes me to have fear, then an idea that represents that impression will also cause me to have fear. The fact that this idea is a less vivacious *replication* of the original impression enables it to do so.[37]

7.6 Response to Garrett

Garrett cites T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1–2, the opening paragraph of the *Treatise*, to support a replication theory. Recall that here, Hume writes:

> All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1)

As we have seen, according to Hume, there are two kinds of perceptions that obtain of the human mind: impressions and ideas, where they may be distinguished by varying degrees of "force and liveliness." Hume continues:

> Those perceptions, which enter with the most force and violence, we may name *impressions* and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking

[35] However, it should be noted that Garrett maintains that there is a distinction between an impression, or an idea, having, say, angry characteristics and a person having angry characteristics (Garrett 2006).

[36] Garrett writes: "Although Hume does not describe in detail how ideas can represent *relations*, ideas presumably represent things as standing in relations when they occur in one mind standing in parallel relations (spatial, temporal, or other, as when an idea is above or occurs after another)" (pp. 314–315).

[37] However, some ideas that don't replicate impressions may also represent (c.f. Garrett 2006).

> and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only, those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1)

Impressions are "sensations, passions and emotions," particularly, those perceptions that make their "first appearance in the soul." Ideas, on the other hand, are the "faint *images*" *of* sensations, passions and emotions. Hume continues: "I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking. The common degrees of these are easily distinguish'd; tho'… they may very nearly approach to each other" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1–2). As noted earlier in this chapter, Hume suggests that the difference in vivacity or force between impressions and ideas amounts to, respectively, a distinction between *feeling* and *thinking.* Perceptions that are especially forceful, or vivacious, are *feelings*, while their less vivacious counterparts are *thoughts*; particularly, thoughts *about* feelings. Hume attempts to clarify this distinction as follows: "Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2). Ideas may *approach* the status of feelings in certain extreme circumstances (e.g. sleep, fever or madness), but, nevertheless, they are still thoughts. Thus it seems that ideas, *contra* Garrett, are a different qualitative *kind* of perception. Hume underlines this point by finishing off the opening passage of the *Treatise* as follows: "But not withstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, [impressions and ideas] are in general so very *different*, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference" (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 2, emphasis added). Thus, I do not think that this paragraph supports a replication theory. If an idea is a different *kind* of perception, it could not, it seems, replicate an impression, or in other words, be an identical, *albeit* less vivacious version of the impression.[38]

As a result, I think that the Qualitative Argument for replication also fails, i.e. the argument that impressions and ideas must share the exact same qualities (in differing degrees of vivacity). Rather, I think that Hume thought that a very important qualitative difference obtains between ideas and impressions; impressions are *feelings* and ideas are thoughts *about* feelings. We see where Hume makes this point in no uncertain terms in the next section.

7.7 Textual Evidence that Directly Opposes the Replication Theory

The most compromising passage for the replication theory occurs very early on in the *Treatise.* In the course of explaining why impressions cause ideas (and not the other way around), Hume writes: "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

[38] A similar interpretation may be given of EHU 2.3, which Garrett also cites to make his case.

so *absurdly*, as to endeavour to produce the impressions by exciting the ideas" (T 1.1.1.8; emphasis added). Here, Hume openly confesses that it would be "*absurd*" to say that *thinking about* the color scarlet or the color orange, or the tastes of sweet or bitter "produce[s] [these] impressions." This means, Hume immediately continues, that "Our ideas upon their appearance produce *not* their correspondent impressions, *nor do we perceive any colour, or feel any sensation merely upon thinking them"* (T 1.1.1.8; emphases added). According to Hume, the idea of scarlet does not cause us to have a scarlet impression; thus this idea could *not be* scarlet. Otherwise, it would be an impression, and thus, would, effectively, cause us to *have* an impression. Likewise, the idea of bitterness could not actually *be* bitter. This is the case, Hume tells us, for *all* ideas; thinking *about* an impression neither is, nor causes us to have an impression. Thus, ideas are qualitatively different from impressions.[39]

We find more evidence that Hume did not believe in a replication theory scattered throughout the *Treatise*. For instance, as explained in Sect. 4 of this Chapter, in Book I, Hume maintains that ideas may be imagined, while impressions may *not* be imagined (T 1.1.3; SBN 8–10). Moreover, when we *remember* an impression, we do not re-experience the impression (e.g. remembering the sun on our skin does not cause us to get a less-vivacious tan). Thus, a memory of an impression is an idea; a thought *about* an impression. At least two more such qualitative differences are pointed out in Book II. First, Hume claims that ideas may be associated by resemblance, contiguity and causation, while impressions may *only* be associated by resemblance (T 2.1.4.3; SBN 283).[40] Second, he claims that ideas *cannot* be combined the same manner that impressions can be combined (T 2.2.6.1; SBN 366).[41]

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[39] This passage puts Hume's earlier comments in T 1.1.1; SBN 1–7 regarding representation into a much clearer light. A few paragraphs before the passage discussed above, he writes: "When I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impression I felt; nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other. In running over my other perceptions, I find still the same resemblance and representation. Ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other" (T 1.1.1.3; SBN 3). If taken out of context, this passage could, quite possibly, support a replication theory. But given Hume's disclaimer on T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5, we know that this cannot be the case. Rather, although Hume thinks that ideas do exactly represent impressions, they do not replicate them. For instance, an architect's drawing may exactly represent a building's structure in virtue of modeling it, and so, "share all the same circumstances," without actually *being* the structure of the building. A bit further on in T 1.1.1, Hume writes: "That idea of red, which we form in the dark, and that impression, which strikes our eyes in sun-shine, differ only in degree, not in nature" (T 1.1.1.5; SBN 3). If this passage is taken out of context, it does seem to suggest that some ideas are, indeed, red, given that they share the same "nature" as impressions. But it would be extremely odd for Hume to claiming this here, and then, four paragraphs later, explicitly tell us that this is *not* what he means. It is much more plausible to assume that he means that an exact representation of an idea is so exact, that it is of the same "nature" as an idea, where having the same "nature" does not mean having the same qualities.

[40] "Tis evident, then, there is an attraction or association among impressions, as well as among ideas; tho' with this *remarkable difference*, that ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation; and impressions only by resemblance" (T 2.1.4.3; SBN 283, emphases added).

[41] "Ideas never admit of a total union, but are endow'd with a kind of impenetrability, by which they exclude each other, and are capable of forming a compound by their conjunction, not by their mixture. On the other hand, impressions and passions are susceptible of an entire union; and like colours, may be blended so perfectly together, that each of them may lose itself, and contribute only to vary that uniform impression, which arises from the whole" (T 2.2.6.1; SBN 366).

Nowhere does Hume suggest these differences obtain merely because ideas are less vivacious than impressions. Rather, given what we have seen thus far, the implication is that they obtain because impressions are feelings and ideas are thoughts *about* feelings.

8 Summary

Ideas and impressions are not only distinguished by "degrees of vivacity," but also by the fact that *ideas* can be remembered and imagined, and so, related in certain ways, while impressions are not re-experienced when they are remembered or imagined. Put still another way: when we remember or imagine an impression, we perceive an idea, not an impression. Further, both impressions and ideas can be either simple or complex, where *simple* ideas/impressions must be understood as parts. As a result, simple impressions/ideas are *in*divisible by the normal human mind, while complex impressions/ideas *may* be divided by the human mind.

Moreover, ideas are initially caused by sense impressions, but the causes of sense impressions are strictly *unknown.* Meanwhile, some ideas may exactly represent impressions—simple or complex, where representation does not equate to replication. According to Hume (and opposed to Locke), we may directly apprehend complex impressions, and thus, have complex ideas that represent those impressions, or we may imagine complex ideas which, as such, do not correspond to complex impressions. Furthermore, simple ideas may *not* be imagined, and all those perceptions that are different (including impressions, *contra* Locke) are separable by the mind, and all those perceptions that are separable by the mind, are different.

In the course of establishing these distinctions between impressions and ideas, we have isolated six principles in Hume's naturalistic psychology. However, if we take Hume's experimental method seriously, we may conclude that all of these principles are derivative of experience, and so, are not *necessarily* true. Thus, they may admit of counterexamples if such examples are so "particular and singular" that they are "scarce worth our observing" (T 1.1.1.10; SBN 6).

8.1 Principles

1. Principle concerning the origin of simple ideas (T 1.1.1.12; SBN 7).
2. Principle of exact representation between simple impressions and simple ideas (T 1.1.1.7; SBN 4); i.e. the Copy Principle.
3. Principle of Imagination (T 1.1.3.4; SBN 10).
4. Separability Principle (T 1.1.7.3; SBN 18).
5. Principle of Memory (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9).
6. Principle of simple impressions/ideas in regard to their nature as respectively, parts and representations of parts (T 1.1.1.2; SBN 2).

Chapter 2
Elementary Belief, Causally-Produced Belief and the Natural Relation of Causality

1 Introduction

In the course of explaining the relation of cause and effect and the notion of belief, Hume is often forced to appeal to "objects." In fact, in just 1.3.6 he uses the word 'object,' or 'objects' or alternatively, 'bodies' at least 38 times. As a result, his account of cause and effect and belief cannot be exhaustively explained until we carefully develop Hume's thoughts on objects. However, to even *begin* our discussion of objects, we need to have at least a general grasp of Hume's notion of causality and belief at our disposal. In particular, we need to have a firm grasp on the *natural* relation of causality.

I proceed as follows in this chapter: In Sects. 2 and 3 I begin my account of what is generally referred to as the "positive" account of Humean induction (Owen 1999).[1] Here, we see what the natural relation of causality consists of, and how we become conditioned to think in terms of it. In particular, in Sect. 2, in the course of analyzing 1.3.2–1.3.6, I present what I refer to as "elementary belief." Elementary belief has been largely overlooked in recent scholarship, regardless of the pivotal role that it plays in Hume's positive account of induction. In Sect. 3, I explain what I call "causally-produced belief," which also belongs to Hume's positive account of induction. In Sect. 4, I explain what is generally referred to as the "negative" account of induction (Owen 1999). Here, Hume rather famously argues that we are not "determin'd by reason" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 88–9) when it comes to making an inductive inference. Thus, agreeing with at least Strawson (1952), Garrett (1997), Owen (1999) and Campell (2006), I argue that neither probable nor demonstrative reason justifies our belief in any causal relation. In fact, no

[1] Granted, Hume hardly ever uses the term 'induction.' But, as pointed out by Millican (1995), although Hume tends to use the terms 'moral reasoning,' 'probable reasoning' and 'reasoning concerning matters of facts' instead, these terms can be misleading. So, for our general purposes, we will stick to the term 'induction.'

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justification that appeals to *reason* is needed. Rather, Hume need only give an account of the psychological conditioning process that enables us think in terms of necessary causal connections. However, in Part IV of this book, after we have explicated Hume's conception of objects, we see how and why some causal inferences are justified and others are not. But not thanks to *reason*. Rather, I argue in Chap. 12 that this justification turns on the constancy and coherence of our impressions. In Sect. 5, I give a brief overview of the distinction between causally-produced belief and what I call philosophical belief, and in Sect. 6, I present a general account of what Hume meant by "reason."

Finally, it must be noted up-front that throughout 1.3, Hume abruptly switches back and forth from talking about the association of "objects" to talking about the association of perceptions. I follow suit in my analysis. But we cannot effectively understand why Hume does as much until we properly explicate Hume's notion of "objects" (see Chap. 12, Sect. 3.2.1). For now, we must tolerate this fluctuation and focus instead on the general structure of the natural relation of causality, elementary belief and causally produced belief.

2 Elementary Belief: The Positive Account of Induction, Part I

2.1 Of the Component Parts of Our Reasonings Concerning Cause and Effect: An Analysis of 1.3.4

In 1.3.2, Hume concludes that we do not have impressions of "causes" and/or "effects" in terms of them being *properties*, i.e. "qualities" (T 1.3.2.5; SBN 75). Nor do we have impressions of "causes" and/or "effects" in terms of them being *relations* (T 1.3.2.6; SBN 75). Instead, we have impressions of the relations of contiguity and succession. However, these impressions do not equate to impressions of causes and/or effects because they do not provide us with the notion of necessity (T 1.3.2.11; SBN 77). This means that according to Hume, we do not have an impression (complex or simple) of a "cause" nor of an "effect," regardless if concluding as much runs contrary to the "principle [stating that every idea must be based on an impression, a principle that] has been already so firmly establish'd as to admit of no farther doubt" (T 1.3.2.12; SBN 77).[2]

Moreover, at the end of 1.3.3, Hume establishes that it is neither "intuitively nor demonstratively certain"[3] (T 1.3.3.8; SBN 82) that "every object, which begins to exist, must owe its existence to a cause" (T 1.3.3.8; SBN 82). Rather, this claim

[2] Keep in mind though, that all of Hume's "principles" may admit of exceptions (recall Chap. 1).

[3] See Sect. 6 of this Chapter for more on Humean "certainty," particularly, demonstrative and intuitive certainty.

"arise[s] from observation and experience" (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82). The question is: How and why does experience give rise to such a principle? A good question, Hume acknowledges, but he chooses to recast it as follows: "I find it will be more convenient to sink this question in the following, *Why we conclude that* [a] *such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects, and* [b] *why we form an inference from one to the other?"* (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82). By doing so, he shifts the discussion from why we believe in the claim that every object has a cause, to an examination of why we think in terms of "particular" (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82) causes and effects.

1.3.4 opens with consideration of *this* question, i.e, an examination of the natural, associative relation of causality that comprises particular causal relations. At this point in our analysis, we can distinguish between what Hume refers to as the "natural" and "philosophical" relations of causality as follows: The natural relation of causality is the product of a conditioning process (specifically, the repetitive association of impressions; T 1.3.14; SBN 169–70). Philosophical relations of causality however, are not functions of a conditioning process. Rather, after we have become conditioned to think in terms of the natural relations of causality, we use "reason"[4] to determine if two objects are causally related (T 1.1.5.1–2; SBN 13–14, T 1.3.6.12–16; SBN 92–93, T 1.3.14.31; SBN 169–170); c.f. De Pierris (2002, n. 20)[5] Schliesser (2007) and Owen (1999, pp. 151–153). Granted, Hume only mentions the distinction between natural and philosophical relations of causality a handful of times in the *Treatise*. Initially, this might lead one to think that this distinction does not play a substantive role. In fact, at first glance, Hume's first explicit mention of the distinction between natural and philosophical relations seems to merely distinguish between certain ways in which the word 'relation' is commonly used (T 1.1.5.1–2; SBN 13–14). However, as we see in this chapter, Hume's positive account of induction presupposes the notion of the natural relation of causality; i.e. a relation that is comprised of, and results from the habituated association of ideas. As a result, we must conclude that this distinction is an essential ingredient of Hume's thoughts concerning induction.

In 1.3.4, in his first attempt to explain the natural relation of causality Hume narrows his focus to concentrate on just the second part of the question noted above. In particular, he attempts to explicate: [b] (noted above), i.e. the nature of the relationship between causes and effects, where he does so by parsing out the components of the relationship. As a result, the problem of [a] (noted above), i.e. necessity, is momentarily suspended, at least until 1.3.6.

Accordingly, Hume begins 1.3.4 by asserting that our idea of the relation of cause and effect and concomitantly, our respective ideas of causes and effects, must somehow,

[4] See Sect. 6 of this Chapter for more on Humean reason. For the time being, we may simply think of "reason" as the reflective comparison of ideas.

[5] De Pierris stresses that philosophical "reflection" can occur without having established any natural associative principles. However, we see in Parts II–IV of this book that is impossible; all reflective thought presupposes at least our ability to think in terms of the natural relation of causality (c.f. Schliesser 2007).

be based on impressions. However, as noted above, Hume has already concluded that we do *not* have an impression (simple or complex) *of* causes and/or effects, either in terms of properties or relations. Yet, Hume claims here, although we never have an impression of the relation of cause and effect, nor of particular causes or effects, in order to distinguish a particular causal relation from a mere "hypothesis" (T 1.3.4.2; SBN 83), we must have had an *impression* of the "object" (T 1.3.4.1; SBN 83) or objects[6] that we eventually come to think of as the alleged "cause" at hand. Alternatively, we must have *memories* of such impressions, which in this respect, Hume remarks, are "equivalent to impressions" (T 1.3.4.1; SBN 82).[7]

This is the case, Hume claims, because a certain causal relation must ultimately be based on a cause that may be justifiably imagined to have once "existed" (T 1.3.4.2; SBN 83). In order for this to be the case, we must have had, or somebody else must have had, an actual impression of the "object" that we imagine to be the cause in the given causal relation at hand. Doing so "establishes the existence" (T 1.3.4.1; SBN 83) of the cause at hand.

2.2 *Of the Impressions of the Senses and Memory: An Analysis of 1.3.5*

In the immediately following section, i.e. 1.3.5, Hume continues with his analysis of what particular causal relations must *consist* of—as opposed to focusing on *how* we come to imagine them in the first place. In particular, picking up where he left off in 1.3.4, he opens this section with the assertion that "All our arguments concerning causes and effects consist both of an impression of the memory or senses, and of the idea of that existence, which produces the object of the impression, or is produc'd by it" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84). Accordingly, he focuses on three aspects of natural causal relations: (1) Sense impressions, or alternatively, our memory of them (where our memories of sense impressions may, in this respect, be understood as standing in for impressions, although they are, nevertheless, ideas) (2) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the *effect* "produc'd" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) in the mind by the impression at hand and *how* it is produced, and (3)

[6] This is somewhat misleading language, for as will be shown in Part II of this book, we *never*, according to Hume, have impressions of "objects" that admit of a perfect identity (i.e. are conceived of as invariable and uninterrupted). However, ideas of objects that we imagine to admit of perfect identity are, indeed, *based* on actual impressions, and so, as we see in Parts II–IV, Hume's remarks noted above are not inconsistent with his general theory of objects.

[7] However, keep in mind, for reasons explained in Chap. 1, that Hume does not mean that memories *are* impressions. Rather, memories are *ideas*. However, in this case, a *memory* of an impression is as good as an actual impression in the respect that it is based on an impression, and so, could not, by definition, be *imagined*. Also, Hume is not claiming here that we must have an impression of a *cause*, and so, we must be careful to note that he is not contradicting himself. Rather, his claim is that we must have an impression of some "object" that we will later characterize *as* a cause.

The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the *cause* "produc'd" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) by the presence of the impression at hand and how it is produced.[8]

For the remainder of 1.3.5, and, consistent with his task to present an analysis of the component parts of the natural relation of cause and effect, Hume concentrates on explaining (1) noted above, i.e., "the original impression[s]" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84). In particular, as we already saw to be the case in 1.1.2 (discussed in Chap. 1), he tells us that the ultimate cause of all our impressions is "perfectly inexplicable" (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84). As a result, we will never know if our impressions originate from "object[s]" (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84) or if they "are produc'd by the creative power of the mind" (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84). However, the inexplicable origin of impressions does not matter to Hume. What *does* matter, he explains, is the fact that we have impressions and that we regularly associate them and our memories of them with effects, regardless of "whether they be true or false; whether they represent nature justly, or be mere illusions of the senses" (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84).

Having noted this, Hume reminds us of the earlier distinction he made between the imagination and the memory. In particular, as we saw in Chap. 1, the memory necessarily retains the order in which we apprehend our impressions while the imagination does not. However, in terms of clarifying just how the relation of cause and effect is based on memories of impressions, as opposed to imagined ideas, this distinction will not suffice. This is the case, Hume tells us, because in order to determine if one is remembering something that actually happened, v. something that is merely imagined, he cannot always appeal to a memory of the order in which the impressions were actually perceived. As a result, Hume concludes, the significant distinction between the memory and the imagination lies in the fact that the ideas produced by the memory are simply more "*vivacious*" than those produced by the imagination (T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85).

This is an absolutely crucial distinction to make. For as explained in 1.3.4 (see my Sect. 2.1. above), upon analysis, Hume concludes that all causal relationships must ultimately be based on *impressions*, or *memories of impressions* of at least, the "object" that comprises the alleged *cause* at hand. Otherwise, we are not, Hume tells us, dealing with a causal relationship, but instead, with a hypothesis (T 1.3.4.2; SBN 83). As a result, when it comes time to determine the difference

[8] Or as Hume puts it: "All our arguments concerning causes and effects consist of both an impression of the memory or senses, and of the idea of that existence, which produces the object of the impression, or is produc'd by it. Here therefore we have three things to explain, *viz. First*, the original impression. *Secondly,* the transition to the idea of the connected cause or effect. *Thirdly,* the nature and qualities of the idea" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84). Note that although Hume does discuss (2) and (3) in 1.3.6 in terms of his account of how we come up with the idea of a necessary "constant conjunction," namely, the idea of cause and effect, he does not fully explain what he has in mind by the "existence" of a cause motivated by the impression at hand, or alternatively, the "existence" of the effect motivated by the impression at hand, until he introduces what I refer to as causally-produced belief in 1.3.7–1.3.9. Moreover, we should also realize that (3) represents Hume's somewhat implicit inclusion of thinking in terms of "necessary" conditions. For if, upon being presented with an impression of the effect, I am led to think of the cause, then the cause is generally thought of as a necessary condition for the effect.

between hypotheses versus natural, associative causal relationships, we must be able to distinguish between *imagined* phenomena versus *memories* of impressions. We may make that distinction in terms of *vivacity*, for: "A man may indulge his fancy in feigning any past scene of adventures; nor wou'd there be any possibility of distinguishing this from a remembrance of a like kind, were not the ideas of the imagination fainter and more obscure" (T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85).[9]

Thus, at this point in the text, Hume defines belief *as* vivacity; belief is "***nothing but*** the vivacity of those perceptions they present" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86; boldness and italics added). Belief is either a particularly vivacious "*feeling*" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86) of an "immediate ***impression*** of the sense" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86; boldness and italics added), or, is a particularly vivacious "feeling" of the *memory* of an impression: "To believe is in this case to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86). This vivacity, this "feeling—" constituted by either a ***sense impression*** that we are actually having, i.e., an "immediate impression," or alternatively, a *memory* of a sense impression (i.e. an idea)—is, Hume realizes upon analysis, a fundamental psychological component of our reflexive, natural notion of cause and effect; "[this vivaciousness] *lays the foundation of that reasoning*, which we build upon it, when we trace the relation of cause and effect" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86; emphasis added). Thus, whenever we reflectively pick apart any instance of natural and associative causal thought, we see that in order for us to make such a natural causal connection, either a sense impression—or a memory of a sense impression—of the cause, *or* the effect, must be present, such that it may "produce" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) respectively, the idea of the effect or the idea of the cause.

This means that here, Hume is not—as he did in 1.3.4—focusing on the ultimate origins of the relation of cause and effect—i.e., the impressions that we initially experience to come to think of the particular causal relationship. Instead, he is calling our attention to what is needed to *trigger* a causal relationship that we have already been conditioned to think in terms of. And that trigger is a sense impression, or a memory of a sense impression (which, as such, is an idea; recall Chap. 1), of either the cause or the effect such that its "presen[ce]" immediately, and reflexively, brings, respectively, either the idea of the effect or the idea of the cause to mind.

In this fundamental respect, all natural, associative causal reasoning appears to be necessarily triggered by certain "*beliefs*"—i.e. sense impressions or memories of sense impressions—rather than imagined ideas. For ease of reference, we may refer to the vivacity that comprises these beliefs as **elementary vivacity** and equivalently, the beliefs themselves as **elementary beliefs**. This definition of belief corresponds

[9] However, Hume explains, it certainly may be the case that after a long period of time, our memories fade, and as a result, lose their "vivacity." At this point it would be difficult to determine if such perceptions are memories or are products of the imagination. Conversely, imagined ideas may, if put forth by particularly deft liars, become especially vivacious. As a result, such ideas would begin to seem like actual memories (T 1.3.5.6; SBN 86). But these are exceptions to the rule, and, as we saw in Chap. 1, Hume's naturalism allows for a certain degree of exceptions, so long as they are irregular enough.

to the first (of three) definitions of belief that Hume gives on T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4.[10]

However, most recent scholars do not acknowledge this kind of belief, claiming instead, that Humean belief must always be a more vivacious *idea*, but never an *impression*. And, more usually than not, these commentators suggest that belief occurs as a *result* of thinking in terms of a causal process, but does not *trigger* it. See for instance, Stroud (1977; Chap. 4), Ayer (1980, p. 31), Wright (1983, p. 214), Falkenstein (2007b, p. 33),[11] Garrett (1997, pp. 36, 209–213),[12] Owen (1999, pp. 166–170), Broakes (2002, p. 189), and Broughton (2006, p. 45).

Kemp Smith (1941) however, is an exception, writing: "Belief appears in a very different, and much more puzzling guise [in 1.3.5], when … it is considered, as it has to be, in the more fundamental form in which it shows its presence in sense perceptio. As thus occurring, belief cannot be defined as enlivening" (p. 112). He continues: "[such] belief is *native* to sense perception; independently of any process of inference" (p. 112). Anscombe (1973, p. 3) and Livingston (1974, p. 15) also acknowledge elementary beliefs but only in passing.

2.3 *Of the Inference from the Impression to the Idea: An Analysis of 1.3.6*

2.3.1 Experience

In 1.3.6, Hume moves from an analysis of what the natural, associative relation of cause and effect consists of to an explanation of how we come to think of it in the first place. To do so, he retrieves the two concerns he left hanging in 1.3.5 (noted above): (2) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the effect produced in the mind by the sense impression (or the memory of the sense impression) at hand, and (3) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the *cause* inferred by the presence of the sense impression (or the memory of the sense impression) at hand and how it is produced.

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[10] Note: "every kind of opinion or judgment, which amounts not to knowledge, is deriv'd entirely from the force and vivacity of the perception, and that these qualities constitute in the mind, what we call the BELIEF of the existence of any object. This force and this vivacity are most conspicuous in the memory; and therefore our confidence in the veracity of that faculty is the greatest imaginable, and equals in many respects the assurance of a demonstration" (T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4).

[11] Falkenstein clearly acknowledges and discusses the role that memory and present impressions play in Hume's many forms of belief. However, he suggests that only the *ideas* "produced by" (p. 33) and "derived from" (p. 34) memory and present impressions constitutes belief. Thus, he rules out impressions as constituting a form of belief.

[12] Garrett clearly emphasizes the role that memory plays in regard to belief (p. 213), but he consistently refers to beliefs as *ideas*, which are the products of belief forming mechanisms, rather than being impressions. As such, he rules out elementary beliefs.

He begins this section by telling us that we cannot somehow divine, or, it seems, intuit the nature or alleged "essence" of "objects" such that we may come to the conclusion that one causes the other, or *vice versa,* and concomitantly, that the existence of one object implies the existence of the other, or *vice versa* (T 1.3.6.1; SBN 86–7). In fact, if this were the case, we could have "knowledge"—where Hume means a demonstrative account—of the *necessary* causes and effects of certain "objects." This means, given Hume's definition of demonstrative knowledge, we could never conceive of alternative causes and effects holding of "objects." For instance, in the spirit of Hume's thought, if I could, just by thinking about the "essence" of a chair, determine that it is necessarily an effect of a chair maker, I could never imagine this not to be the case, i.e., a situation where a chair is not produced by a chair maker. However, it seems that I could easily imagine a counterexample. For instance, I might come across a rock in the woods that serves as a chair. As a result, because the idea of a chair maker and a chair are distinct, they are what Hume refers to as "separable;" we need not necessarily think of both of them at once. Thus, here, Hume is appealing to an aspect of what we saw identified in Chap. 1 as the Separability Principle: "But as all distinct ideas are separable, 'tis evident there can be no impossibility of that kind. When we pass from a present impression to the idea of any object, we might possibly have separated the idea from the impression, and have substituted any other idea in its room" (T 1.3.6.1; SBN 87).

As a result, because we do not sense (i.e. we do not see, touch, taste, smell, or hear) causes and effects, and nor can we intuit our way to them by examining the nature or alleged "essence" (T 1.3.6.1; SBN 86) of the "object" at hand, we must be appealing to something else. This something else, Hume tells us, consists of, at least, "experience." Experience will provide the missing explanation for how (2) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the effect is produced in the mind by the sense impression or the memory of the sense impression at hand and how (3) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the *cause* is brought to mind by the presence of the impression of the sense memory of the sense impression at hand.

Hume writes:

> 'Tis therefore by EXPERIENCE only, that we can infer the *existence* of one object from another. The nature of experience is this. We remember to have had frequent instances of the existence of one species of objects; and also remember, that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them, and have existed in regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them. (T 1.3.6.2; SBN 87; emphasis added)

Experience tells us that a certain kind of "object" (again, it is not yet clear what Hume means by 'object') is frequently "attended" by another kind of "object." So, quite simply, when we see, touch, taste, smell and/or hear one kind of object δ,[13]

[13] Throughout this book, I use lower case Greek letters to refer to variable objects, e.g. 'δ' in the example cited above, and upper case Greek letters to refer to particular objects, e.g. 'Δ.'

we tend to see, touch, taste, smell, or hear another kind of object ϕ.[14] Thus, the frequency of having *impressions* of one kind of object δ when we have *impressions* of another kind of object ϕ constitutes what Hume refers to as "experience." This is nothing short of a psychological conditioning process, which Hume famously refers to as "constant conjunction" (T 1.3.6.3; SBN 87; c.f. Garrett 1997; Owen 1999). For instance, we usually experience the "object" heat when we experience the "object" flame, where heat regularly occurs with, or in other words, is *contiguous* to flame, and *succeeds* flame.

Consequently, "experience" necessarily consists of the repetitive, consistent association of sense *impressions*, i.e. *not* ideas, particularly, not imagined ideas. And so, these impressions, in virtue of *being* impressions, are particularly vivacious, and thus, by definition, we believe in their "existence." This means, according to Hume, that the "experience" requisite for us to think in a causal manner is comprised of the association of *elementary beliefs* (c.f. Livingston 1974, p.15). Thus, in 1.3.6, we see that elementary beliefs are not just "triggering" devices, as we saw to be the case in 1.3.5. Rather, here we see that the *content of our constant conjunctions* must be elementary beliefs, i.e. impressions (where, we may assume, these impressions can be simple or complex). This point seems to have been overlooked by all those commentators who do not acknowledge the existence of elementary beliefs, much less the significant role that they play in how we come to think in terms of the natural relation of causality (e.g. Falkenstein 2007b; Owen 1999; Broughton 2006; Broakes 2002; Wright 1983; Ayer 1980; Garrett 1997; Stroud 1977).[15]

As a result of our experiencing the constant conjunction of elementary beliefs, we, "Without any farther ceremony … call the one *cause* and the other *effect*, and [***so***] infer the existence of the one from the other" (T1.3.6.2; SBN 87). That is, as a result of reflexively, i.e., "without any farther ceremony," coming to think of Δ as a cause and Φ as an effect—thanks to repeatedly experiencing them in a contiguous, successive relationship—we "infer the existence" (T 1.3.6.2; SBN 87) of Φ from the presence of Δ. Or alternatively, if Δ is thought of as a "necessary condition" for Φ, we may "infer the existence" (T1.3.6.2; SBN 87) of Φ from the presence of Δ. And so, Hume has, indeed, returned to concerns (2) and (3) regarding how (2) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the effect is produced in the mind by the sense impression or the memory of the sense impression at hand and how (3) The idea of the "existence" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84) of the cause is inferred by the presence of the sense impression of the memory of the sense impression at hand.

[14] Note that Hume never demands that one's impressions of Δ and Φ must be of the same nature, e.g. if one *sees* Δ, one must necessarily *see* Φ. Rather, he seems to imply that one's experience of Δ and Φ could consist of any combination of different kinds of impressions, e.g. when one sees Δ, one could consistently hear Φ, and so on.

[15] We will also see that elementary beliefs play a fundamental role in Hume's notion of a "justified" causal inference and a "justified" belief in an object. See Part IV of this book for more detail.

3 Causally-Produced Belief: The Positive Account of Induction, Part II

As we just saw, according to Hume, to reflexively associate perceptions in a causal manner, is to make some kind of *existence-inference.* However, in 1.3.6, it is not exactly clear how this "inference" proceeds. For Hume has yet to explicitly introduce the phenomenon of necessity and the role of resemblance, which are crucial components of our ability to think in terms of the natural relation of cause and effect.

Regardless, it should be clear that according to Hume, elementary belief *enables* us to become conditioned to associate perceptions in a causal manner. It not only comprises our contiguous and successively related "experience" but somehow, it triggers us into thinking in terms of natural causal relations.

We pause now to sketch this "triggering" process in a bit more detail. The idea that is "*produced*" in virtue of the presence of elementary belief, is not, technically, believed in the same way that we believe in elementary beliefs. For in the latter case (i.e. in the case of elementary beliefs), vivacity occurs in virtue of just *being* a sense impression, or being a memory of a sense impression. And thus, as Kemp Smith puts it "[such] belief is *native* to sense perception, independently of any process of inference" (1941, p.112). But in the former case, *vivaciousness occurs* ***only*** *because we have become conditioned to think of this perception as occurring in a causal relation.* As such, this vivaciousness, and so, concomitantly, our belief in the idea's existence, is, in effect, "*produced*" i.e. triggered, by an elementary belief that we have become conditioned to associate with the idea in a causal manner. And so, Hume writes in 1.3.7: "An opinion therefore, or belief may be most accurately defin'd, A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION" (T 1.3.7.5; SBN 96). And a bit later, he remarks: "belief is a lively idea produc'd by a [causal] relation to a present impression" (T 1.3.7.6; SBN 97).

In fact, in 1.3.8 he presents "three experiments" to help explain why just the natural relation of causality can produce such belief. First, if an impression p is experienced, and if we have *not* been conditioned to causally associate it with another impression q, it will not be capable of producing a more lively idea q´ (T 1.3.8.9; SBN 102). Nor can *reason* effectively produce a lively idea q´ when presented with an impression p. That is, we cannot reflectively compare the impression p with the idea q´, and in turn "bestow" (T 1.3.7.5; SBN 96) more vivaciousness on q´ such that we come to believe it. Rather, this must be a natural, reflexive process, based on conditioning (T 1.3.8.10; SBN 102–3). And finally, he argues that an *impression* p is necessary to trigger a more vivacious idea q;´ ideas will not work[16] (T 1.3.8.11; SBN 103). However, he ends this discussion with a lingering concern: why couldn't the

[16] Here, Hume seems to rule out memories of sense impressions, given that, as we saw in Chap. 1, all memories are ideas. However, in light of our preceding analysis of 1.3, we may conclude that this is not the case. Rather, Hume is ruling out any idea that is not directly related to an impression. That is, he is ruling out any idea that is not what we have defined as elementary belief. Moreover, it's worth noting that Hume's definition of the natural relation of causality on T 1.3.14.31; SBN 169–70 includes the association of two ideas, as well as the association of an impression and an idea.

relations of resemblance and/or contiguity just as effectively produce a lively idea q´ upon be presented with the appropriate impression p? Hume answers this in the course of explaining his two levels of reality, which we discuss in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, we may refer to this species of "triggered" belief as **causally-produced belief**.[17] Likewise, the vivaciousness that occurs concurrently with causally-produced beliefs may be referred to as **causally-produced vivaciousness**. Hume explicitly introduces this more complex notion of belief on T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4, where it is the second of three kinds of belief.[18]

We may now thumbnail the distinction between elementary belief and causally-produced belief as follows:

Elementary Belief: The vivacity that accompanies our impressions and our memories of our impressions (where the latter are ideas; recall Chap. 1). This vivacity occurs immediately upon experiencing impressions and/or having memories of them. We may refer to this as elementary vivacity. This belief could *not* be a function of, or in any way derivative of our ability to think in a causal manner because it *enables* us to think in a causal manner.

Causally-Produced Belief: A product of a "present impression" p (or a memory of p) triggering us to "bestow vivacity" on the imagined idea q'_{n+1} that resembles q_{1-n}, where we have been conditioned to causally associate p_{1-n} with $q_{1-n.}$ We may refer to this bestowed vivacity as causally-produced vivacity. This vivacity comprises causally-produced belief, leading Hume to claim: "[causally produced] belief arises only from causation" (T 1.3.9.2; SBN 107).

4 Necessity: The Negative Account of Induction

The question remains: Why do we think that some causes have *necessary* effects and some effects have necessary causes? Although Hume will revisit this topic at great length in 1.3.9, as well as in 1.3.14, he begins to answer this question in 1.3.6 by writing:

> There are hopes, that by this means we may at last arrive at our propos'd end' tho' to tell the truth, this new-discover'd relation of a constant conjunction seems to advance us but little

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Doing so accommodates the association between a memory of an impression and the idea it reflexively produces. Moreover, as we will see above, further on in his analysis of the natural causal relation (particularly, in the course of giving his "negative account of induction") he explicitly reintroduces a memory of impression into the natural causal equation (T 1.3.6.6; SBN 89).

[17] Owen discusses what I call causally-produced belief at some length in his book, *Hume's Reason* (1999, p. 160). However, to avoid confusion, realize that Owen's notion of simple belief corresponds to my notion of causally-produced belief, and Owen's notion of complex belief roughly corresponds to what I will call "indirect belief" in Chap. 3. See also Falkenstein (2007b) for an account of different kinds of belief in Hume's philosophy.

[18] Note: "The next degree of these qualities [of force and vivacity] *is that deriv'd from the relation of cause and effect*; and this too is very great, especially when the conjunction is found by experience to be perfectly constant, and when the object, which is present to us, exactly resembles those, of which we have had experience" (T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4; emphases added).

> in our way. For it implies no more than this, that like objects have always been plac'd in like relations of contiguity and succession; and it seems evident, at least at first sight, that by this means we can never discover any new idea, and can only multiply, but not enlarge the objects of our mind. (T 1.3.6.3; SBN 87–8)

Our respective ideas of particular causes and effects inadvertently come to mind as a result of the consistent, successive and contiguous repetition of perceptions; namely, as a result of their "constant conjunction." But if this is the case, where could the idea of "necessity" come from? It is not a property of *any* of the components of the complex relation of constant conjunction, viz., succession, contiguity or consistent repetition. Or, as Hume articulates this puzzle:

> It may be thought, that what we learn not from one object, we can never learn from a hundred, which are all of the same kind, are perfectly resembling in every circumstance. As our senses shew us in one instance two bodies, or motions, or qualities in certain relations of succession and contiguity; so our memory presents us only with a multitude of instances, wherein we always find like bodies, motions, or qualities in like relations. (T 1.3.6.3; SBN 88)

If we can't glean some property A from say, an apple, we could not, it seems, glean A from a hundred apples, regardless if these apples turn out to be just like our original apple. For instance, if I can't find the property of "is good at windsurfing" in one apple, I probably will not find that property in a hundred apples just like our original apple. The same goes for the idea of necessity—if we cannot glean the property of necessity from one instance of experiencing Δ and Φ together—and thus, we do not, with this one instance, conclude that Δ *necessarily* causes Φ—we will not glean the property of necessity from experiencing Δ and Φ together hundreds of times (T 1.3.6.3; SBN 88). So, the property of necessity that we attribute to causal relations could not be a function of how *many* times we consistently experience two "objects" in a contiguous and successive relationship; in short, *experience* does not grant us our idea of necessity.

4.1 Why Reason Does Not Provide the Idea of Causal Necessity

So where does the idea of necessity come from? To answer this question, Hume entertains the possibility that *reason* might be responsible for our attributing necessity to causal relationships. However, as we see below, in the course of examining this possibility, he finds adequate justification to dismiss it, where this dismissal consists of Hume's well-known, if not notorious, "negative" account of induction.

Hume's negative argument may be parsed into four subsections. I represent the steps in the first subsection with numbers and the letter 'i,' where 'i' stands for the *introductory* argument. For the second subsection, I use numbers and the letter 'd,' where 'd' stands for the argument that rules out *demonstrative* reasoning. For the third subsection, I use numbers and the letter 'p,' where 'p' stands for the argument that rules out *probable* reasoning. Finally, for the fourth and last subsection, I use numbers and the letter 'o,' where 'o' stands for the argument that rules out "powers."

To begin, Hume writes, in so many words: [1i] If reason *did* produce the idea of necessity that is commonly associated with causes and effects then [2i] This "reasoning"

must "proceed upon that principle" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89) that "instances" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89) (e.g. particular associations of Δ and Φ) that occurred in the past, will continue to occur as such in the future. This principle is the idea that "nature continues uniformly the same" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89); a maxim that is typically referred to in the literature as the *principle of uniformity*. The role that it plays is simple: We constantly experience that Δ precedes and is contiguous to Φ. Following, as a result of our faith in the principle that nature is orderly—i.e., continues in a fashion similar to how it operated in the past—we reason that Φ should *always* follow Δ, and thus, Φ is a "cause" and Δ is and "effect." [3i] However, If [2i] is true, i.e., if it is true that we reason our way to causal necessity based on the principle of uniformity, this principle must, in some fashion or other, be *justified;* it must be "founded" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89). [4i] Thus it seems that the principle of uniformity must be a conclusion that is a derivation of either (a) "knowledge" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89) (demonstrative reasoning), *or*, it must be a derivation of (b) "probable" reasoning (c.f. Garrett's steps 1–4 1997, p.82).

Accordingly, Hume begins by examining evidence for (a), that is, evidence for a demonstration that leads to the conclusion that "nature continues uniformly the same." However, Hume argues, we can find no such demonstration. For, [1d] We can imagine that the principle that nature will continue uniformly the same in the future is false, while simultaneously imagining the claim that nature has always continued the same in the past—as true. And so, we violate the nature of a demonstration (T 1.3.6.5; SBN 89). Thus, [2d] The principle of uniformity is not "prove[d]" (T 1.3.6.5; SBN 89) by demonstrative reasoning (c.f. Garrett's steps 5–7 1997, p.82).

Having established as much, Hume immediately turns to (b), i.e., the idea that there might be a convincing "probable" argument available to justify the principle of uniformity:

> Probability, as it discovers not the relations of ideas, consider'd as such, but only those of objects, must in some respects be founded on the impressions of our memory and senses, and in some respects on our ideas. Were there no mixture of any impression in our probable reasonings, the conclusion woul'd be entirely chimerical: And were there no mixture of ideas, the action of the mind, in observing the relation, wou'd, properly speaking, be sensation, not reasoning. 'Tis therefore necessary, that in all probable reasonings there be something present to the mind, either seen or remember'd; and that from this we infer something connected with it; which is not seen or remember'd. (T 1.3.6.6; SBN 89)

Hume's reasoning here may be parsed as follows: [1p] Probable conclusions occur when we compare the nature of "objects," such that we discover relations that allegedly hold between such "objects." Meanwhile, demonstrative reasoning concerns the relations of ideas. [2p] However, Hume explains in the passage cited above, when we reason about objects, we are to some degree, actually reasoning about *ideas*.[19] For if no ideas were present in our minds, when we engaged in "probable" reasoning

[19] As we will see in Parts II–III of this book, according to Hume, *all* objects are nothing more than ideas, regardless if they admit of a "perfect identity" (i.e. are conceived of as uninterrupted and invariable). Recognizing this sheds a bit of light on the otherwise obtuse passage cited above regarding the distinction between "demonstration" and "probable reasoning." For without realizing as much, one might wonder how Hume could suddenly classify an "object" as an *idea* such that probable reasoning, which concerns the comparison of "objects," must also be understood as the comparison of *ideas*.

(reasoning about "objects"), we would just be manipulating *impressions*. As a result, we could not possibly be reasoning. Instead, we would merely be sensing, or as Hume puts it in the passage cited above "[this] action of the mind … wou'd properly speaking, be *sensation*, not reasoning." [3p] Thus, Hume concludes in the passage cited above, probable reasoning must consist of *both* [i] impressions and/or memories of impressions *and* [ii] ideas that are memories of impressions.

Proceeding deeper into the argument, Hume writes:

> The only connexion or relation of objects, which can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses, is that of cause and effect' and that because 'tis the only one, on which we can found a just inference from one object to another. The idea of cause and effect is deriv'd from *experience*. (T 1.3.6.7; SBN 89–90)

That is: [4p] The only relation that, when presented with a sense impression, or alternatively, a memory of a sense impression of any object Δ, that can lead us to think of (specifically, remember an impression of, and thus, have an idea of) another object Φ is the relation of cause and effect. [5p] This is the case because cause and effect is the only relation that, Hume claims, "can found a *just* inference from one object to another" (emphasis added).[20] [6p] This means that by definition, "probable" reasoning *equates to* causal reasoning. For in both cases, based on past experience of say, Δ and Φ, we are, when presented with an impression or memory of an impression of Δ, led to think of the idea Φ. [7p] But, our notions of "causes" and "effects," are "deriv'd *from experience*" (first emphasis added). This is clearly quite problematic, for we cannot say that probable reasoning (causal reasoning) leads to the conclusion that "nature continues uniformly the same" and yet at the same time, conclude that probable reasoning (causal reasoning) is founded on the principle that "nature continues uniformly the same." So, if we claim that the principle of uniformity may be both justified by causal reasoning *and* it justifies causal reasoning, we are engaged in a vicious circle. [8p] Thus, probable reasoning does not justify the principle of uniformity (c.f. Garrett's steps 7–13 1997, p. 82).

But there is a remaining possibility: powers. [1o] Perhaps it is the case that certain objects have the "power" to produce other objects; "The power necessarily implies the effect; and therefore there is a *just* foundation for drawing a conclusion from the existence of one object to that of its usual attendant" (T 1.3.6.8; SBN 90). Thus, if such powers existed, we would be using reason to make causal inferences; it would be true, by definition, that a power causes an effect. [2o] However, Hume explains, the notion of a "power" presupposes the principle of uniformity. For we only conclude that like objects have like powers based on experience, where we assume that if an object had the "power" in the past to produce an effect, it will have it in the future. But as noted above, the principle of uniformity is unfounded (not justified) by reason. So we return to the same problem

[20] Exactly why this is the case (particularly, why this is "just") is discussed at length in Part IV of this book.

(T 1.3.6.7; SBN 89–90).[21] [3o] Thus, we do not use either demonstrative or probable reason to make causal inferences. (c.f. Garrett's steps 14–15 1997, p. 82). In fact, as Kemp Smith points out, this means that *natural* causal reasoning is really not *reason* at all, and so is not, technically speaking, an "inference" (1941, p. 375).[22]

Yet at no point in the course of this "negative" argument does Hume suggest that natural inductive "reasoning," is therefore, worthless, as some commentators claim (e.g. Stove 1973). However, just how this point plays out in regard to Hume's skepticism and his notion of a justified causal "inference" as well as a justified idea of an object cannot be properly addressed until Part IV of this book (for at that point, we will have fleshed out a comprehensive explanation of Hume's notion of an "object").

Nor, contrary to a relatively recent trend in Hume scholarship (e.g. Beauchamp and Rosenberg 1981; Arnold 1983; Broughton 1983; Baier 1991), does Hume suggest we can use probable reasoning to justify our inferences. In fact, he clearly argues that this could *not* be the case, given that we cannot "found" the principle of uniformity on probable reason; recall 1p–8p above.[23]

4.2 The Role of the Imagination

Having dismissed the possibility that demonstrative or probable *reason* is behind our ability to make causal "inferences," Hume immediately turns to the faculty of the imagination. Is the imagination responsible for our conclusion that certain constant conjunctions are necessary?

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[21] Millican (2002c) refers to Hume's discussion of powers in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* as a "coda;" i.e. a discussion that serves to illustrate, or round out the negative argument concerning induction. As such, in agreement with our discussion above, Millican argues that Hume meant to show that even if there were such things as "powers," Hume's skepticism regarding the rational basis for induction still holds. As a result, especially in the *Enquiry*, it is clear that Hume's negative argument concerning induction does not presuppose his positive account of induction (which we discuss in more detail in Sects. 4.2 and 4.3 of this chapter). For even if we did suppose that causation is *not* a function of mere regularity, i.e. even if we did eschew Hume's positive account of induction, and in its stead, adopt a causal power theory, such a theory could not be justified by reason (as shown above). Thus, Millican rightly concludes, although Hume's negative account of induction occurs in the middle of his positive account of induction in the *Treatise*, the former does not presuppose the latter.

[22] Whether or not *philosophical* causal reason counts as "reason" is touched on in Sects. 5 and 6 of this chapter. Also see Chap. 12.

[23] See Garrett (1997) for a more detailed rejection of this reading of Hume's negative argument (pp. 83–88). In brief, Garrett argues that these commentators could not be right because 1. They do not correctly interpret Hume's use of the word 'reason' in regard to the negative argument, where they claim that it only applies to deductive reasoning. 2. Hume seems to clearly disagree with this reading when he paraphrases the negative argument elsewhere, e.g. T 1.3.12.21; SBN 139 and T *Abs.* 21; SBN 653–4 (limiting ourselves to just the *Treatise*). 3. Hume clearly argues that probable reasoning cannot "found" the principle of uniformity (as I claim above).

Yes, although the explanation that Hume gives of the imagination's role in 1.3.6 is not complete. It is not until he introduces the role that resemblance plays in 1.3.14 that we can fully grasp how, exactly, the imagination allows us to think of certain constant conjunctions as being necessary. However, we can glean some useful information from the account he gives in 1.3.6.

Here, he reminds us that three relations allow us to *reflexively* move from one "object" to another. This means that in some cases, i.e. in the cases of "natural" relations, we may move from thinking about Δ to thinking about Φ *without* reasoning, or in other words, without reflecting.[24] These three reflexive "natural" (T 1.3.6.13; SBN 92) relations are resemblance, contiguity and cause and effect. Yet, Hume tells us, we "intuit" (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70, T 1.3.6.12–13; SBN 92) the relations of resemblance and contiguity. But we certainly do not "intuit" the relation of causality, as explained earlier in this chapter. Nor, as we know by now, do we employ reason to grasp this relation.

Rather, "when the mind, therefore, passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determin'd by reason, but by certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects and *unite them in the imagination*" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92; emphasis added). When two objects Δ and Φ are "constantly conjoined," we, *without* employing "reason," come to "*unite* them in the imagination." As a result, although Hume will explain this phenomenon at greater length in 1.3.14, the implication is that this "unit[ing]" somehow consists of *imagining* Δ to be *necessarily* conjoined with Φ such that we have our full-blown notion of cause and effect. Accordingly, the effect is conceived of as necessarily following from the cause. Or in some cases, the cause is conceived of as a necessary condition for the effect.

To better defend the pivotal role that the imagination plays, Hume writes: "Had ideas no more union in the fancy than objects seem to have in the understanding, we cou'd never draw any inference from causes to effects, nor repose belief in any

[24] Or as Hume puts it: "We have already taken notice of certain relations, which make us pass from one object to another, even tho' there be no *reason* to determine us to that transition; and this we may establish for a general rule, that wherever the mind constantly and uniformly makes a transition without any *reason,* it is influenc'd by these relations" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92; emphasis added). Here he seems to be referring to T 1.1.4 and T 1.1.5.1; SBN 13. In the latter portion of the text he writes: "The word relation is commonly us'd in two senses considerably different from each other. Either for that quality, by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, and one naturally introduces the other, after the manner above-explained, or for that particular circumstance, in which, even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them." Granted, at first glance, Hume may seem to only be concerned with how we generally *use* the word 'relation' in this passage, and thus, he does not necessarily abide by this distinction himself. However, this could not be the case, for as we have seen, much of 1.3 is concerned with explicating the mechanism behind how we come to naturally associate perceptions in a causal manner, not how we *say* that we come to naturally associate perceptions in a causal manner. Meanwhile, he defines reason as a "comparing" process on at least T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73 (c.f. Sect. 6 of this chapter); this is not an account of how we *say* that we reason, it is an account of *how* we reason. Moreover, notice that in T 1.1.5.1; SBN 13, he refers to T 1.1.4; in this section he briefly explains how we naturally associate ideas, not how we *say* we associate ideas.

matter of fact. The inference therefore, depends solely on the union of ideas" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92). We *do* make "inferences"[25] from what we take to be causes and effects, and moreover, we tend to think that such inferences are necessary. Yet, as shown above, reason (demonstrative or probabilistic) is not responsible for our thinking as much. Nor is intuition or just experience, i.e. the constant conjunction of impressions (elementary beliefs). Thus, it must be the case that we somehow imagine that such inferences are necessary. There appears to be no other option.

4.3 The Role of Resemblance; A Partial Analysis of 1.3.14

In 1.3.14, after revisiting and dismissing the possibility of "powers" and "efficacy" on T 1.3.14.2–20; SBN 156–165, Hume introduces the relation of resemblance into the mix, announcing, "There is then, nothing new either discover'd or produc'd in any objects by their constant conjunction, and by the uninterrupted resemblance of their relations of succession and contiguity." "But," he immediately continues, *"'tis from this resemblance, that the idea of necessity, of power, and of efficacy are deriv'd"* (T 1.3.14.19; SBN 164; emphases added). Squaring with the account he gives in 1.3.6, Hume reminds us that the constant conjunction of objects does not, taken alone, divulge the idea of necessity. Rather, it is somehow "deriv'd" from experiencing multiple instances of *resembling* conjunctions of objects. However, as we know, this "derivation" is not a function of reason. Instead, it is a certain kind of "determin[ation]" (T 1.3.14.20; SBN 165). We are *determined*, upon experiencing Δ, to automatically think Φ. And it is this conditioned, seemingly-unwilling *reflex* to think Φ whenever we have an impression, or a memory of an impression of Δ, that constitutes our idea of necessity, or equivalently, any idea we might have of an objects "power" and/or "efficacy." Thus, "necessity" *qua* a "determination" of the mind, is nothing more than a conditioned psychological reflex, where Hume refers to this reflex an "internal impression of the mind." (T 1.3.14.20; SBN 165).[26]

But how does the imagination come into play? Hume writes:

> This *determination* is the only effect of resemblance; and therefore must be the same with the power or efficacy, whose idea is deriv'd from the resemblance. The several instances of resembling conjunctions lead us into the notion of power and necessity. These instances are in themselves totally distinct from each other, and have not *union but in the mind*, which observes them, and collects their ideas. Necessity then, is the effect of this observation, and is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another. (T 1.3.14.20; SBN 165; emphases added)

[25] Earlier, I pointed out that, after Kemp Smith (1941, p. 375), the associative relation of causality could not be an "inference." So why does Hume refer to it as such here? See Sect. 6 of this chapter for an answer.

[26] Hume is careful to point out that this "internal impression" is not a sense impression, and nor is it an ordinary impression of reflexion because it is not, ultimately, derived from a sense impression. Thus, it does not appear to admit of degrees of vivacity. Rather, as explained above, it is a conditioned reflex.

Although Hume does not explicitly use the word 'imagination' here, we know, given our analysis of 1.3.6, that he must have the imagination in mind when he refers to a "union in the mind." For recall that in 1.3.6, we saw that necessity is a function of being "unit[ed] … in the imagination" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92) and: "Had ideas no more union in the fancy [i.e. the imagination] than objects seem to have in the understanding, we cou'd never draw any inference from causes to effects, nor repose belief in any matter of fact. The inference, therefore, depends solely on the union of ideas" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92). So, we know that the imagination is responsible for the "union" noted above.

However, in 1.3.14, Hume clarifies that what is being "union[ized]" by the imagination is not a particular instance of the impressions of p and q, but instead, all instances of p_{1-n} and q_{1-n} *in virtue of each pair's resemblance* to each other. For instance, assume that on one instance, e.g. time T_1, I jump in the water (e.g. impression p) and get wet (e.g. impression q) and on another instance, e.g. time T_2, I jump in the water and get wet, and so on for times T_3–T_n. In virtue of being able to naturally "intuit" (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70, T 1.3.14.28; SBN 168–9) the resemblance that holds between the pairs of events that occur on T_1–T_n, I, thanks to my imagination, "unify" all pairs of p_{1-n} and q_{1-n} with each other such that when presented with an impression p (or a memory of p), I am reflexively determined to think q'_{n+1} where I *imagine* q'_{n+1} based on its resemblance to q_{1-n}

Thus, via elementary transitive reasoning, Hume concludes that "necessary connexion" is nothing more than a "*transition* from the accustom'd union [in the imagination]." (T 1.3.14.21; SBN 165, emphasis added; c.f. Craig 1987, p. 85; Owen 1999, p. 63, n2). Necessity is simply the conditioned *reflex* to imagine the idea q'_{n+1} whenever we have an impression of p (or a memory of p).[27] Thus, the natural relation of causality is not a *belief*. It is not a sense impression nor is it a particularly vivacious idea of a sense impression (c.f. Campbell 2006). This is opposed to at least (and perhaps most famously), Kemp Smith, who refers to our ability to make a natural causal inference as a "belief" (1941, p.127; see also Chaps. 16 and 17). However, as pointed out earlier, Kemp Smith is right to point out that this reflexive tendency is not an instance of reasoning; we do not reflectively compare ideas, we merely react (1941, p. 375; see also Owen 1999, p. 32). Hume is quite clear in this regard: "Thus all probable reasoning is nothing but a species of sensation" (T 1.3.8.12; SBN 103), "*even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience*" (T 1.3.12.20; SBN 139).

However, it must be pointed out that the idea q'_{n+1} produced as a result of the causal reflex *is* a belief (see T 1.3.6–8; SBN 93–106), comprising in fact, Hume's second definition of belief (T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4). As noted earlier, this is the

[27] Thus, after at least Stroud (1991, 1993) and de Pierris (2002), I think that according to Hume, the idea of necessity is "projected" as a result of a psychological conditioning process. However, *what* this necessity is projected onto (i.e. "objects" or perceptions) cannot be effectively ascertained until we discover just what Hume means by an "object."

form of belief that most Hume scholars focus on, where they tend to overlook elementary beliefs. The question is, does the idea q'_{n+1} represent—exactly or not—any impression? We know that q'_{n+1} *resembles* the ideas q'_{n-1}, and thus, to some degree, represents the impressions q_{n-1}. We will revisit this issue in Part II of this book, where we discuss abstract ideas.

5 The Natural Relation of Causality v. The Philosophical Relation of Causality: A Closer Look

However, Hume certainly does suggest that we *believe* in certain causal relations. For instance, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we all tend to *believe* in the idea that every object has a cause. Moreover, in virtue of believing in this "principle" (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82) and other causal relations, we come to certain conclusions; we "*reason*…from causes or effects" (T 1.3.7.2; SBN 94; emphasis added). We are not just acting in a reflexive manner.

Does this mean that Hume is contradicting himself? No. As already mentioned, he employs *two* senses of causality: the *natural* relation of causality, which is a conditioned reflex, and so, is not a belief, and the *philosophical* relation of causality, which, although it is based on conditioning, *is* a belief. Thus, according to Hume, we have what we may call **philosophical beliefs**. These include the general principles that (i) every cause has an effect, (ii) every effect presupposes a cause (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82), and (iii) every object has a cause (T 1.3.3.9; SBN 82). Philosophical beliefs also include particular conditioned reflexes, but only when viewed from a *philosophical* perspective.

Consider the following example: One may become conditioned to think that weed killer causes weeds to die. And so, every time she sees weed killer poured on weeds (or remembers weed killer being poured on weeds), the enlivened idea of weeds dying reflexively comes to mind; she *believes* that the weeds will die. This is a causally-produced belief. However, as a result of her conditioning, she may also *believe* the causal relation that "every time weed killer is poured on weeds, weeds will die." In this respect, a causal relation is, in effect, a "principle;" it is a causal relation that we believe to obtain between two ideas, i.e. the idea of "weed killer" and "weeds dying." Thus, as noted above, we may, after Hume, refer to this kind of belief, and, in fact, any kind of belief that is based on the comparison of ideas (as opposed to being a result of a conditioning process) as **philosophical belief** (c.f. Schliesser 2007).[28]

[28] In 1.3.12, "Of the Probability of Causes," Hume presents four "species" of probability, where we are not strictly *determined* to think q´ whenever we have an impression p. Falkenstein characterizes them as: imperfect experience, contrary causes, instinctive and statistically guided inferences concerning contrary causes and analogy (2007b, pp. 34–36). All but the first case involves some consideration of the ideas p´ and q,´ and thus, must be understood as philosophical relations of causality, i.e. relations that involve reflection.

Now, *what* one believes (i.e. the reflexively produced idea or the philosophical principle) merely depends on how you look at it: "There may two definitions be given of [causation] … which are only different, by their presenting a different view of the same object, and making us consider it either as a *philosophical* or as a *natural* relation; either as a comparison of two ideas, or as an association betwixt them" (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 169–70). This distinction plays itself out in Hume's rather notorious, and frequently discussed "two definitions of cause." However, because much of our interpretation of these two definitions will turn on Hume's notion of an "object" and his notion of justification, we must suspend our in-depth discussion of this matter until Chap. 12 of this book. At that point, we will take a closer look at the principle of uniformity. In particular, we will see how it is justified, but not thanks to reason. Doing so will enable us to work out a more precise distinction between reflex and reason, and so, a more precise distinction between casually-produced beliefs and philosophical beliefs. Meanwhile, for ease of reference, we may refer to both philosophical causation and natural causation as **"ordinary causation."**

6 Humean Reason: An Overview

Having worked our way through a general summary of Hume's positive and negative account of induction, we may now pause to briefly reflect on Hume's notion of "reason," and the "reasoning" process. However, this account is not meant to be exhaustive; this would take us well beyond the scope of this project. Rather, for our purposes, a brief overview, including a summary of some the recent major scholarly debates on the topic will suffice.

6.1 Reasoning as a Comparison: Demonstrative v. Probable

Hume's most general definition of reasoning occurs on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73; which is the definition we have been working with thus far: "All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but a *comparison*, and discovery of those relations, either constant or inconstant, which two or more objects bear to each other" (emphasis added). Initially, Hume tells us that this comparison may entail a comparison of two sense impressions, two ideas, or an idea and a sense impression. However, Hume continues, a comparison of two sense impressions actually does *not* constitute reasoning, because "in this case [there is no] exercise of thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions 'thro the organs of sensation" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73, also see T 1.3.6.6; SBN 89).

Thus, reasoning, i.e. an active "exercise of thought" can only occur when either two ideas are being compared, or when an idea and an impression are being compared.

Moreover, according to Hume, there are two kinds of reasoning (i.e. comparing) processes (c.f. T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89): demonstrative reasoning, where two ideas are present, and probable reasoning, where either two ideas are present, or an idea and an impression are present. As briefly explained above, when we are engaged in probable reasoning and two ideas are present, we must be thinking in terms of the *philosophical* relation of causality, and thus, we should call this kind of reasoning "philosophical" probable reasoning. Moreover, it could not be the case that when a sense impression and an idea are present, we are engaged in something like *natural* probable *reasoning*—at least in regard to the definition of reason noted above. For as explained at length in earlier sections of this chapter, Hume is careful to point out that the natural relation of causality does not entail any kind of "comparison" or active "exercise of thought." Rather, it is a conditioned *reflex* to imagine a idea q'_{n+1} when presented with an impression p (or a memory of p); "*we have no* ***reason*** *to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience"* (T 1.3.12.20; SBN 139; emphasis added).

In fact, this is precisely what the negative argument concerning induction is meant to show: the natural relation of causality is not a reasoning (comparing) process, and nor is it justified by any reasoning process or reasons. Thus, when Hume includes a comparison between an idea and a impression as an instance of "reasoning" on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 in virtue of claiming that only causation can ever be "made use of in reasoning" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) such that it may grant us a "conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses" (i.e. leads us to think about an idea) he could *not* be talking about the natural relation of causality. Nor is he talking about the philosophical relation of causality—which invokes the comparison of two *ideas*—since he is discussing cases where *sense impressions* lead us to "reason," i.e. to "compare" our way to ideas. Thus, he must have had some kind of *third* kind of causation in mind. As we will see in Part II of this book, this is what I call "transcendental" causation, and accordingly "transcendental" probable reasoning (see, in particular, Chap. 5, which is devoted to explaining just T 1.3.2.1–2; SBN 73–74).

However, it needs to be noted that Hume does, confusingly enough, periodically refer to the natural associate relation of causality as an "inference" (e.g. T 1.3.6.2; SBN 87, T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92, 1.3.12.20; SBN 139), or as "reason" (T 1.3.8.12; SBN 103). In fact, he even titles 1.3.16, "of the *reason* of animals," where he discusses non-human animal thought, which is equivalent to the way in which humans naturally associate perceptions. However, given what we have seen above, he must have had still another kind of "reasoning" in mind when it comes to the associative causal mechanism, namely one that does *not* consist of any kind of "comparing" or "exercise[ing] of thought." I think it would be appropriate to call this "natural" probable reasoning, given what he says in regard to the natural associative "reasoning" process that we share with non-human animals: "To consider the matter aright, reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible *instinct* in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations." (T 1.3.16.9; SBN 179; emphasis added).

In sum, to keep matters straight, we must distinguish between three kinds of probable reasoning:

1. *Philosophical probable reasoning*, where we compare two ideas. This kind of reasoning depends on what Hume calls the "philosophical" relation of causality.
2. *Transcendental probable reasoning,* where an idea is inferred from an impression via an "exercise of thought" (to be explained in Part II of this book).
3. *Natural probable reasoning,* which is to be identified with the natural, associative causal mechanism, and does not involve any comparison of ideas. This kind of reasoning depends on what Hume calls the "natural" relation of causality.

Meanwhile, demonstrative reasoning, along with intuition, may, according to Hume, produce knowledge and certainty (as opposed to mere belief)[29] (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70, T 1.3.11.2; SBN 124). In the case of demonstrative reason, we move from one idea to another via a reflective "comparing" process, while in the case of intuition, no reflective process is involved; we immediately "intuit" the given relation between the ideas at hand. Regardless of this difference, neither demonstrative nor intuitive claims (where two ideas stand in a given relation) can be imagined otherwise without creating a contradiction (T 1.3.3.3; SBN 79–80, T 1.3.6.1; SBN 86–7, T 1.3.6.5; SBN 89, T 1.3.7.3; SBN 95, T 1.3.9.10; SBN 111, T 1.3.14.13; SBN 161–2 and T Abstract *Abs.* 11; SBN 650). How though, according to Hume, do we "move" from one idea to another using "demonstrative reason?" Did Hume think that such moves, when correctly carried out, are what we typically refer to today as "deductive inferences?" (see, for instance, Stove 1973; Millican 1995, 2002c; Mackie 1979; Beauchamp and Rosenberg 1981) Or, did Hume think that demonstration consists of an informal evaluation of the relations of ideas (see Owen 1999)? Although this is an interesting and important question, for our purposes, we must sidestep it—answering it one way or the other does not affect my analysis of objects. Thus, let us simply acknowledge this problem as a problem. Meanwhile, we may work with the relatively uncontraversial notion that a demonstrative claim is one that cannot be imagined otherwise.

7 Summary

In this chapter, we saw that:

1. Cause and effect is not a property, but a relation. Moreover, we do not have an impression of this relation.
2. Regardless of the fact that we do not have an impression of the relation of cause and effect, it must, somehow, be *based* on an impression or impressions. Otherwise, we would merely have a "hypothesis" on our hands (T 1.3.4.2; SBN 83).

[29] An account of Hume's more nuanced understanding of the distinction between belief and knowledge falls outside the scope of our discussion.

3. The relation of cause and effect is based on impressions, which, in virtue of being impressions, are particularly "vivacious." These impressions and the order in which they repetitively appear to us constitutes our "experience."
4. In the course of claiming (3), Hume defines belief as "nothing but" this vivaciousness (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86). We may refer to this kind of belief as *elementary belief*; it is the belief that our ability to think in a causal manner depends on. Elementary beliefs consist of impressions or memories of impressions (where these memories must be ideas; recall Chap. 1).
5. Constant conjunction is comprised of the consistent experience of an impression p_{1-n} occurring contiguously and successively with an impression q_{1-n}.
6. We come to think in terms of necessary connections as a result of the imagination "union[izing]" (T 1.3.6.12; SBN 92) all instances of p_{1-n} being constantly conjoined with q_{1-n} in virtue of the resemblance that holds between each instance of p being constantly conjoined with q. As a result of this unification, when I am presented with a memory or an impression of p_{1-n}, I am "determined" (T 1.3.14.20; SBN 165) to imagine an idea $q'_{n+1.}$ It is in this respect that the relation of cause and effect is an "existence" inference (T 1.3.6.1; SBN 86–7); the existence of p_{1-n} implies the existence of q'_{n+1}, which we believe in. This belief in q'_{n+1} constitutes what I refer to as *causally-produced* belief.
7. At this point in our analysis, the distinction between natural and the philosophical relations of causality may be generally summarized as follows: We are conditioned to think in terms of the natural relation of causality without any reflection. This kind of causal relation is merely a reflex, a conditioned ability to think in a causal manner. As such, it is not a belief. Moreover, in cases where we reflexively think an idea q'_{n+1} when presented with an impression p, or a memory of p, we do not reason, at least in the philosophical sense of the word 'reason,' where we "compare" two ideas via an "exercise" of thought. But when we think the idea q'_{n+1} as a result of considering the idea p' as its cause, we do reason. Such reasoning turns on the belief in philosophical causal relations, and thus, we may refer to it as *philosophical belief.* We revisit this distinction in much more depth in Chap. 12. For ease of reference, we may refer to both philosophical induction and natural induction as *ordinary causation.*
8. Accordingly, we were forced to distinguish between three kinds of probable reason: (1) Natural probable reasoning (the associative causal mechanism). (2) Transcendental probable reasoning (to be explained in Part II of this book). (3) Philosophical probable reasoning (causal inferences that involve the comparison of two ideas).

Chapter 3
The Two Systems of Reality

1 Introduction

In 1.3.9, Hume introduces two levels of reality. He does this to show why the relations of resemblance and/or contiguity cannot reflexively produce vivacious ideas in the manner that causation can (T 1.3.9.2; SBN 107). But the implications of Hume's account of reality are far-reaching. In fact, if we don't take his two systems of reality into account, we can't understand his notion of an object, his many forms of belief, nor his notion of justification. Oddly though, Hume's two systems of reality are largely overlooked in Hume scholarship, if not ignored altogether (with some exceptions, e.g. Kemp Smith 1941; Owen 1999; Loeb 2002).

I have divided this chapter as follows: In Sect. 2, I explain the two systems of reality. In Sect. 3, I explain how they are related to elementary belief and causally-produced belief. In Sect. 4, we examine the role of general rules in regard to Hume's second system of reality. And finally, in Sect. 5, we see how the two systems of reality are used to show that resemblance and contiguity do not produce belief as effectively as causation does.

2 The Two Systems

Hume tells us that "whatever is present to the memory" is especially "vivacious" in virtue of the fact that it resembles an actual impression. As a result, these memories are easily distinguishable from "the mere fictions of the imagination" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 107–8).[1]

[1] Here, Hume is relying on the distinction he made earlier between the imagination and the memory, discussed in Chap. 2 in regard to elementary beliefs and elementary vivacity (T 1.3.5.3; SBN 85).

S. Rocknak, *Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects*,
The New Synthese Historical Library 71, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-2187-6_3,

These memories, as well as impressions, constitute what he refers to as a "system" of "reality:"

> Of these impressions or ideas of the memory we form a kind of system, comprehending whatever we remember to have been present, either to our internal perception or senses; and every particular of that system, joined to the present impressions, we are pleas'd to call a *reality*. (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108)

However, Hume immediately continues, this is not the only "system" of reality we work with:

> But the mind stops not here. For finding that with this system of perceptions, there is another connected by custom, or if you will, by the *relation of cause and effect*, it proceeds to the consideration of their ideas; and as it feels that 'tis in a manner necessarily determin'd to view these particular ideas, and that the custom or relation, by which it is determin'd, admits not of the least change, it forms them into a *new system*, which it likewise dignifies with the title of *realities*. (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108; emphases added)

The first system of reality emerges on a more immediate level—it is merely a function of certain memories of impressions and any impressions that we may have. At the second level however, the relation of cause and effect is brought to bear, which somehow, in a regular, determined fashion, forms another, more complicated system. Accordingly, Hume tells us: "The first of these systems is the object of the memory and senses; the second of the judgment" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108). The first system appears to be more reflexive and immediate, while the second system involves reflection, particularly, reflection based on the relation of cause and effect. As a result, the second system is comprised of "judgment[s]."

Hume tells us that: "'Tis the latter principle [of judgment based on cause and effect], which peoples the world, and brings us acquainted with such existences, as by their removal in time and place, lie beyond the reaches of the senses and memory" (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108). This second, reflective level somehow allows us to conceive of and believe in the reality of places that we have never been to, people we have never met, and events we have never experienced; in other words, things that we have never formed actual impressions of. So it makes sense that this reality could not possibly belong to the realm of "senses and memory." For in the case of this kind of reality, nothing has been sensed. And so, nothing could be remembered either. But according to Hume, this second system of reality is an accurate reality nevertheless, constructed from, it seems, second, or even n-th hand impressions—impressions that *other* people have had: "By means [of this second system] I paint the universe in my imagination, and fix my attention on any part of it that I please." In fact, he immediately continues, "I form an idea of ROME, which I neither see nor remember; but which is connected with such impressions as I remember to have received from the conversations and books of travelers and historians" (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108). In this respect, it may be argued (as convincingly put forth by Loeb (2002, pp. 38–42)) that Hume's second system of reality is devised, at least partially, in response to Locke. For Locke argued that we may *only* know that an object exists thanks to the memory and thanks to our senses (ECHU IV. xi), i.e. thanks to just Hume's *first* system of reality.

Thus, we may thumbnail Hume's two systems of reality as follows:

System of Reality 1: Memories of sense impressions (i.e. ideas; recall Chap. 1) *and* any impressions that we may be experiencing at the moment.
System of Reality 2: Allows us to (somehow) conceive of and believe in phenomena that we have not necessarily had sense impressions of, by way of our ability to think in a causal manner.

3 Elementary Beliefs and Causally-Produced Beliefs: How Do They Operate in Hume's Two Systems of Reality?

Given what we saw in Chap. 2, we may conclude that Hume's first system of reality is comprised of *elementary beliefs*, i.e. sense impressions and memories of sense impressions. This makes perfect sense. For as we saw in Chap. 2, the natural relation of causality concerns existence: "All our arguments concerning causes and effects consist both of an impression of the memory or senses, and of the idea of that *existence*, which produces the object of the impression, or is produc'd by it" (T 1.3.5.1; SBN 84; emphasis added). Our ability to think in a causal manner is grounded in what we take to *exist*, i.e. what we believe is *real* (in virtue of the vivacity that naturally obtains of impressions and memories of impressions). As a result, our ability to think in a causal manner presupposes the first system of reality, i.e., our ability to have impressions, remember them, and concomitantly, believe in them.[2]

But what about causally-produced beliefs? As explained in Sect. 2, Hume's second system of reality is comprised of "judgments," particularly, *causal* judgments. Recall his claim that:

> 'Tis this latter principle [regarding the second system of reality] that people's the world and brings us acquainted with such existences, as by their removal in time and place, lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory. By means of it, I paint the universe in my *imagination*, and fix my attention on any part of it. (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108; emphasis added)

For example, he continues,

> This idea of *Rome* I place in a certain situation on the idea of an object, which I call the globe. I join to it the conception of a particular government, and religion, and manners. I look backward and consider its first foundation; its several revolutions, successes and misfortunes. All this, and everything else, which I believe are nothing but ideas; tho' by their force and settled order, arising from custom and relation of cause and effect, they *distinguish themselves* from the other ideas, which are *merely the offspring of the imagination*. (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108; emphases added)

Although the idea of Rome is indeed, "painted" in his imagination, thanks to the "custom and the relation of cause and effect" it is to be distinguished from those ideas

[2] Note that Owen suggests that only Hume's *second* system of reality entails beliefs, while the first does not (1999, pp. 166–8).

that are "*merely* the offspring of the imagination." This suggests that what is imagined in the former case is *justified* in virtue of the fact that it contributes to the fabric of reality, while the latter is not (where by 'justified' I simply mean, for now, after (Loeb 2002, p. 47) based on, or somehow related to impressions). Indeed, *everything* that Hume believes in—that is "real"—is comprised of ideas that, working hand in hand with the imagination, "aris[e] from custom and the relation of cause and effect" (in addition to, it would seem, memories and impressions, i.e. the elementary beliefs that comprise the first system of reality). Meanwhile, what is "merely" imagined is nothing but fantasy, and so, is not based on impressions, and thus, is not "real."

To better understand Hume's thought process here, we need to revisit his account of causally-produced belief. Recall that after being conditioned to think in terms of if p then q, we are, when presented with an impression p or a memory of p, reflexively "determined" to imagine the idea q'_{n+1}. Simultaneously, we "bestow" vivacity on q'_{n+1}, such that we believe in q'_{n+1}, i.e. we believe in its existence, it's reality. However, we don't imagine q'_{n+1} out of the blue. Rather, we imagine q'_{n+1} based on its *resemblance* to q_{1-n}, having been conditioned by the constant conjunction of the impressions of p_{1-n} and q_{1-n}.

Now consider Hume's Rome example, employed to illustrate Hume's claim that the objects of the second system of reality "lie *beyond* the reach of the senses and memory" (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108; emphasis added). Hume imagines Rome; he has never been to Rome, so he has no memories of any impressions of Rome. Moreover, it's conceivable that he has never been to a city that *resembles* Rome (and so, the resemblance set of q_{1-n} would be absent). Nevertheless, he suggests that his imagined idea of Rome *is* somehow *justified* (or at least, is *better than*, than "a merely imagined idea") because it is based on "custom and the relation of cause and effect" (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108; cf. Loeb 2002, p. 63; Passmore 1968, p. 101; Kemp Smith 1941, pp. 383–85). Also see the footnote at the end of 1.3.9 (cf. Loeb 2002, p. 64).

Thus, in regard to his second system of reality, Hume must be appealing to an *indirect* kind of conditioning, which is best illustrated by slightly reworking Hume's example: Although I may have never been to Rome, and so, the idea that I have of it is imagined, it nevertheless constitutes what I take to be reality (and it doesn't *resemble* any impression I've had—assume that I've never been to a big city, much less Europe). However, this is not the same as saying: "I have never seen a unicorn, and so, the idea I have of it is imagined. Nevertheless, this idea constitutes what I take to be reality." Rather, according to Hume, the difference between my imagined idea of Rome v. my imagined idea of a unicorn lies in the natural relation of cause and effect, which, as explained in Chap. 2, is a product of custom. In the past—through my own experience—I have discovered that certain people are trustworthy. So, I tend to believe that the stories they tell me are true, which means I have been conditioned to think in terms of the conditional: if a person is trustworthy, then her accounts are "real" (i.e. are vivacious, and so, are rooted in impressions). As a result, I will believe any trustworthy account that Rome exists, regardless if I hear these stories first hand, or say, read them in a *National Geographic* magazine; I am reflexively conditioned to do so.

However, recall that Hume claims that the second system of reality is comprised of causal *judgments*, not natural, reflexive associations. Thus, although he is never

explicit in this regard, we might surmise that he is thinking along the following lines: In addition to being reflexively conditioned to believe that Rome exists upon hearing trustworthy accounts that it does exist, we believe in the *philosophical* principle: "If a person is trustworthy, then her accounts are real (i.e. are based on experience)." By appealing to this principle, I may, in effect, justify my belief that Rome exists. As such, I use philosophical causal *reason* to conclude that Rome exists (recall the sketch of philosophical causal reason given at the end of Chap. 2). Moreover, as Owen points out (1999, p. 170), this imaginative process also seems to be grounded in the principle of uniformity, i.e. the principle that whatever occurred in the past will be similar to what occurs in the future.

But where, one might ask, is the textual evidence that suggests that Hume has this indirect kind of causal justification in mind when it comes to his second system of reality? We need only take a look at Hume's account of history in the *Treatise* (1.3.3). Here, he explains that we may justifiably believe in Caesar's death (an event that no reader of Hume's work ever witnessed and conceivably, does not resemble any other event that the reader has witnessed) precisely *because* of a series of trustworthy accounts that fit into a chain of causal relationships (cf. Livingston 1974):

> tho' the [causal] links are innumerable, that connect any original fact with the present impression, which is the foundation of belief; yet they are all of the same kind, and depend on the *fidelity* of Printers and Copists. One edition passes into another, and that into a third, and so on, 'till we come to that volume we peruse at present…This circumstance alone preserves the evidence of history, and will perpetuate the memory of the present age to the latest posterity. (T 1.3.13.6; SBN 146; emphasis added)

This account is related to Hume's notion of testimony, which Garrett (1997) explicates in regard to Hume's discussion of miracles in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Garrett writes: "[O]ur assurance in any argument [derived from the testimony of men and the reports of eyewitnesses and spectators] is derived from no other *principle* than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses" (p. 147; emphasis added, cf. Livingston 1974, p. 18). Thus, at least in light of Hume's account of testimony in the *Enquiry*, it is not far-fetched or unusual to characterize the claim "If a person is trustworthy, then her accounts are real" (i.e. are based on experience, or as Garrett puts it, "facts") as a *principle*, particularly, a philosophical principle.

We must also consider Hume's *third* definition of belief given on T 1.3.13.19; SBN 153–4:

> But below this degree of evidence [found in the first two kinds of belief] there are many others, which have an influence on the passions and the imagination, proportion'd to that degree of force and vivacity, which they communicate to ideas. 'Tis by habit we make the transition from cause to effect; and 'tis from some present impression we borrow that vivacity, which we diffuse over the correlative idea. But when we have not observ'd a sufficient number of instances, to produce a strong habit; or when these instances are contrary to each other; or when the resemblance is not exact; or the present impression is faint and obscure; or the experience in some measure obliterated from the memory; or the connexion dependent on a long chain of objects; or the inference deriv'd from general rules, and yet not conformable to them: In all these cases the evidence diminishes by the diminution of the force and intenseness of the idea. This therefore is the nature of the judgment and probability.

Here, Hume actually lists *seven* different kinds of belief, where all are weaker forms of belief based, in various ways, on the relation of cause and effect. But we need only focus on the last one: "the inference deriv'd from *general rules*" (emphasis added). For although Hume may have thought that the other six kinds of belief mentioned above *also* inform his second system of reality, given what we have seen, the seventh seems to be the most important, and so, we will highlight it, and for ease of reference, call it "**indirect belief**."

However, we cannot fully understand indirect belief without taking a brief look at general rules.

4 General Rules

On T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149, Hume defines "general rules' as those which allow us to determine if our beliefs are legitimate in the respect that they are grounded in custom (experience), i.e. if they are justified or not (cf. Falkenstein 1997b; Loeb 2002):

> According to my system, all reasonings are nothing but the effects of custom; and custom has no influence, but by enlivening the imagination, and giving us a strong conception of any object. It may, therefore, be concluded, that our judgment and imagination can never be contrary, and that custom cannot operate on the latter faculty after such a manner, as to render it opposite the former. This difficulty we can remove after no other manner, than by supposing the influence of general rules.

As we saw in Chap. 2, Hume distinguishes between two kind of cause, where one pertains to the *natural* relation of causality and the other pertains to the *philosophical* relation of causality. At this point in our analysis, we have established that in the case of a "natural" cause, an effect q'_{n+1} is produced by the imagination reflexively, without incurring any kind of judgment; we imagine q'_{n+1} based on its resemblance to the q'_{1-n}, where we have had impressions of q_{1-n}. But in the case of a philosophical cause, the effect q'_{n+1} is produced as a result of a *judgment*, where two ideas are compared.

In some cases, Hume observes, such judgments may be opposed to what we reflexively imagine. Thus, some natural relations of causation might stand in conflict with philosophical relations of causation. To resolve this conflict, we have to appeal to what Hume calls "general rules" (and thus, Hume writes an entire section called "Rules by which to judge of causes and effects" 1.3.15). For instance, he explains that by means of general rules,

> we learn to distinguish the accidental circumstances from the efficacious causes; and when we find that an effect can be provided without the concurrence of any particular circumstance, we conclude that that circumstance makes not a part of the efficacious cause, however frequently conjoin'd with it. (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149)

Some perceptions may be constantly conjoined with other perceptions, but this may just be circumstance. Consider, for instance, the following example: For 3 days in a row, Luke has walked out of the door of his new apartment and been doused with water (unbeknownst to him, a child upstairs had been laying in wait for him, dumping water on his head every time he leaves the apartment). However, this does

not mean that Luke should conclude that opening the door *causes* him to get wet, however much he is naturally inclined to do so. Rather, he has fallen victim to what Hume refers to in the passage noted above as an "accidental circumstance." If Luke reflected on his *propensity* to think of water falling from the sky whenever he walks out the door in terms of Hume's general rules concerning causes and effects—particularly, the idea that an effect must always have the same cause (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149; cf. 1.3.15.6; SBN 174)—he might realize that this propensity is just a function of his imagination. In fact, upon reflection, Luke should come to the conclusion that walking out doors does *not* cause water to fall from the sky. Water falls from the sky on many occasions when Luke does *not* walk out the door of his apartment, and thus, he must conclude, in this case, that an "effect [i.e. water falling] can be provided *without* the concurrence of any particular circumstance [i.e. walking out the door]" (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 179; emphasis added).

Thus, Luke should come to a conclusion that *opposes* the propensity to imagine water falling whenever he walks out his door. This conclusion can be nothing other than a philosophical judgment, involving the comparison of ideas (viz. walking out doors and water falling from the sky) while employing certain general rules concerning the nature of causes and effects. Or as Hume puts it:

> But as this frequent conjunction necessarily makes it have some effect on the imagination in spite of the opposite conclusion from general rules, the opposition of these two principles produces a *contrariety* in our thoughts, and causes us to ascribe the one inference to our *judgment* and the other to our *imagination*. The general rule is attributed to our judgment; as being more extensive and constant. The exception to our imagination; as being more capricious and uncertain. (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149; emphasis added)

However, Hume's account of general rules is not without controversy. For how are these general rules justified? But we can't answer that yet—not until we nail down Hume's notion of an object. In the meantime however, we can conclude that in the case of Hume's second system of reality, the appeal to "general rules" bestows a certain kind of legitimacy, or justification on the philosophical principles that we appeal to in order to justify our belief in ideas that we have never had impressions of (cf. Falkenstein 1997b). For instance, recall that in order for me to believe in the idea of Rome (where I have never had an impression of Rome, nor any impression of a city resembling Rome), I must:

(a) Be *conditioned* (through the constant conjunction of impressions) to think: "If I come across a trustworthy source that tells me that α exists, then α exists."
(b) *Believe* the philosophical principle "If I come across a trustworthy source that tells me that α exists, then α exists" (cf. Garrett 1997, Chap. 7 and Livingston 1974, p. 18).
(c) Our belief in (b) is justified by checking it against general rules (which are outlined in detail in 1.3.15)
(d) Reflexively conclude that Rome exists when presented with a trustworthy source claiming that Rome exists, thanks to (a).
(e) Justify my belief that Rome exists thanks to (b) and (c); where I appeal to philosophical causal reason. That is, I reflectively compare the idea of my trustworthy

> source telling me that α exists, with the idea that α actually exists. This squares with Hume's claim that the second system of reality is comprised of causal "*judgments*" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 1078; emphasis added), i.e. not reflexive associations. Accordingly, in the course of making these judgments, I "proceed to the consideration of … [the] ideas" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 108) that comprise the causal relation at hand.

This means that we are not dealing with an *ordinary* inductive inference here (philosophical or natural). For as Hume explicitly states, we have *never had an impression of the effect*, q. As a result, we do not have a resemblance set q'_{1-n} to appeal to in order to imagine q'_{n+1} (cf. Livingston 1974, p. 18).

But is this a violation of Hume's Copy Principle? Do we, in these instances, form ideas that do not exactly represent impressions? Hume never explicitly answers these questions but we might conclude: No. Recall that the principle of exact representation (the "Copy Principle") only applies to simple ideas; all *simple* ideas must exactly represent impressions, whereas complex ideas do not necessarily exactly represent complex impressions. Rather, some complex ideas may be imagined. In fact, even in the case of ordinary causation, we *imagine* q'_{n+1}, where this idea does *not* exactly represent an impression we have had, but rather, resembles one.

Thus, although Hume has never had an impression of Rome, his imagined idea of Rome might very well be a compilation of simple ideas that *do* exactly represent impressions that he has had. This is why Hume admits that although the relation of resemblance does not enliven an idea in the way that causation does, it may certainly help us imagine more vivacious ideas (T 1.3.9.5; SBN 109). For instance, the poet's fantastic idea of the Elysian Fields is enlivened by the idea's resemblance to fields that he has seen (T 1.3.9.5; SBN 109). Thus, we might say that Hume's idea of Rome *does* resemble some impressions he's had, e.g. impressions of smaller cities, and/or impressions of Italian artwork, etc. Regardless, his complex imagined idea of Rome does *not* resemble other complex ideas of Rome that he has had, simply because he has never had an impression of Rome. Thus, regardless of the fact that Hume's imagined idea of Rome must be comprised of some ideas that exactly represent impressions, the causal process that inspires us to imagine an idea of Rome is not the same as ordinary causation.

We might appeal to Hume's account of probability to find more on this rather strange kind of causation, but it is a non-starter. On T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147, Hume writes:

> Now 'tis the nature of custom not only to operate with its full force, when objects are presented, that are exactly the same with those to which we have been accustom'd; but also to operate in an inferior degree, when we discover such as are similar; and tho' the habit loses somewhat of its force by every difference, yet 'tis seldom entirely destroy'd where any considerable circumstances remain the same.

For instance, he explains, someone who is used to enjoying pears or peaches can also be satisfied by melons. Similarly, a drunk who typically drinks red wine, can also be satisfied by white wine (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147). In these cases, and others like them, Hume explains: "we transfer our experience in past instances to objects which are resembling, but are not exactly the same with those concerning which we have had experience" (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147). In fact, he continues, "In proportion as the resemblance decays, the probability diminishes; but still has some force as long as there remain any traces of the resemblance" (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147).

But there's a difference between these kinds of examples and the Rome example. In the case of pears, peaches and wine, the person at hand *has* had impressions of these things, where these impressions constitute "our past experience in past instances." We can then "transfer" that experience onto our present perceptions. But as already pointed out, Hume has had *no* experience of Rome such that he can transfer that experience of "Rome" onto his imagined idea of Rome. Thus, Hume's account of probability does not apply to the kind of causal reasoning taking place in regard to Rome.[3]

For ease of reference, let's refer to this kind of indirect inference as **indirect causal induction**, which as such, represents a fifth kind of reasoning process at work in Book I of the *Treatise*, i.e. what we may call indirect probable reasoning.[4] However, we should note that Hume's second system of reality is not necessarily comprised of *only* beliefs in things that don't resemble what we have actually experienced. For although Hume never explicitly says as much, it just wouldn't make much sense; complex beliefs derivative of ordinary inductive inferences should surely have a home in this system, as well as the six other kinds of "less vivacious" beliefs mentioned above. For instance, upon seeing John's wet umbrella in the rack, I reflexively think of John being in the building, i.e. as existing, as being real. In turn, I might appeal to the principle, "If I see John's wet umbrella in the rack, I may conclude that John is in the building," and so make the reflective judgment that John is in the building, existing. This would be an instance of an ordinary causation, where I what I imagine to exist (John) resembles impressions that I have actually had of John. But this belief couldn't belong to Hume's *first* system of reality (which only consists of elementary beliefs), and so, it must belong to the second.

5 Resemblance and Contiguity

Recall that resemblance, contiguity and causation are, Hume claims, the three natural associative principles that govern our thought (T 1.1.4.1; SBN 10–11). However, only *causation* may produce ideas that are lively enough to comprise beliefs. In fact, the two systems of reality are specifically introduced to show as much. How does Hume make his case?

He explains: "But tho' I cannot altogether exclude the relations of resemblance and contiguity from operating on the fancy in this manner, 'tis observable that, when, single, their influence is very feeble and uncertain" (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109). In fact, he immediately continues: "As the relation of cause and effect is requisite to

[3] The examples listed above comprise what Falkenstein (1997b) calls analogies (p. 37). They comprise the fourth of four species of association identified in 1.3.12, "Of the Probability of Causes." The first three, are, as Falkenstein puts it (pp. 35–36): "Imperfect Experience," "Contrary Causes," and "Instinctive and Statistically Guided Inferences Concerning Causes." In all three cases, it is rather obvious that the resemblance set q'_{n-1} is *not* missing. And thus, Hume's Rome example does not pertain to these three species of probability.

[4] Recall that in Chap. 2, we saw that the other four kinds of reasoning are: 1. Natural probable reasoning. 2. Philosophical probable reasoning. 3. Transcendental probable reasoning. 4. Demonstrative and intuitive reasoning.

persuade us of any real existence, so is this persuasion requisite to give force to these other relations." (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109) That is: (1) On their *own*, resemblance and contiguity are simply too "feeble and uncertain" to give rise to our respective notions of reality; "observation" indicates as much. (2) However, our belief in reality, which in part, is based on our beliefs in certain casual relationships—namely, our "persuas[ion] of … real existence" (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109) "gives force" to the relations of resemblance and/or contiguity.

(1) is the case, Hume explains, because we simply could not believe that anything exists *without* the aid of the relation of cause and effect. Again, observation indicates as much. Thus, although resemblance and/or contiguity might add a certain vivacity to ideas, and so, be instrumental in our belief in such ideas, this belief would be somewhat weak in comparison to the belief we have in ideas that have been enlivened by a causal relation. As a result, if only in the respect that our belief in ideas prompted by resemblance and/or contiguity is weaker (i.e. produces less vivacious ideas) than that produced by cause and effect, the former belief is what we may understand as *unjustified*, while the latter is *justified* (cf. Loeb 2002). The more vivacious the idea is, the more justified we are in believing it. For as we just saw, more vivacious ideas are more "real," where "real" ideas are either impressions, memories of impressions, or, are related to causal claims that are based on experience and, are supported by general rules. As such, "real" ideas are not "merely the offspring of the imagination" (T 1.3.9.4; SBN 108).

As a result, (2) noted above, is the case. Our belief in cause and effect aids, or "gives force" to the relations of resemblance and contiguity. Yet this is not to say that contiguity and resemblance, when operating alone (i.e. when "single" (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109), do not produce certain ideas that in some respect, we may believe in as existing. However, as just noted, such belief would not be *justified* in the same respect that it would be if it were based on a causal relationship:

> For whereupon the appearance of an impression we not only feign another object, but likewise arbitrarily, and of our mere good-will and pleasure give it a particular relation to the impression, this has but a small effect upon the mind; nor is there any reason, why, upon the return of the same impression, we shou'd be determin'd to place the same object in the same relation to it. (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109)

Although a certain impression, might, *via* the relation of resemblance or contiguity incite us to bring a relevant idea to mind (again, ignoring Hume's use of the word 'object' for now), it is by no means "*determin'd*" (emphasis added) that in these cases we bring such an idea to mind. For instance, although Peter and Mark resemble each other, an impression of Peter *might*, by way of the relation of resemblance, bring an idea of his *other*, younger brother to mind, i.e. Tim. As a result, the mere resemblance that holds between Peter and Mark does not guarantee that thinking of Peter will, in a "determinant" way, bring the idea of Mark to mind in a vivacious way: "There is no manner of necessity for the mind to feign any resembling and contiguous objects; and if it feigns such, there is as little necessity for it always to confine itself to the same, without any difference or variation" (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109). Similarly, because of the relation of contiguity, I may indeed produce an idea of a green jacket when I have an impression of a blue jacket, simply because I always see these jackets hanging together in my

closet. However, an impression of a blue jacket *could* just as easily bring to mind an idea of Jane, who I always see wearing a blue jacket.[5]

In fact, Hume tells us, we are well aware of the "looseness" and thus, the unpredictability with which resemblance and contiguity relate objects, as opposed to the regularity granted by causal relations (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109-10). As a result, we generally do *not* have confidence in the ideas that the mind may produce thanks to the relations of contiguity and resemblance, while we generally *do* have confidence in the ideas that the mind may produce under the auspices of certain causal relations. In fact, Hume explains, we are so aware of the undependability of contiguity and resemblance–where this undependability consists of the inconstant results that they produce–that we construct a "general rule" to ourselves *to never place as much faith in them as we do in cause and effect* (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 110). However, as noted above, this is not say that in some cases we will not do so. But this would be a mistake, constituting what we may understand as an *unjustified* instance of belief.

6 Justification: What We Know So Far

We discuss justification in much more depth in Part IV of this book, particularly, Chap. 12. However, it has been necessary to briefly touch on the notion of justification here, so, to keeps matters as clear as possible, let's summarize what we know so far.

When discussing his conception of "reality," Hume makes it clear that impressions, memories of impressions and natural causal relations are all "real." In particular, they are "real" because they either are impressions, or exactly represent impressions, or are causal relations. In all three cases either we, or some trustworthy source has actually experienced them. It is in this very general respect that they are, according to Hume "justified." Meanwhile, ideas that have been imagined, are not "real" (although they must ultimately, be rooted in impressions; recall Chap. 1). As a result, they do not exactly represent any impression. Thus, they are not, generally speaking, "justified." It is in this respect that on T 1.1.1.9; SBN 5 and T 1.3.2.4; SBN 74–5, Hume respectively mentions the "just" idea of a pineapple and "just reasoning." Note: "We cannot form to ourselves a *just* idea of the taste of a pine-apple, *without having actually tasted it*" (T 1.1.1.9; SBN 5). And: "'Tis impossible to reason justly, without understanding perfectly the idea concerning which we reason; and 'tis impossible perfectly to understand any idea, without tracing it up to its origin, and examining that *primary impression from which it arises*" (T 1.3.2.4; SBN 74–5; emphases added).

[5] Hume presents his own examples here, but I find them rather obscure. They do not pertain to cases where the relations of resemblance and contiguity are taken alone, i.e. are "single," but instead, when they work in conjunction with the relation of cause and effect. For instance, in regard to resemblance, he argues that the idea of a moving body α (the cause) resembles the idea of another moving body β (the effect). As a result, we tend to "bind … the objects in the closest and most intimate manner to each other, so as to make us imagine them to be absolutely inseperable" (T 1.3.9.10; SBN 112). And thus, we mistakenly conclude that the cause necessitates the effect in a demonstrative manner, where we can, it is alleged, derive the effect just upon consideration of the cause (without appealing to experience).

Relatedly, the relations of resemblance and contiguity are too weak to reflect actual patterns of experience. As a result, upon experiencing an impression p, we are not "determin'd" to think of an idea q′ that resembles p. Rather, we might think of the idea r' or s' or t', where all of them resemble p. Similarly for the relation of contiguity. As a result, the ideas that the associative relations of resemblance and contiguity incite are not as vivacious as those produced by the natural relation of cause and effect; they do not reflect the frequent patterns of experience (i.e. the constant conjunction of impressions) that the natural relation of causality does. Thus, these ideas are less "real," and thus, are less justified.

Granted, this account of justification is still very general. But at this point in our analysis, this is what we must work with; we cannot develop a more comprehensive account of justification until we properly explicate Hume's of notion of an "object." Thus, we revisit this topic at length in Part IV of this book.

7 Summary

The central points that have been established in this chapter are as follows:

1. Reality consists of two "systems": The first is based on impressions and memories of impressions (where the latter are ideas; recall Chap. 1). This means that the first system of reality is comprised of what I characterized in Chap. 2 as elementary beliefs.
2. The second system of reality is based on the relation of causality. It includes what we may refer to as *indirect causation*, and produce instances of *indirect causal belief*. We may also understand this process a being representative of a fifth kind of reasoning process at work in Book I of the *Treatise*, i.e. indirect probable reasoning. And although Hume does not explicitly say as much, this system of reality also seems to include cases of ordinary causation.
3. The second system of reality presupposes the first system of reality; viz. as explained in Chap. 2, we could not come to think in terms of any causal relation if we did not have elementary beliefs.
4. Observation shows that when "single" (T 1.3.9.6; SBN 109) contiguity and resemblance are too weak and too indeterminate to produce the vivacious ideas that the relation of causation does. Thus, although we might be duped into believing ideas that are produced by resemblance and contiguity, we are not, it seems, *justified* in doing so; such ideas do not admit of enough vivacity, and so, it seems, they are not "real" enough. However, as we saw in Chap. 2, contiguity and resemblance are required when it comes to thinking in a causal manner; p must be observed to be contiguous with q, and the idea q'_{n+1} that is imagined upon being presented with an impression p must resemble $q'_{1-n.}$
5. Although it is argued in this chapter that certain causal inferences, and certain impressions and ideas are *justified*, we cannot completely explicate Hume's notion of justification until Part IV of this book. For it is not until we fully expose Hume's notion of an object that we can properly understand his notion of justification.

Summary of Part I

In Chaps. 1, 2, and 3, we reviewed some of the basic components of Hume's system, including the distinction between impressions and ideas, and the distinction between the imagination v. the memory. In particular, we saw that impressions cannot be remembered and/or imagined in the respect that remembering or imagining an impression invokes having an impression. But when we remember or imagine an idea, we have an idea in mind. Moreover, when an idea "represents," or "copies" an impression, it does not *replicate* it. When an idea exactly represents an impression it is, indeed, a less vivacious *representation* of the impression, but it lacks "color [nor do we] feel any sensation [with an idea]" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5). Thus, representation is not replication. We also saw that Hume's experimental method is to be taken very seriously—all of the "principles" of the science of human nature are derivative of experience, and so, are not necessarily true. Thus, they may admit of counterexamples if such examples are so "particular and singular" that they are "scarce worth our observing" (T 1.1.1.10; SBN 6). Generally put, this method comprises Hume's naturalistic (empirical), psychological approach to human nature.

We also reviewed three kinds of belief, as well as the natural, associative relation of causality, the philosophical relation of causality, indirect causation, five kinds of reasoning processes, and Hume's two systems of reality. In particular, we saw that elementary belief is "nothing but" (T 1.3.5.7; SBN 86) the vivaciousness that accompanies any impression, or, any idea that exactly represents an impression. Elementary beliefs *enable* us to become conditioned to think in a natural causal manner, where we don't *believe* in the natural relation of causality. Rather it is a conditioned, associative reflex. However, as a *result* of being conditioned to think in a causal manner, we may entertain what I refer to as causally-produced beliefs and indirect beliefs. Causally-produced beliefs consist of *two* parts, where the reflexive ability to think in a causal manner constitutes "*one* part of the definition or opinion of [general] belief" (T 1.3.6.15; SBN 93; emphasis added). The *second* part of causally-produced belief consists in the vivaciousness that accompanies an imagined idea q'_{n+1}, when presented with an impression p. This idea resembles q'_{1-n}, where we have been conditioned to associate p_{1-n} with q_{1-n}. Indirect beliefs consist of imagining an idea q'_{n+1}, where the resemblance set of q'_{1-n} is *missing*. In these cases, we have not been conditioned to associate p_{1-n} with q_{1-n} simply because we have never had an impression of q_{1-n}, nor any impression that resembles q_{1-n}. Rather, we rely on the testimony of others.

Meanwhile, we saw that the philosophical relation of causality is derivative of the natural relation of causality, and, unlike the natural relation of causality, we may *believe* in it. Such belief consists in belief in causal principles, e.g. the principle of uniformity. We classified the natural relation of causality and the philosophical relation of causality as instances of "ordinary causation," since both ultimately depend on our being conditioned to associate perceptions p_{1-n} with q_{1-n}. This is opposed to indirect causation (see above).

In Chap. 3, we saw that Hume's two systems of reality respectively correspond to the distinction between elementary beliefs and causally-produced beliefs. Thus, the first system of reality is comprised of impressions and memories of impressions, where these memories/ideas exactly represent the impressions that caused them. Meanwhile, the second system of reality is based on the relation of causality, and so, is comprised of causal judgments, where some are ordinary, and others are indirect. We also saw that by 'real,' Hume simple seems to mean justified, where we examine why this is the case in much more depth in Part IV of this book.

Part II
Perfect Identity and the Transcendental Imagination

Introduction to Part II

A Brief Review of the Scholarship

I won't be the first to argue that Hume implicitly appealed to a "transcendental" aspect of the imagination in the *Treatise*. In his now somewhat overlooked book, *Hume's Theory of the External World* (1940), H.H. Price argues that Humean objects are a product of a "transcendental imagination." In this respect, Price claims, Hume anticipates Kant (Price 1940, pp. 15–16). Just 1 year later, Kemp Smith published *The Philosophy of David Hume*, where he argues that Hume's work has an important transcendental component. However, unlike Price, Kemp-Smith emphasizes "natural belief," as opposed to a "transcendental imagination" (Kemp-Smith 1941, pp. 462–63). More recently, Jan Wilbanks argues that the imagination does, indeed, play a crucial role in regard to Humean objects (*Hume's Theory of Imagination* (1968)). But to understand why, Wilbanks argues, we must distinguish between a "general" sense of the imagination and a "supposal" sense of the imagination, where the latter appears to be transcendental. And finally, in his book, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, Wayne Waxman argues that Hume thought that objects are indeed imagined (1994). However, this is only possible given the imagined identity of the self; in this respect, the idea of the self seems to be transcendentally conceived of idea.

Numerous other scholars have also touched on the role that the imagination plays in the *Treatise*, but Price, Kemp-Smith, Wilbanks and Waxman present the most extensive accounts of a transcendental imagination. So, although I acknowledge the work of these other scholars, and cite it when appropriate, this introduction focuses on just the four noted above. However, it is not necessary to explicate these four scholar's work in detail. Rather, I highlight just a few general points and distinctions. Doing so will frame my own position regarding Hume's approach to the notion of a transcendental imagination, which I present in Parts II–IV of this book.

Price

According to Price, Hume implicitly relied on two fundamental senses of the imagination: the *transcendental* imagination and the *empirical* imagination (1940, p.16). The empirical imagination allows us to associate empirical data gleaned from past experience. For instance, if we imagine B, we may legitimately ask: what caused us to do so? In such instances, we could reply that experiencing A at that moment caused us to do so. For in the past, whenever we had an impression of A, we also had an impression of B: "With regard to [The empirical imagination] it is right and proper to ask causal questions. What causes me to think of Smith's face when I hear his name mentioned? It is because I have frequently experienced them together in the past and therefore have come to associate them" (1940, p. 16).

But, Price explains, if we imagine some object or event thanks to the *transcendental* imagination, it does not make sense to ask what *caused* us to do so, at least in terms of recalling past experiences of constantly conjoined objects and/or events. This is because experience *presupposes* the transcendental imagination, and so any act of the transcendental imagination cannot be explained *in terms of* experience: "For unless [The transcendental imagination's] activities are presupposed, we cannot be aware of a world of objects at all, whether material objects or selves, and so cannot inquire into the causal processes which go on in them" (1940, p. 16). Thus, according to Hume, Price claims, objects are *imagined* as a result of this unacknowledged transcendental imagination, *not* the empirical imagination:

> Now Hume is in substantial agreement with Kant about the activity of the Transcendental Imagination. It is true that he lays more stress on its supplementative functions, whereas Kant lays more stress on its synthetic ones. *But still, both hold that the phenomenal world, the world of material objects and empirical selves, is in some sense an imaginative construction*. Hume even distinguishes in one place between those 'principles' in the imagination which are 'the foundations of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin' and other principles in it which are 'changeable, weak and irregular.' Here he comes very near to Kant's distinction between two radically different sorts of imagination, transcendental and empirical. (1940, p. 16; emphases added)

According to Price, Hume clearly thought that material objects, including the empirical self, are *imagined* entities. Moreover, there is evidence that Hume had a distinction between the transcendental and empirical imagination in mind when he distinguished between, respectively, an imagination that provides us with certain "foundations of all our thoughts and actions" and one whose principles are not so foundational, but instead, are "changeable, weak and irregular."[1]

However, as noted above, Price argues that objects are *not* imagined *causes*. This must be the case, Price claims, because according to Hume, we have no experience of objects before we imagine them, but every and any cause may only be posited based on experience.[2] Thus, objects cannot be imagined *causes*. In fact, Price claims

[1] Costa (1989) makes a similar distinction between Hume's notion of the "imagination" v. "fancy."

[2] Note that at least Wilson (1989), Flage (1990) and Costa (1989) are opposed to this claim.

that only the "Philosopher," sketched at the end of *Of Skepticism in Regard to the Senses*, would make such a mistake (1940, p. 26). According to Price's reading of Hume, the philosopher assumes that "real" objects cause our various impressions *of* them. Yet in the course of doing so, they mistakenly infer causes (real objects) that have never been experienced from effects (impressions) that *have* been experienced; this is the philosopher's myth of a double existence: "real objects" and the impressions we have *of* them.[3]

Having ruled out the role of causality in regard to objects, Price explains that objects are actually imagined as follows: First, we mistakenly identify two sense impressions which in fact, are not *identical*, but instead, are merely resembling. As a result, these impressions are both numerically distinct and temporally distinct: "For example, we have a view of the sycamore tree; then a gap, while we shut our eyes or go away or look at something else; then we have a second view of the sycamore tree, exactly resembling the first" (1940, p. 38). Yet, Hume *pace* Price continues, this is not enough to yield an idea of a material object, which in this example, would be a "sycamore tree." This is the case because although we might mistakenly conclude that a certain series of resembling impressions are identical, and thus *seemingly* come up with an idea of a continuous object, there are gaps in the series that are left open. This will inevitably occur, Price explains, because:

> we cannot always succeed in overlooking the gaps, strongly as we may be inclined to. If it is a mere blink or turn of the head, perhaps we can. But often the interruption is much longer. And when we reflect we cannot but remember that there *was* an interruption: a period occupied by alien sense-impressions of quite another sort (as when I go away to Cambridge and return to Oxford twenty-four hours later), or it may be by images, as in dreaming. (1940, p. 43)

So the question is: how do we fill in these gaps in our series of impressions such that we can make an uninterrupted (albeit mistaken) identification? Price answers that according to Hume, we use our transcendental imagination to fill these gaps in with ideas of "*unsensed* sensibilia" (Price, p. 44). As a result, according to Price, we may identify Humean objects with impressions, but *only* with the caveat that Hume thought that some of these impressions are necessarily *imagined,* thanks to a pre-Kantian transcendental imagination.

Kemp Smith

Just 1 year after Price published *Hume's Theory of the External World*, Kemp Smith published his still-influential book, *The Philosophy of David Hume*. Consider the following passage where Kemp-Smith outlines the vulgar position regarding objects:

[3] And thus, Price would have accused Flage (1990) and Wilson (1989) of attributing the "philosopher's mistake" to Hume.

> Hume maintains a threefold thesis in which the distinctiveness of his teaching, in contrast to that of all his predecessors, largely consists, and the points of which are as follows: (i) That in the attitude of the ordinary consciousness no distinction is drawn, e.g. in visual perception, between the physical body which acts on the eye, and the object as seen; i.e. that this attitude is so naively realistic that there is no thought of distinguishing between impressions and objects. The two terms and their synonyms are, on this view, freely interchangeable. (1941, p. 114)

According to Hume *pace* Kemp Smith, the vulgar (i.e. "everyday," non-philosophical people) make no distinction between the "thing" sensed and the sensation of it; objects may be *identified* with impressions of sensation. This view, Kemp Smith adds, is rife with naive realism. However, "in view of the data," Hume *pace* Kemp-Smith explains, this identification is overturned:

> (ii) That this realist attitude ordinary consciousness calls for correction in view of data which it itself provides, and which, *if interpreted in terms of its own realist assumptions*, constrains us to recognize that all impressions and ideas are physiologically conditioned, that they are internal and perishing existences, and are not, therefore, the continuing, independently existing objects which, in natural belief, they have been taken to be. (1941, p. 114)

At this point, Hume *pace* Kemp-Smith explains, the philosopher posits the existence of the real, mind independent world as well, but not *via* inference but as a result of what he refers to as "natural belief":

> (iii) That, as just indicated, it is to *ordinary* consciousness, with its natural beliefs, that we owe our awareness of the issues dealt with in the *philosophical* theory of perception, i.e. that only by means of what we still retain of it is the philosophical restatement of it so much as even possible to the mind. The transition from impressions and ideas to real existence cannot be made by any form of inference, but solely in virtue of the beliefs which have determined for the ordinary consciousness the naively realistic character of its outward-looking attitude. (1941, pp. 114–115)

Kemp-Smith explains elsewhere that although such belief is a "fiction," or "illusion," (p. 133) it is not to be confused with the philosopher's "fiction" or "illusion" where real objects are *inferred*, posited as the *causes* of our impressions; a move that the philosopher claims is justified by reason.[4] Rather, Kemp Smith argues, natural belief provides the *basis* for reason. As a result, our natural belief in objects, posited by the imagination, *precedes* reason, and thus could not possibly be justified *by* reason:

> It pleases our reason to allow that our dependent perceptions are interrupted and different; and at the same time it makes itself agreeable to the *imagination*, in attributing continued existence to something else, which we call objects. In what reason allows, no less than in what it asserts, it has still to rely on the natural beliefs; and were it—to make an impossible assumption—to succeed in displacing them it would in so doing destroy itself. (1941, pp. 133–134; emphasis added)

Our "natural belief" propels us to *imagine*, or "feign" the "continued existence [of] … objects." Although Kemp-Smith does not use these words, this activity seems to be similar to what Price would have identified as transcendentally necessary; we could not function without doing so, particularly, we could not *reason* without doing

[4] C.f. Gaskin (1974).

so: "[reason] has still to rely on the natural beliefs [in the external world] and were it … to succeed in displacing them would in so doing destroy itself." Moreover, according to Kemp Smith, Hume is surely not asserting that the natural *belief* in such objects leads to the conclusion that such objects actually *exist*.[5]

Wilbanks

Although his work has been largely overlooked, Wilbanks, like Price and Kemp-Smith, spends a great deal of time explaining the importance of the imagination in Hume's work, dedicating a book to the subject: *Hume's Theory of the Imagination*. According to Wilbanks, although Humean objects are imagined, this process does not turn on Price's distinction between an empirical and a transcendental imagination. Rather, Wilbanks believes that Hume worked with another distinction: (1) A "general conception" of the imagination and (2) A special "supposal" sense of the imagination, which "supposes" objects without simultaneously presenting a corresponding image (namely, an impression) to itself.[6]

To better understand what Wilbanks has in mind, consider his own characterizations of these two functions of the imagination. (1) The general conception: "Inasmuch as Hume never explicitly states his general conception (or definition) of imagination, any view regarding it must be considered as a kind of hypothesis. My hypothesis is the following: imagination in Hume's view, is the faculty of forming, unifying and separating ideas" (1968, p. 72). (2) On the other hand, the "supposal sense" of the imagination may be characterized as follows:

> to suppose the existence of an unknown something, in which the qualities of a thing inhere, is to engage in an act of imagining. And what is noteworthy about such imaginative acts,

[5] Although Kemp Smith does not argue that our belief in objects leads to the conclusion that such objects really do exist (or, alternatively, that they *do not* exist), he does argue that our belief in causality does *not* lead to causal realism: "What [Hume] is saying is that the belief in *causal* connexion i.e. in a connexion which as *necessitated* is more than any mere uniformity, is made possible for us by what is merely a feeling, the feeling of necessitated transition, and that this feeling, *qua* feeling can exist only in the mind … What Hume, therefore, is primarily intending to say is that the connexion and necessity which ground our so-called *inferences* can exist only in us. This does not involve the assertion that objects are incapable of influencing one another independently of mind. Not only does natural belief ordinarily intervene to prevent us from accepting any such conclusion, it also prevails over any sceptically inspired attempt to prove the belief to be itself false" (p. 136).

[6] Wilson (1989) and Costa (1989) present a similar reading of this aspect of the imagination, although in both cases, Wilbanks is not cited. The idea that we may, according to Hume, "suppose" something that does not entail an image (i.e. is not representational) is opposed to at least Garrett (1997). Garrett argues that like Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and Berkeley, Hume thought that the imagination is necessarily representational. By doing so, and not including a "pure," non-representational "intellect" in his system, Hume essentially blocks the rationalist's avenue to metaphysical truth (1997, Chapter 1).

> such acts of supposing, is that no idea (in Hume's sense of the term) of the entity supposed or imagined to exist is possible. Thus, in addition to *conceiving*, which is Hume's frequently used term for the activity of the imagination in forming ideas of things, he recognizes a *supposing* activity of this faculty. (1968, p. 81)

The supposal aspect of the imagination allows us to posit the existence of things that we do *not* necessarily have to have a corresponding idea or impression of. As a result, we may posit the existence of objects that we have no previous experience of, i.e. experience presupposes such "positing":

> Hume devotes quite a few pages of Treatise I to providing explanations of our imagining (i.e. supposing) albeit falsely, that we have ideas (i.e. images) of certain "things:" for instance, "of a time and duration, without any change or succession" and "of a vacuum, or space where there is nothing visible or tangible." And, though in so doing he appeals to his principles of the association of ideas—claiming that "from these 3 relations we are apt to confound our ideas"—it is still the case that the false supposition itself (i.e. the object of the supposition) has no accompanying (i.e. corresponding) image. Likewise, there is no accompanying or corresponding image present to the mind when it supposes (or images) "an unknown something, or original substance and matter," as a principle of union or cohesion among the various qualities which comprise a material object. (1968, p. 82)

According to Hume, we *can* suppose a vacuum and "time and duration without change or succession" without conceiving of them, much less experiencing them. Thus, according to Wilbanks, Price is wrong to claim that Hume's transcendental imagination involves *any* kind of "imaging."[7] Rather, "there is no accompanying or corresponding image present to the mind when it supposes (or imagines) 'an unknown something, or original substance and matter' as a principle of union or cohesion among the various qualities which comprise a material object" (1968, p. 82).[8]

Waxman

More recently, Waxman argues that Hume thought that material objects are imagined, but this is *only* possible given the imagined identity of the mind. Otherwise, Waxman argues, what would we distinguish objects *from*? Note:

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[7] Note: "The bearing this has on the question concerning recognition, by Price, of a supposal sense of "imagination" in Hume is a follows. In talking about this imaginative supplementation (which is supposedly involved in our consciousness of material objects), Price makes it clear that he believes that this sort of imaginative activity—he usually refers to it as imaginative postulation—is not to be identified with imagining or picturing (i.e. forming "Humean" ideas). Certainly, this much it has in common with what I consider to be Hume's supposal sense. The difference is this: whereas Price is willing to admit (and indeed claims) that imaginative postulation does involve imaging of some sort, I deny that Hume's supposal sense of "imagining" involves it at all. Furthermore, I should add that I am not convinced that Hume himself recognized the existence of imaginative postulation—as it is described by Price" (pp. 82–84).

[8] To some degree, this "supposal" sense of the imagination anticipates the recent skeptical realist reading of Hume, which relies heavily on "supposing" (see, for instance, Strawson (2007) and Wright (2007); see Chap. 12 of this book for more detail on skeptical realism).

> the identity [of a body] is a total fiction from ground up. First, the imagination is only able to feign the existence of body by conceiving certain of its impressions *as external to, and independent of*, a mind, and this it can do only because the mind is likewise its own invention (a product of "uniting principles in the ideal world … the very essence [of which] consists in their producing an easy transition of ideas." (T 260) (1994, p. 251; emphasis added)

In particular, the distinctness that we attribute to particulars may only come about because:

> to conceive of (some of) these same perceptions as continued, distinct existents, the mind must be conceived differently; in particular, it must be fictitiously assumed to have an identity that renders it indifferent to the comings and goings of perceptions, and so to be something *over and above* the aggregate (bundle) of individual perceptions and their relations. This "equivocation" makes the distinctness of bodies, and the continued existence that goes with it, a sham. (1994, p. 251)

Thus, according to Hume, our imagined conception of self must be transcendental; it is presupposed by ordinary experience, particularly, our experience of a world inhabited by "objects."

Summary

Throughout the remainder of this book, I note where I agree and disagree with Price, Kemp Smith, Wilbanks and Waxman. As we will see, I reject both Price's "gap theory" and the idea that we cannot imagine an unsensed cause. But like Wilbanks, I claim that according to Hume, we can imagine an object that we have not sensed, particularly, we can imagine *properties* that are not based on impressions. However, unlike Wilbanks, I *do* think that an image is involved in this process, namely a member of what Garrett refers to as a "revival set" (Garrett 1997, p. 53); i.e. the set of similar perceptions that we appeal to when coming up with the idea of an abstract object). In regard to Kemp-Smith's reading, I agree that we should *not* confuse the philosopher's imagined idea of an object with our "natural," i.e. our transcendental notion of an object. However, as already explained in Chap. 2, I do not, unlike Kemp Smith, think that according to Hume, we are equipped with a natural (transcendental) belief in *ordinary* causation. Moreover, we do not *believe* in the natural relation of causation; we are merely conditioned to think in terms of it (while we *do* believe in philosophical relations of causality; recall Chap. 2). However, as we will see in the next three chapters, in order to imagine objects, we do, indeed, need to appeal to *transcendental* causation, which—as we will see in more detail—is not the same as ordinary causation (where Hume never makes clear if we *believe* in transcendental causal relations). Finally, I do, to some degree, agree with Waxman's claim that Hume thought that we must (transcendentally) imagine the idea of the self in order to imagine an idea of any other object. But we do not see why this is the case until we get to Chap. 10, which is found in Part III of this book.

Transcendentalism and Naturalism: A Happy Marriage?

Some might be wary of an account that characterizes Hume as a naturalist who appeals to transcendental notions, however implicitly. For, to some, transcendental inquiry must occur independently of the natural sciences; we do not do empirical research to come up with conditions of possibility for thought. Rather, transcendental inquiry is, somehow, "pure" in the respect that it operates independently of the natural sciences. However, I do not think that this is necessarily the case. Rather, generally speaking, these two modes of inquiry may be very compatible, particularly if we think of "transcendental" as merely being a way to think of those psychological tendencies that most are born with; they are literally conditions of possibility for normal human thought. Consider those scientists who hypothesize "instincts," or "natural propensities," or "hardwired" abilities to explain both human and non-human behavior. For instance, recent empirical studies completed at Yale suggest that infants are born with certain moral "instincts," or propensities (Wynn (2008)). In short: our behavior *presupposes* such psychological tendencies. Similarly, after conducting a number of behavioral tests, scientists have hypothesized that the behavior of at least some dogs are best explained if we assume that they are, to some degree, "rational" (Kaminski et al. 2004). In short, the claim is: some dogs' behavior *presupposes* rationality. Even Quine—a self avowed naturalistic philosopher—posited the existence of certain "instincts" or "pre-established harmonies" to explain why human beings function the way that they do; human behavior *presupposes* such pre-established psychological harmonies (1995, pp.19–21, 1996, pp. 160–161).

In its essence, transcendental reasoning is nothing other than "backwards reasoning." In order for, say, X to be the case, we conclude that Z must be the case. It is in this very general sense that I use the term "transcendental" in this book, which is in keeping with at least Price's application of the term to Hume's philosophy. To some degree, this certainly anticipates the Kantian transcendental turn, but it is not my intention to show how or why Hume's philosophy does or does not square with Kant's project here; that would take us far beyond the scope of this book.

Structural Overview of Part II

In Chap. 4, I explain what I call "proto-objects." Proto-objects are ideas that do not represent both of the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability (nor continuity or distinctness), and so do not admit of what Hume refers to as "perfect identity." In Chaps. 5, 6, and 7, I present three separate instances where Hume discusses perfect identity. In each case, we see that (a) proto-objects are the necessary conceptual building blocks for an idea of an object that we imagine to admit of perfect identity and (b) we must employ a transcendental imagination and transcendental probable (i.e. causal) reasoning to imagine an idea of perfect identity.

Chapter 4
Proto-Objects

1 Introduction

With the general concepts of impressions, ideas, cause and effect, belief and reality in mind, we may now turn to Hume's notion of an object.[1] In this chapter, we focus on a traditionally overlooked sense in which he uses the word 'object'—"objects" that are either impressions or are *ideas* that "exactly represent" impressions. I show that such objects could not be what Hume has in mind by ideas of objects that admit of a "perfect identity." This is the case because impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions (simple or complex) do *not* represent both of the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability, while ideas of objects that we imagine to admit of perfect identity *do*. In fact, as we will see in the following chapters, impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions (simple or complex) must be understood as the necessary psychological building blocks *for* ideas of objects with a perfect identity. Accordingly, we may think of, and hereafter refer to, those impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions as "proto-objects."

2 A Brief Review of the Different Meanings of a Humean Object

As noted in the introduction to this book, there are four general ways in which a Humean "object" has been interpreted (c.f. Grene 1994): (1) The phenomenonalist reading, where objects *are* impressions (e.g. Grene 1994; Bennett 1971; Steinberg 1981; Dicker 2007). For instance, according to this reading, the visual impression of red *is* an "object," just as the tactile impression of a piece of cold metal *is* an object.

[1] At times, Hume uses the words 'body' and 'object' interchangeably. For the most part, however, he uses the word 'object' and thus, so do I.

S. Rocknak, *Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects*,
The New Synthese Historical Library 71, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-2187-6_4,

Sometimes, this is referred to as the "vulgar" reading, largely thanks to 1.4.2 of the *Treatise*, which is explained at length in Chaps. 8 and 9. (2) The intentional reading, where objects are the objects of thought (e.g. Salmon 1983). For instance, according to this reading, if I think *of* a sailboat, this sailboat would be an "object." (3) The realist reading, where objects are mind-independent things (e.g. Wilson 1989; Flage 1990; Costa 1989; Strawson 2007; Wright 2007; Kail 2007a, b). For instance, in this case, an "object" would be the Empire State Building, which, according to the realist, exists independently of my thought, and so, it does not vary, or change as a result of how I think of it, and it continues to exist even when I do not think of it. (4) The imagined, but non-causal reading, where objects, to varying degrees (depending on the scholar at hand) are imagined, but are not imagined as causes (e.g. Price 1940; Kemp Smith 1941; Wilbanks 1968; Waxman 1994). For instance, I might imagine an idea of a chair, but that imagined idea is not thought to *cause* my sense impressions of it. Or, *pace* Price, I might imagine a "gap" in my sensations of a chair, but this imagined gap-filler is not thought to cause any other sense impressions.

In this book, I present a fifth option: Humean objects that admit of perfect identity are imagined *causes*; we imagine that they cause our impressions. We do not address this interpretation in this chapter, but we do run across passages where Hume uses the word 'object' in an a phenomenonalist sense, an intentional sense, and in a realist sense. However, we see that although Hume does have occasion to use the word 'object' (or occasionally, 'body') in these respects, this usage does not reflect his more comprehensive understanding of objects, which is unveiled as we proceed deeper into this book.

3 Six Instances Where 'Object' Means Simple Idea

In this section, I focus on those passages where Hume clearly indicates that at least *some* objects/ideas exactly represent simple impressions. Following, we see that the fundamental restrictions that hold of any objects/ideas that exactly represent simple impressions also applies to those objects/ideas that exactly represent *complex* impressions.

To begin, first recall the distinction that Hume makes between the imagination and the memory in 1.1.3, "Of the ideas of memory and imagination." Hume makes this distinction in terms of a discussion of the effects these faculties have on simple ideas. According to the principle of the imagination, the imagination may combine and separate *simple* ideas at will, while according to the principle of memory, the memory must retain the original order in which simple impressions were initially apprehended: "all *simple* ideas may be separated by the imagination, and may be united again in what form it pleases" (T 1.1.4.1; SBN 10; emphasis added). And: "The chief exercise of the memory is not to preserve the *simple* ideas, but their order and position" (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9; emphasis added).

However, this is not to say that Hume does not think that the imagination could not dissect and recombine *complex* ideas at will, nor that the memory could not retain the order and position of *complex* ideas: "We find by experience that when

any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea; and this it may do after two ways … The faculty by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called MEMORY, and the other is the IMAGINATION" (T 1.1.3.1; SBN 8–9; emphasis added). The memory and the imagination may manipulate *any* idea, since *any* impression, complex or simple, must reappear in the mind as an idea, respectively complex or simple. Consequently, we may conclude that these faculties apply to *both* simple and complex ideas. As a result, we need to realize that when Hume discusses the faculties of the imagination and memory in terms of simple ideas, he is merely *emphasizing* these faculties' influence on simple ideas rather than on complex ideas.

With this remark about the scope of the imagination and memory in mind, note the following passage where Hume explicitly uses the word 'object': "'Tis evident at first sight, that the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination, and the former paints its *objects* in more distinct colours, than any which are employ'd by the latter" (T 1.1.3.1; SBN 9; emphasis added). Clearly, an object is an *idea* here; these are what are being "painted" by the memory and "employ'd" by the imagination. Otherwise, one would have to say that the memory is (1) "Painting" impressions, or (2) "Painting" real, mind-independent objects. Yet it could not be (1) because we do not remember actual impressions, but instead, ideas *of* impressions (recall Chap. 1). Nor could it be (2) because Hume never indicates that the memory could, somehow, affect, or "paint" a mind-independent world. Rather, as noted above, "when any impression has been present with the mind, it makes its appearance there as an *idea* [by way of the memory or the imagination]" (T 1.1.3.1; SBN 8; emphasis added). So, Hume must mean "idea" when he uses the word 'object' in this passage.

Having established that Hume means "idea" when he uses the word 'object' in the passage cited above, we need to ask: In this case, and perhaps in others like it, are such objects *simple* ideas, and as a result, may we say that they exactly represent simple impressions? Given what we have seen above, it is clear that we can answer with a qualified "yes;" such objects could be *either* simple ideas or complex ideas. For as noted, the faculty of the memory may apply to *simple* ideas, as well as to complex ideas. And nowhere does Hume indicate that he is *excluding* simple ideas in the passage noted above. As a result, we have established the first instance of the word 'object' that means either a complex idea, or a simple idea. Further, in those cases where such an object is a simple idea, we know, given the principle of exact representation (the Copy Principle), that it must exactly represent a simple impression (recall Chap. 1).

But this is not the only respect in which Hume uses 'object' in this Section (1.1.3). Rather, in what may be taken as *prima facie* evidence for what has been traditionally referred to as the "phenomenological" reading (Haymond 1964; Grene 1994), he also uses 'object' to mean impression: "'Tis evident, that the memory preserves the original form, in which its *objects* were presented, and that where-ever we depart from it in recollecting anything, it proceeds from some defect or imperfection in that faculty" (T 1.1.3.3; SBN 9; emphasis added). Given what we have seen in Part I of this book, Hume means that the memory preserves the original form in which *impressions* were presented to the mind, for nothing aside from impressions are initially presented to the mind. So, such objects may not be ideas, since ideas are not *initially* presented to the mind, but rather, are *copies* of impressions that *re*appear to the mind.

Now consider a passage taken from the immediately proceeding Section, 1.1.4, "Of the connexion or association of ideas." Here, Hume once again uses the word 'object' to mean impression, but less than a sentence away, he uses it to mean either a complex or simple *idea* caused by a simple impression:

> 'Tis likewise evident, that as the senses, in changing their *objects*, are necessitated to change them regularly, and take them as they lie *contiguous* to each other, the imagination must by long custom acquire the same method of thinking, and run along the parts of space and time in conceiving its *objects*. (T 1.1.4.2; SBN 11; emphases added)

In the first sentence of this passage, Hume points out that our senses experience different objects, where, in keeping with the phenomenological reading of Hume, 'objects' must mean impressions, given that we do not see, taste, hear, smell or touch *ideas.* Hume's further point is that such impressions are contiguous to each other (for example, two separate visual impressions might be contiguous). Similarly, he proceeds to remark in the second sentence that the "objects" of the imagination must lie contiguous to each other as well. However, in this latter case, Hume must be talking about objects as *ideas*, not impressions. This is the case because as explained in Chap. 1, we do not imagine impressions, but instead, ideas. Further, as noted above, such ideas—those ideas manipulated by the imagination—are often simple, and so, in these instances, exactly represent simple impressions. This then, is the second instance in Book I where 'object' can be taken to mean "simple idea."

Hume's next employment of this particular sense of 'object' occurs almost immediately after the passage cited above:

> That we may understand the full extent of these relations [of resemblance, contiguity and cause and effect], we must consider that two *objects* are connected together in the imagination, not only when one is immediately resembling, contiguous to, or the cause of the other, but also when there is interposed betwixt them a third *object*, which bears to both of them any of these relations. (T 1.1.4.3; SBN 11; emphases added)

Here, Hume is once again discussing the things that the imagination may apply itself to. As noted earlier, these "things" are ideas, which may be simple or complex. However, Hume concludes that *all* the "objects" that are related by resemblance, contiguity and cause and effect are in fact, *simple* ideas: "These [three relations] are therefore the principles of union or cohesion among our *simple* ideas, and in the imagination supply the place of that inseparable connexion, by which they are united in memory" (T 1.1.4.6; SBN 12; emphasis added). Yet this does *not* mean that Hume excludes these three relations from operating on *complex* ideas. Rather, in his effort to explain the psychological foundations of thought in 1.1.4, he merely begins by focusing on their application to simple ideas. This then, is the third instance where 'object' can mean simple idea (as well as a complex idea).

The next instance where 'object' can mean simple idea occurs in 1.1.7, "Of abstract ideas." Although Hume uses the word 'object' at least ten times here, we will focus only on a passage where 'object' is intended to mean "simple idea." To properly illuminate what is going on in this passage, first note that in the course of arguing that an abstract object can never be general, Hume writes: "'tis confest, that no *object* can appear to the senses; or in other words, that no impression can become present to the mind without being determin'd in its degrees of both quantity and quality"

(T 1.1.7.4; SBN 19; emphasis added). Here, Hume is once again using 'object' to mean impression; i.e. he is using it in the phenomenological sense. For these objects, "or in other words," impressions, are what "appear to the senses." These objects are what "become present to the mind." Moreover, Hume asserts here that such impression-objects are "determin'd in … degrees of both quantity and quality." For instance, as explained in Chap. 1, the impression we may have of, say, a line, represents[2] a certain quantity (e.g. is a mile long) and represents certain quality (e.g. is straight).

With this in mind, observe that Hume writes in the next paragraph:

> Now since all ideas are deriv'd from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them, whatever is true of the one must be acknolwedg'd concerning the other. Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. The foregoing conclusion is not founded on any particular degree of vivacity. It cannot therefore be affected by any variation in that particular. An idea is a weaker impression; and as a strong impression must necessarily have a determinate quantity and quality, the case must be the same with its copy or representative. (T 1.1.7.5; SBN 19)

As explained in Chap. 1, ideas that exactly represent impressions may differ with impressions *only* in terms of "strength and vivacity." Consequently, all the properties that appear to hold of impressions must also hold of any idea that exactly represents an impression—*at least in terms of being accurately represented*. For recall, as explained in Chap. 1, Sect. 7, that representation is not *replication*. As a result, if my impression of say, a line, represents a certain quality and quantity, my idea of that line must exactly *represent* that quantity and quality, but the idea is not literally straight and one mile long. With this in mind, note the following passage, which immediately follows the passage cited above:

> 'Tis a principle generally receiv'd in philosophy, that everything in nature is individual, and 'tis utterly absurd to suppose a triangle really existent, which has no precise proportion of sides and angles. If this therefore be absurd *in fact and reality*, it must also be absurd *in idea*; since nothing of which we can form a clear and distinct idea is absurd and impossible. But to form the idea of an *object*, and to form an idea is simply the same thing; the reference of the idea to an *object* being an extraneous denomination, of which itself bears no mark or character. Now as 'tis impossible to form an idea of an *object*, that is possest of quantity and quality and yet it is possest of no precise degree of either, it follows that there is an equal impossibility of forming an idea, that is not limited and confin'd in both these particulars. (T 1.1.7.6; SBN 19–20; last three emphases added)

Hume's reasoning here may be characterized as follows: (1) Nothing general exists in nature. As a result, we have no impressions of say, a "general triangle." (2) But we do have an *idea* of a triangle with "precise proportion of sides and angles." It would be absurd to say otherwise. (3) As a result, if we can form an idea of it, it must exist (at least as an *idea*, i.e. "*de dicto*")[3]; it would be absurd to say otherwise. (4) But our *idea* of an object as being say, "Ξ," is always an idea. In other words, just

[2] Recall that an impression does not admit of mind-independent qualities, e.g. an impression of a mile-long line is not *literally* a mile long. Rather, somehow, it represents the quality of being a mile long (see Chap. 1, Sect. 7).

[3] To keep matters as clear as possible, realize that by "*de dicto*," I simply mean, exists as an *idea*, while by "*de re*" I mean exists as a *mind-independent thing*.

because we conceive of an object as being some actual mind-independent thing (and thus, allege that it exists "*de re*"), it is, nevertheless, just an idea (it merely exists "*de dicto*"): "to form the idea of an *object*, and to form an idea is simply the same thing." (5) As a result, any *idea* we form that has "quantity and quality" must possess a representation of a "precise degree" of such quantity and quality. This is the case because forming an *idea* with a representation of quality and quantity is the same as forming an *idea of* an *object* with a representation of quality and quantity.

As a result, we have located yet another instance where an "object" must be understood as an idea. Moreover, Hume seems to be identifying *all* ideas with objects here and thus, we have yet another (our fourth) instance where 'object' could mean simple idea.

The next clear instance where 'object' means simple idea occurs some 50 pages later in 1.2.6, *Of the idea of existence, and of external existence*. Here, Hume writes:

> There is no impression of any kind of which we have any consciousness or memory, that is not conceiv'd as existent; and 'tis evident, that from this consciousness the most perfect idea and assurance of *being* is deriv'd. From hence we may form a dilemma, the most clear and conclusive that can be imagin'd *viz*, that since we never remember any idea or impression without attributing existence to it, the idea of existence must either be deriv'd from a distinct impression, conjoin'd with every perception or *object* of our thought, or must be the very same with the idea of the perception or *object*. (T 1.2.6.2; SBN 66; emphases added)

The puzzle that Hume presents in this passage is as follows: (1) Impressions are conceived of as being existent. (2) Our idea of *being*, in addition to our confidence *in* being is derived from the fact that we take all our impressions to be existent. (3) But this gives rise to a certain dilemma: We do not *attribute* or add existence to impressions. So, Hume conjectures, (a) There must be some separate impression "conjoined with every perception or object of our thought," where in this case, 'object' is used in what has been referred to by scholars as the "intentional sense," (c.f. Grene 1994; Salmon 1983). That is, an object is whatever we think *about*, which could be an impression or an idea. Or, (b) Existence = the "idea of the perception or object" at hand, where in this case, 'object' appears to mean idea, and 'perception' appears to mean impression. In this second case, existence is not some special impression that is conjoined with a given impression or idea (object). Rather, it is an idea *of* a given impression or idea (object). To decide which is correct, (a) or (b), Hume immediately continues:

> As this dilemma is an evident consequence of the principle, that every idea arises from a similar impression, so our decision betwixt the propositions of the dilemma is no more doubtful. So far from there being any distinct impression, attending every impression and every idea, that I do not think there are any two distinct impressions, which are inseparably conjoin'd. Tho' certain sensations may at one time be united, we quickly find they admit of a separation and may be presented apart. And thus, tho' every impression and idea we remember be consider'd as existent, the idea of existence is not deriv'd from any particular impression. (T 1.2.6.3; SBN 66)

Here, Hume eliminates possibility (a), i.e., the notion that existence comes about from a special "existence impression" that accompanies every (other) impression and/or idea. He is confident that this is the case, because no two impressions are "inseparably conjoin'd." As a result, it is impossible that there is an "existence" impression that necessarily accompanies every other impression. Consequently,

Hume may conclude that the idea of existence does *not* originate in impressions of "existence." Instead, he writes:

> The idea of existence, then, is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent. To reflect on anything simply, and to reflect on it as existent, are nothing different from each other. That idea, when conjoin'd with the idea of any *object*, makes no addition to it. *Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent*. Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form. (T 1.2.6.4; SBN 66–7; emphases added)

So, any idea that we conceive of must, simultaneously, be thought of as existing. To conceive of is to ontologically commit to—at least in terms of *de dicto* existence.

Moreover, to return to our more immediate concerns, we may conclude that the word 'object' cited in the second sentence cited immediately above may be taken to mean an idea, which could be either simple or complex. For this "object" is "what we conceive to be existent," which could be "any idea we please to form." As a result, "any" such idea could be either simple or complex. So, we may count this as yet another instance where the word 'object' ranges over *both* simple and complex ideas. This is the fifth instance where 'object' could mean simple idea.

Hume continues shortly thereafter to say that: "no object can be presented resembling some object with respect to its existence and different from others in the same particular; since every object that is presented, must necessarily be existent" (T 1.2.6.5; SBN 67). Here we see another instantiation of the idea that *all* "objects" exist—at least in terms of being ideas, i.e. *de dicto*. Thus, no "object" may be differentiated in terms of existence or non-existence. And, in light of our current task, we need to note that once again 'object' appears to mean an idea, if only because in the passage noted above, Hume's principle of existence specifically applies to ideas, rather than impressions. As a result, when he refers to an "object" that is "necessarily … existent," he must mean any *idea*. Moreover, for the same reasons given in the paragraph above, this idea could be either simple or complex, giving us yet another instance (the sixth) where 'object' could mean simple idea.

4 Proto-Objects Do Not Admit of a Perfect Identity

4.1 A Preliminary Glance at "Perfect Identity"

Now that it has been established that Hume intermittently uses the word 'object' to range over both complex *and* simple ideas (in at least six separate instances in Book I), it must be shown why such objects *qua* simple ideas could *not* be what Hume has in mind when he refers to ideas of objects that have a *perfect identity*, i.e. ideas of objects that we imagine to represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254).[4]

[4] "Perfect identity" is a term that has been largely overlooked in Hume scholarship. Identity *simpliciter*, has been discussed at length, as well as personal identity (see for instance, Kemp Smith 1941; Stroud 1977; Pears 1990; Fogelin 1993; Baxter 1998; Roth 2000; Winkler 2007; Ainslie 2001). But there has been no careful discussion of *perfect* identity.

Hume introduces perfect identity on T 1.4.2.24; SBN 199, which culminates in the statement on T 1.4.2.30; SBN 201 that the two essential properties of identity are invariability and uninterruptedness (Hume repeats this claim on T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253–4). We know then, that the two requisite properties of perfect identity are invariability and uninterruptedness. Moreover, *ideas* admit of perfect identity, not impressions, and not mind-independent objects; "Here then is an *idea*, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it: And this *idea* we call that of identity" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201; emphases added). This remark is consistent with what Hume has to say on T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253–4, where he writes: "we have a distinct *idea* of an object, that remains invariable and uninterrupted thro' a suppos'd variation of time; and this *idea* we call that of identity or sameness." Moreover, Hume tells us in 1.4.2, that the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness are *imagined* (T 1.4.2.29-30; SBN 200–1). As a result, they could not be impressions—we do not imagine sense impressions (recall Chap. 1). Nor could they be mind-independent properties since, by definition, such things are not imagined. Thus, uninterruptedness and invariability must be ideas, and so, squaring with Hume's explicit remarks to this effect, perfect identity must be an idea.[5]

4.2 Proto Objects and Continuity and Distinctness

For ease of reference, let's start referring to impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions (complex or simple), as "proto objects." To see why it cannot be the case that proto-objects represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness, we need to take a brief look at 1.4.2, "Of skepticism with regard to the senses."[6] We begin our discussion with Hume's own words: "We may well ask, *What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body?* **but 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or not?*** That is a point, which we may take for granted in all our reasonings" (T 1.4.2.1; SBN 187; boldness added). Here, Hume is making it clear that the following account will not be *metaphysical.* For in light of the immediately preceding section ("Of skepticism with regard to reason") *Hume chooses to simply bypass the question of whether there actually are "bodies," or in other words,*

[5] One might argue that nevertheless, Hume thought that there *are* invariable and uninterrupted objects—it's just that we cannot apprehend them through our senses or reason. Generally speaking, this is what has recently been called the skeptical realist reading of Hume, which pertains to the mind-independent existence of objects and causality (see Read and Richman 2007). But whether or not Hume was a skeptical realist is much too large a project to take on in this Chapter. Either way, we may conclude that Hume thinks that perfect identity is an *idea*, which may or may not refer to mind-independent invariable and uninterrupted objects. For more on skeptical realism, see Chap. 12 of this book.

[6] I say 'brief' because 1.4.2 is completely explicated in Chaps. 6, 7, 8, and 9. However, for the purpose of our discussion of proto-objects, we need only take a small portion of it into account here.

"objects."[7] Instead, he takes it for granted that normally functioning human beings *do* believe in such things; the question is: *Why?*

To begin his fairly lengthy answer, Hume immediately continues:

> The subject, then, of our present enquiry is concerning the *causes* which induce us to believe in the existence of body: And my reasonings on this head I shall begin with a distinction, which at first sight may seem superfluous, but which will contribute very much to the perfect understanding of what follows. We ought to examine apart those two questions, which are commonly confounded together, *viz*, why we *attribute* a CONTINU'D existence to objects, even when they are not present to the senses; and why we *suppose* them to have an existence *distinct* from the mind and perception. Under this last head I comprehend their situation as well as relations, their *external* position as well as the *independence* of their existence and operation. (T 1.4.2.2; SBN 187–8; emphases added)

Here, Hume tells us that he would like to preface his discussion by making a general distinction between two questions concerning why we "believe in the existence of body." They are: (1) Why we *believe* that certain objects continue to exist even when we are not receiving impressions of them—for instance, when I shut the door of my refrigerator, but nevertheless believe that the orange within it *continues* to exist—and (2) Why we commonly *believe* that certain objects exist external to and independent of "the mind and perception," where both externality and independence fall under the heading of "distinctness." Accordingly, question (2) may be rephrased as follows: Why aren't we typically idealists in the respect that an idealist believes that the existence of objects is *dependent* on the mind? For instance, why is it that I believe that my chair exists independently of my seeing it, touching, tasting it, smelling it and/or feeling it? How and why does it exist *distinct* from my perception of it?[8]

We must emphasize the fact that in both the case of continuity and distinctness (and thus independence and externality), we "*attribute*" and "*suppose*" (i.e. *imagine*) these properties. As such, these properties could not, by definition, be perception-independent; they are *perceived* properties. Thus, the question is: How and why could we perceive properties that we believe are perception-independent? How could I believe that an object has the property of being *distinct* from my perception of it, if this property is, in fact, an imagined perception? Has Hume written himself into a paradoxical position? No. I may easily imagine that an object is X, without X actually being the case. For instance, I may imagine time travel in the afterlife. To do so, I do not need to have an idea of what time travel really is (or is not), nor what the afterlife really is (or is not). Similarly, I may imagine (i.e. perceive) that an object is perception-independent while having no idea what perception-independence is really like. But, the reader might ask, according to Hume, wouldn't our imagined idea of perception-independence have to be rooted in *some* kind of impression of

[7] See Chap. 12 where we discuss this remark in more detail.

[8] We must note that here, Hume is presenting what I take to be his own account of how we typically conceive of objects—as opposed to paraphrasing a vulgar and/or philosophical account. We may understand that this is the case simply because Hume makes no mention of either of these positions here, where his first mention of the "vulgar" does not occur until T 1.4.2.31; SBN 201–2, where Hume introduces part 2 of his four-part "system." See Chaps. 6, 7, 8, and 9 for more detail.

perception-independence, i.e. an impression of a mind-independent object? For as we saw in Chap. 1, the imagination may combine and recombine ideas, but ultimately, those ideas must be based on impressions. Similarly, although we do not know what time travel or what the after life is really like, or if it *is* at all, according to Hume we imagine these complex ideas by compiling ideas that are ultimately based on impressions. Surely this must be the same for the imagined properties of continuity and distinctness?

But Hume does *not* think that this is the case—as we will see in the remainder of this chapter. The imagined properties of continuity and distinctness (independence and externality) are *not* based on any impression, on any experience, however remotely.[9] Rather, in the remainder of this book, we see that our much of our experience *presupposes* our ability to imagine such properties, and so, in this respect, Hume is employing a *transcendental* imagination (c.f. Price 1940; Kemp Smith 1941; Wilbanks 1968; Waxman 1994; recall the Introduction to Part II of this book). Meanwhile, we must continue on in our analysis of 1.4.2, where see why, in detail, Hume thinks we do not, and *cannot* have impressions of continuity and/or distinctness.

Hume immediately continues after the passage cited above as follows, which we might do well to preface with a "However,"

> These two questions concerning the continu'd and distinct existence of body are intimately connected together. For if the objects of our senses continue to exist, even when they are not perceiv'd, their existence is of course independent of and distinct from the perception; and *vice versa*, if their existence be independent of the perception and distinct from it, they must continue to exist, even tho' they be not perceiv'd. But tho' the decision of the one question decides the other; yet that we may the more easily discover the principles of human nature, from whence the decision arises, we shall carry along with us this distinction, and shall consider, whether it be the *senses*, *reason*, or the *imagination*, that produces the opinion of a *continu'd* or of a *distinct* existence. These are the only questions, that are intelligible on the present subject. For as to the notion of external existence, when taken for something specifically different from our perceptions, we have already shewn its absurdity. (T 1.4.2.2; SBN 188)[10]

[9] However, a bit further on in 1.4.2, Hume does seem to suggest that the vulgar do experience a certain *kind* of impression of uninterruptedness (continuity) (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). However, he ultimately retracts this claim, where this retraction squares with Hume's announcement on T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283 that: "'Tis impossible for the mind to fix itself steadily on upon one idea for any considerable time; nor can it by its utmost efforts ever arrive at such a constancy" (see Chaps. 7 and 8 for more detail).

[10] Here Hume makes a direct reference to T 1.2.6, "Of the idea of existence, and external existence," which, recall, we discussed in some detail in Sect. 2 of this Chapter. In these passages, Hume argued that existence is not *added* to an idea, either in the form of another idea or an impression. Rather, as noted, to conceive of an idea is to simultaneously conceive of it as existent (*de dicto*); recall: "The idea of existence, then, is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent, are nothing different from each other. That idea, when conjoin'd with the idea of any object, makes no addition to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent. Any idea we please to form is the idea of being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form" (T 1.2.6.4; SBN 66–7). With this in mind, realize however, that the question Hume is attempting to answer in 1.4.2, "Of skepticism with regard to the senses," is: *Why* do we typically believe in the existence of an object? He is not asking: Do objects exist (*de re*)? For "'tis in vain to ask whether there be body or not" (T 1.4.2.1; SBN 187).

Hume acknowledges that the two categories of inquiry that he has set up above, i.e. [A] The continuation of an object's existence and [B] The distinctness of objects, are not mutually exclusive. Rather, he explains, if we believe that one belongs to an object, then we should believe that the other property also belongs to the object and *vice versa*. For instance, an orange that I believe to *continually* exist when I am not having impressions of it is an orange that I also believe is *distinct* from my perceptions and *vice versa*.[11] However, regardless of Hume's acknowledged interdependence of these properties, he thinks it would be easier to carry out his analysis by parsing them into two separate categories. He also lets us know in the passage cited above that he will approach the phenomenon of our belief in a continued and distinct existence by answering three questions: (1) Do our *senses* produce our belief in continuity and distinctness, i.e. do we have *impressions* of these properties? (2) Does our *reason* produce our belief in continuity and distinctness or (3) Does our *imagination* produce our belief in continuity and distinctness?

So, to best understand Hume's thought, we need to carefully work our way through the passages of 1.4.2 that answer these three questions. However, for our present task—to discover the nature of proto-objects—we need only discuss Hume's account of the *senses* in "Of skepticism with regard to the senses." As a result, any discussion of (2) and (3) may be momentarily put aside (they are discussed at length in Chap. 6).

4.2.1 Why the Senses Are Not Responsible for Our Belief in the Continued and Distinct Existence of Objects

To begin our discussion of the role of the senses in these matters, note that Hume quickly dismisses the possibility that our senses produce our belief in the *continued* existence of objects. He tersely explains:

> To begin with the SENSES, 'tis evident these faculties are incapable of giving rise to the notion of the *continu'd* existence of their objects, after they no longer appear to the senses. For that is a contradiction in terms, and supposes that the senses continue to operate, even after they have ceas'd all manner of operation. (T 1.4.2.3; SBN 188–9)

According to Hume, it is simply a contradiction to claim that [i] Objects continue to exist when we are not sensing them yet [ii] It is our continuous sensing of them that causes us to believe in their continuous existence. For if both [i] and [ii] were the case, then according to [i] we would *not* be sensing the objects at hand while according to [ii], we *would* be continuously sensing them. Consequently, we would have "a contradiction in terms."

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[11] See T 1.4.2.2. The reader should also note that some have recently argued that Hume's claim that continuity implies distinctness and "vice versa" is not as coherent as it could be, e.g. Dicker (2005). However, a discussion of this matter takes us well beyond the scope of this chapter. Meanwhile, we should realize that $[(C \supset D) \bullet (D \supset C)]$ is equivalent to $[(\sim D \supset \sim C) \bullet (\sim C \supset \sim D)]$ where 'C' stands for "continuous" and 'D' stands for "distinctness." Thus, if I believe that an idea is not distinct, then I also believe that it is not continuous and *vice versa.*

Following, having eliminated the senses as being responsible for our belief in continuity, Hume turns his attention to their possible influence on our belief in the distinct existence of objects. To best understand Hume's thoughts on this matter (which range from T 1.4.2.3-10; SBN 188–191), consider the following outline:

1. If it were the case that our belief in the distinct, continuous and independent existence of objects came about through the senses, then impressions would have to either:

   [i] Be images of mind-independent objects that *do* have these properties (where these impression-images would, in particular, capture these properties in the "impression-image.")
   [ii] Or, have these properties themselves (T 1.4.2.3; SBN 188–9).

2. But [i] cannot be the case, Hume argues, because impressions alone "convey to us nothing but a single perception and never give us the least intimation of anything beyond." (T 1.4.2.4; SBN 189). Thus, if we *did* conjecture that impressions are *about* something, or *images of* things that are *not* sensed (namely, mind-independent objects), then that conjecture would, by default, have to be a product of reason, or alternatively, the imagination. For, as noted, such a thing would *not* be sensed, but would be "beyond" perception; it would be perception-independent.
3. Moreover, [ii] cannot be the case because:

   (a) If we apprehend an impression as distinct (and so, as external and independent) we would have to be able to distinguish between *ourselves* and impressions solely by means of impressions. Otherwise, without recourse to some external faculty (which would allow us to make such a distinction), we would necessarily apprehend impressions as *part* of ourselves. But if it were the case that we were forced to appeal to another faculty to do as much, we could not say that our senses *independently* give rise to the belief that our impressions are distinct, external or independent—at least in relation to ourselves (T 1.4.2.5; SBN 189).

   (b) But we do not, by way of the senses alone, apprehend ourselves as distinct, external or independent. Thus, sensing alone cannot grant us apprehension of the property of distinctiveness, externality or independence (T 1.4.2.5; SBN 189).

   (c) Thus, in order to apprehend impressions as distinct, external and independent from us, we must employ some faculty *other* than the senses. Three considerations, Hume claims, augment this conclusion:

      [x] We do not immediately apprehend our own bodies *as* bodies, but rather, as collections of impressions that later, through an "act of mind difficult to explain" (T 1.4.2.9; SBN 191), we "[ascribe to them] a real and corporeal existence" (T 1.4.2.9; SBN 191).

      [y] Sounds, tastes and smells are not *extended*, that is, they do not exist in space. However, according to Hume, "external to" means "has a position

in space." Thus, if sounds tastes and smells are not extended, they do not have a position in space, and thus, they could not possibly be sensed as external to us (T 1.4.2.9; SBN 191).

[z] Regarding the third consideration, Hume explains: "*Thirdly*, even our sight informs us not of distance or outness (so to speak) immediately without a certain reasoning and experience, as is acknowledg'd by the most rational philosophers" (T 1.4.2.9; SBN 191). That is, quite simply, "distance," or "outness" is not immediately apprehended by the senses. Rather, such properties are only ascertained by a "certain reasoning and experience," where, evidently, "experience" is not meant to denote empirical evidence. Thus, once again, we see that according to Hume, our belief in the externality of impressions could not come about solely by means of impressions.

(d) Finally, Hume ends by presenting a more specific claim regarding the *independence* of impressions, writing:

> As to the *independency* of our perceptions on ourselves, this can never be an object of the senses; but any opinion we form concerning it, must be deriv'd from experience and observation: And we shall see afterwards, that our conclusions from experience are far from being favourable to the doctrine of the independency of our perceptions. (T 1.4.2.10; SBN 191)

Hume takes it to be obvious that the independence of our perceptions is a function of "experience and observation," which, as such, does *not* consist of the senses immediately apprehending its impressions in an independent way.

4. Thus, it is clear, Hume thinks, that the senses *cannot* give rise to the belief that impressions are distinct, external and independent.

As a result, at this point in 1.4.2, Hume is confident that he has eliminated the senses as being responsible for producing our belief in *both* the continued and distinct existence of objects. As a result, although some faculty of the mind[12] may make it *seem* as if objects have the properties of continuity and distinctness, impressions do *not* have these properties. ***Consequently, it must follow that no impression, nor any simple idea, in virtue of exactly representing an impression, represents these properties***. For as shown in Chap. 1, if a simple impression lacks certain properties a–z, the resultant simple idea cannot represent properties a–z. Unless, that is, the mind *adds* the representation of such properties to the given simple idea. However, if this is the case, the simple idea would be, by definition, *no longer simple*, nor would it exactly represent the impression at hand. Instead, it would be complex.

Thus, we now know that according to Hume, at least *some* objects do not have the properties of continuity and distinctness. This is the case because, as we saw

[12] As already suggested above, this faculty is the transcendental imagination, which will be explained in more detail in the following chapters.

in the previous sections of this chapter, there are instances where Hume thinks that some objects are impressions and some are simple ideas. But as we just saw, impressions, and simple ideas—in virtue of exactly representing impressions—could not have the properties of continuity and distinctness.

Moreover, it is possible that Hume could, in places, be thinking of objects that are complex ideas that exactly represent impressions. As a result, these objects-ideas would *not* represent the properties of continuity and distinctness either, simply because according to what we just saw, *no* impression, complex or simple, has such properties.

As a result, we may conclude that according to Hume, any object-impression, or any object-idea (simple or complex) that exactly represents an impression, could not represent the properties of continuity or distinctness. As a result, no *proto-object* could represent the properties of continuity or distinctness.[13]

5 Continuity and Distinctness v. Uninterruptedness and Invariability

Throughout Book I, Hume uses the properties of continuity and distinctness interchangeably with the property of uninterruptedness for fairly obvious reasons: If an object is conceived of as being uninterrupted, then it is, simply by definition, also conceived of as being continuous. And so, because (as explained above) continuity implies distinctness, it must also be thought of as being distinct. So, if I think of some object as being uninterrupted by my perceptions of it (i.e. I think of it as being continuous) then I believe that it exists distinctly from my perception of it. The reverse is also true: if I conceive of an object as being distinct from my perception of it, then I also conceive of it as being continuous and so, simply by definition, it is conceived of as being uninterrupted by my perceptions of it.[14]

Conversely, if an idea does *not* represent the properties of continuity and distinctness, then it could not represent the property of uninterruptedness, simply by definition (i.e. an idea that represents non-continuity would also represent the property of interruptedness). As a result, such an idea would *not* represent one of the properties

[13] One might object that regardless of all of Hume's efforts to show that we cannot have an impression that admits of continuity and distinctness, according to his own system, it is nevertheless possible. For instance, what if I simply stare at an object, say a violet, for an extended period of time (even while my perceptions around it might change, e.g. someone walks behind it)? Wouldn't this give me an impression of at least, continuity (i.e. uninterruptedness)? However, in the course of discussing the vulgar position on objects just a bit further on in 1.4.2, Hume acknowledges this possibility and dismisses it (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). And as mentioned in an earlier footnote in this chapter, he dismisses it again on at least T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283 (see Chaps. 7 and 8 for more detail).

[14] However, this is *not* to say that invariability is interchangeable with distinctness; See Chaps. 6, 7, and 8 for more explanation.

required for perfect identity, i.e. uninterruptedness. *Thus, proto-objects cannot admit of perfect identity*. They do not represent uninterruptedness (but they can, to some degree represent invariability (or "constancy"), but not "perfectly;" we will see why in Chaps. 6, 7, and 8).

6 Summary

The main points that we have covered in this chapter are as follows:

1. According to the first pages of "Of skepticism with regard to the senses," impressions do *not* have the properties of continuity and distinctness.
2. As shown in Sect. 2 of this chapter, according to Hume, some "objects" *are* simple ideas, and so, exactly represent simple impressions.
3. All ideas (simple or complex) entail the conception of their existence; this is what we may characterize as the principle of *de dicto* existence. However, given what we saw in Chap. 3, some ideas are *real*, and some are not, regardless if all ideas exist (*de dicto*). For instance, my idea of a unicorn might exist (as an idea), but it would not be real.
4. According to the principle of exact representation between simple impressions and simple ideas (i.e. the "Copy Principle"), all simple ideas must—with the exception of being less vivacious—exactly represent the simple impressions which caused them.
5. Thus, because simple impressions do not (by way of 1.) have the properties of continuity and distinctness, *no* simple idea could represent such properties.
6. So, any object that is a simple idea could not possibly represent the properties of continuity and distinctness, despite the fact that it *exists* (*de dicto*).
7. We may also conclude that any *complex* idea-object that exactly represents a complex impression does not represent the properties of continuity and distinctness either, despite the fact that it exists (*de dicto*). This is the case because *no* impression, complex or simple, has these properties.
8. We may characterize any object-impression, or object-idea that exactly represents an impression (simple or complex), as a "proto-object." However, proto-objects could not be objects that admit of "perfect identity." This is the case because proto-objects do not represent the property of continuity, and thus, do not represent the property of *uninterruptedness*, which is one of the properties that must be represented by an idea of an object that is imagined to admit of a perfect identity. However, proto-objects do exist (*de dicto*).
9. At this point, it should be clear that the following terms are interchangeable: (a) impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions (recall Chap. 1)[15] (b)

[15] Note: I am not claiming that impressions are interchangeable with ideas that exactly represent impressions. Rather, I am claiming that impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions are proto objects, and thus, they are also what I call "elementary beliefs."

elementary beliefs (recall Chap. 2) and (c) proto-objects. At first glance, this interchangeability might seem a bit cumbersome. Ultimately though, it allows us to reveal a number of the intricate relationships that obtain between Hume's notions of belief, causality, objects and justification. For instance, we already know that in virtue of being an impression or an idea that exactly represents an impression, (i.e. being an elementary belief), proto-objects are *real*; they belong to Hume's first system of reality (recall Chap. 3).

Chapter 5
The First Account of Transcendental Perfect Identity: The Foundation of Secret Causes

1 Introduction

Proto-objects, I claim, are the necessary conceptual building blocks for an idea of an object that admits of perfect identity. Also, ideas of objects that admit of perfect identity, must, according to Hume, be *imagined*. In this chapter, we examine Hume's somewhat implicit first account of perfect identity, given in 1.3.2. In the course of doing so, we begin to see how and why proto-objects enable us to imagine objects that admit of a perfect identity. However, the reader should note that this chapter merely serves as an introduction to Hume's theory of imagined causes and perfect identity, while Chaps. 6, 7, and 8 provide us with a more fully-developed version.

2 Perfect Identity: A Secret Cause

Hume first addresses the nature of identity in 1.1.6, "Of Modes and Substances," where he writes: "Of all relations the most universal is that of identity, being common to every being, whose existence has any duration" (T 1.1.5.4; SBN 14). Hume is making it clear here—very early on in Book I—that the relation of identity will play an absolutely central role in the *Treatise*. In particular, we know that the relation of identity must be thought to hold of any body or object that we conceive of as existing over an extended period of time. However, it is not clear at this point if Hume thinks that *proto*-objects must admit of this identity. Is perfect identity the same as identity, *simpliciter?*

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2.1 Four Questions Pertaining to the "Discovery" of Identity

To help answer this question, we need to revisit 1.3.2, "Of probability; and the idea of cause and effect," where Hume gives a more extensive account of identity. This section begins as follows:

> This is all I think necessary to observe concerning those four relations, which are the foundation of science; but as to the other three, which depend not on the idea, and may be absent or present even while *that* remains the same, 'twill be proper to explain them more particularly. These three relations are *identity, the situations in time and place, and causation*. (T 1.3.2.1; SBN 73)

Here, Hume is referring to the immediately preceding section where he discusses "the seven different kinds of philosophical relation, *viz., resemblance, identity, relations of time* and *place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quality, contrariety* and *causation*" (T 1.3.1.1; SBN 69). In this section, he argues that the "philosophical" relations of resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportions in number constitute the "foundation of science." This is the case because these four relations comprise relations between ideas (and so, constitute what Hume calls "demonstrations"). Meanwhile, the relations of identity, situations in time and place and causation are *not* a function of the definition (or nature) of the ideas that they hold between.

Having reminded us that he has already given what he takes to be an adequate account of the four demonstrative relations, he turns his attention to an examination of the three *non*-demonstrative philosophical relations, i.e. the relations of identity, situations in time and place and causation.

Before we focus on these non-demonstrative philosophical relations, particularly identity and causation, it will be helpful to recall that in Chap. 2, we determined that Hume is working with the following distinctions in regard to probable (causal) reasoning:

1. *Philosophical probable reasoning*, where we compare two ideas. This kind of reasoning depends on what Hume calls the "philosophical" relation of causality.
2. *Transcendental probable reasoning*, where an idea is, somehow, inferred from an impression via an "exercise of thought."
3. *Natural probable reasoning*, which is to be identified with the natural, associative causal mechanism, and does not involve any comparison of ideas.

With these distinctions in mind, let's revisit the following passage, which we initially examined in Chap. 2. In the course of doing so, we may begin to unpack (2) above, viz., the notion of transcendental probable reasoning:

> All kinds of reasoning consists 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 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 thro' the organs of sensation. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73)

Hume's line of thought may be understood as follows: (1) *All* reasoning necessarily consists of an act of comparison. (2) This comparison consists of a method of "discover[ing] those relations which two or more objects bear to each other" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73). These "objects" consist of two kinds: (a) those that "are present to the senses" and (b) those that are *not* present to the senses. As a result, kind (a) appears to consist of what we saw characterized earlier as "phenomenological" objects, i.e., impressions (recall Chap. 4). For "when both objects are present to the senses … we call this perception [and it consists in] … a mere passive admission of the *impressions* thro' the organs of sensation" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73; emphasis added). As for objects (b), these would have to be, by default, ideas, since they appear when impressions are *not* present. It is not clear however, if in the case of (b) that Hume is talking about proto-objects or objects that admit of perfect identity. (4) Regardless, as explained in Chap. 2, Hume adds that we do not call such a comparison "reasoning" when we are comparing *just* impressions. Instead, we should call it "perception."[1] However, if at least one "object" under our purview is *not* present to the senses (and so, by default, this "object" must be an idea), then we may call such a comparison "reason." As a result, Hume's implicit claim here is: In order to "reason," the mind must have at least *one* idea as its object. Otherwise, as explained in Chap. 2, we are simply in a passive state of *receiving*, but not *processing* or "thinking about" impressions. It is precisely for this reason that he characterizes perception as "a mere *passive admission* of the impressions thro' the organs of sensation" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73; emphasis added).

Hume immediately continues: "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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73). That is, as far as the non-demonstrative philosophical relations of identity and the relations of time and place are concerned, we are only dealing with *perception*, not reasoning; evidently, such relations may only apply to impressions. This is what Hume means when he writes: "in none of [these relations can] the mind … go beyond what is immediately present to the senses." As a result, neither identity nor the relations of time or place may grant us access to ("discovery of") "the real existence or the relations of objects."

Our analysis of this passage encourages at least the following questions, which I raise now, but cannot answer until the end of this chapter. For the process of answering them involves a prolonged textual analysis, which as we proceed, generates still more questions—also to be answered at the end of this chapter. Meanwhile, our immediate questions are: [Q1] In what respect may a relation be applied to impressions and not ideas? In particular, how, according to Hume, do we "perceive" identity purely in terms of impressions rather than ideas? [Q2] Why is the relation of identity

[1] However, to keep matters straight, recall from our discussion in Chap. 1, that throughout the *Treatise*, Hume also uses 'perception' as a noun, which, as such, sometimes ranges over *both* impressions and ideas and sometimes just impressions. In this case, however, to "perceive" is to be in a state where we are apprehending just impressions.

"philosophical?" [Q3] When Hume speaks of the "[discovery of] the real existence or the relation of *objects*," [emphasis added] it is not clear in just what respect he is using the word 'object.' Is he referring to a proto-object or not? [Q4] Why does the fact that the relations of identity and time or place do *not* yield "reason" prevent us from "discovering" the "real existence or the relations of such objects?" In just what respect does reason grant us access to "real existences and relations?"

2.2 *Four Questions Concerning Existence and Necessity*

En route to answering these questions, Hume immediately continues: "'Tis only *causation*, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence of one object that 'twas follow'd 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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4). Hume makes it abundantly clear here that (a) The relation of causation, and causation *alone* can "give us assurance from the existence of one object, that 'twas follow'd or preceded by any other existence or action." This seems to mean: In those cases where an object ξ is "follow'd or preceded" by either an "action" or the existence of any other object ψ, only the relation of causation can assure us of the "existence" of ξ thanks to some kind of reasoning process. (b) Moreover, because the relations of identity and time or place only apply to "perception," we cannot use them in such reasoning, although these relations may "affect" our reasoning, as well as be "affected by" our reasoning.

However, at this point, it is still not entirely clear just what Hume is up to. In particular, we need to ask the following questions—in *addition* to those we raised earlier, which, keep in mind, remain unanswered: [Q5] In just what respect does causation assure us of the existence of any object ξ given the preceding or proceeding "action" or existence of another object ψ? Does his answer differ from what we saw to be the case in Chaps. 2 and 3 (where we saw that causality is an existence inference, and that it plays a pivotal role in Hume's conception of reality)? [Q6] In just what respect may the relation of identity "affect" our reasoning and *vice versa*? [Q7] For that matter, just what does Hume have in mind by 'reasoning' here? In particular, in light of the emphasis he places on causality in this passage, does he mean *causal* reasoning, or reasoning in general, where as we saw in Chap. 2, reasoning *simpliciter* consists simply of a *comparison*, where at least one of the objects being compared must be an idea? [Q8] As briefly explained in Chap. 2, the causal reasoning that Hume is discussing here does not involve a comparison of two ideas, since he is discussing cases where sense impressions lead us to "reason," i.e. to compare our way to ideas. Thus, although he classifies this relation as "philosophical" here, he could not mean a philosophical relation in the respect that he refers to it on T 1.1.5.1–2; SBN 13–14, T 1.3.6.12–16; SBN 92–93, T 1.3.14.31; SBN 169–170. For recall that in these instances, *two* ideas are being compared. Nor could he mean a natural causal relation, since is not talking about instances where, thanks to

habituation, we are conditioned to automatically think an idea q'_{n+1} upon being presented with an impression p, or a memory of p, *without* engaging in any kind of comparison. Thus, does Hume have a *special* kind of "philosophical" relation of causality in mind here?

2.3 Secret Causes

2.3.1 Two Questions Concerning Remoteness and Contiguity

To properly answer these questions, in addition to those raised earlier, we need to continue working through the text. Hume immediately continues: "There is nothing in any object to perswade us that they are either always *remote* or *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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; italics and boldness added). In other words, as far as "objects" go, they do not inherently possess the properties of "remoteness" or "contiguity."

However, Hume adds, there are cases when we experience and observe objects such that they *seem* remote or contiguous and so, it appears that we have no choice but to conclude that some "***secret cause*** … separates or unites them" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; italics and boldness added). As a result, when we suppose that an object is contiguous, we assume that some "secret cause" is, somehow, *responsible* for such contiguity. Given what Hume says on T 1.4.5.8–16 and T 1.4.6.22, it is likely that he is thinking about the contiguity, or unity of the various parts and properties that seem to obtain of a complex object. For in these passages, Hume argues that there is no principle of intrinsic spatio-temporal unification in complex objects. Rather, by appealing to the imagination, we must "feign a principle of union" (T 1.4.6.22) to account for the contiguity, or in other words, the unity of all the parts and properties that seem to obtain of a complex object. Thus, we do not *sense* contiguity, we must imagine a "principle" that is, somehow, responsible for it. This squares with what Hume says in 1.3.2.22 regarding the origin of contiguity: "there is nothing in any object to perswade us that they are either always remote or contiguous" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74). Thus, it seems likely that his mention of contiguity in 1.3.2 anticipates his discussions of contiguity in 1.4.5 and 1.4.6.

As far as "remoteness" is concerned, Hume seems to mean *distinctness*, in anticipation of 1.4.2, where, as we saw in Chap. 4, Hume pays a great deal of attention to this relation. In particular, "remote" seems to mean, *distinct* from, i.e. *independent* of, our perception. What else could Hume have in mind here? Remote in the sense of always being *far away* from the observer? That just wouldn't make sense; many objects are not necessarily far away from many observers. Also, Hume claims that we do not *sense* remoteness (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74), just as we do not *sense* distinctness (T 1.4.2.3–10). Thus, I think that it is reasonable to say that his discussion of remoteness in 1.3.2 anticipates his discussion of distinctness in 1.4.2.

Despite these clarifications regarding contiguity and remoteness, this passage raises still *more* questions, particularly: [Q9] Just what does Hume have in mind by 'object' here (i.e. "there is nothing in any *object* to perswade us that they are either always remote or contiguous" T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; emphasis added). [Q10] Also, *why* do we have to assume that an object is always "remote" (distinct) or contigous? Does his answer anticipate what he will say in 1.4.2 regarding continuity and distinctness and invariability and uninterruptedness?

2.3.2 Secret Causes and Perfect Identity

The questions are piling up, but we are on the brink of some answers, hinted at in the passage that immediately follows the one cited above:

> The same reasoning extends to *identity*. We readily suppose an object may continue individually the same, tho' 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 wou'd have convey'd an ***invariable*** and ***uninterrupted*** perception. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; emphases added)

The process behind apprehending the concept of identity is ***the same as*** imagining the "secret causes" that are responsible for the contiguity and remoteness that obtains of objects. For in just the *same* way that we imagine secret causes, we "suppose" that a given "object" remains the *same* object when we stop perceiving it (stop having impressions of it). For instance, when I close the door of the refrigerator, and as a result, lose sight of the orange sitting inside, I nevertheless *suppose* that the orange continues to exist inside the refrigerator. Moreover, when I open the refrigerator an hour later and see the orange, I *suppose* that it is the same orange that I saw over an hour ago. This means that by way of a "supposition" I ascribe a certain *identity* to my various impressions of the orange such that I come to believe that they all belong to, or are, in some fundamental way, *caused* by an ***invariable*** and ***uninterrupted*** orange, i.e. a "secret cause." That is, ***they are caused by an orange (a "secret cause") with a perfect identity*** (recall from Chap. 4 that an idea of an object that is imagined to represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness has a perfect identity).

Moreover, by "suppose," Hume seems to mean *imagine*; recall that in 1.4.2 that we must imagine the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (T 1.4.2.29–30; SBN 200–1). Also, Hume is fairly explicit here about claiming that this supposition involves positing a *cause* that we have never sensed and thus, we know that it must be imagined; this is precisely why it is a *secret* cause:

> 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 chang'd upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; first emphasis added).

In order to discover such "secret causes"—i.e. to conceptualize perfect identity—and so, move "beyond the impressions of our senses," *we must, somehow, employ the relation of cause and effect*. We do not *sense* secret causes, we *imagine* them,

just as we must imagine the "principle of union" (T 1.4.6.22) that allows us to imagine a contiguous object. And as shown in Chap. 1, we don't imagine impressions, we imagine ideas. Thus, secret causes are *imagined ideas*.

But this raises still more questions: [Q11] Just *how* does this imaginative process occur? For in Chap. 2, we saw that causal connections emerge from the constant conjunction of *impressions* (natural causation) or from the comparison of two ideas (philosophical causality). But in the case of secret causes/perfect identity, we must explicitly move "*beyond* the impressions of our senses" (emphasis added) and nor are we comparing two ideas. For as explained earlier, Hume is discussing cases where, thanks to some kind of causal reasoning process, *sense impressions* lead us to imagine certain ideas; "[neither the relation of identity nor time and place can] go beyond what is immediately present to the senses. 'Tis only causation which produces such a connexion" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74). [Q10] Moreover, in what respect does Hume use the word 'object' here, viz."[imagining secret causes assures us] the *object* is not chang'd upon us, however much the new *object* may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses" (emphasis added)? Does he mean a *proto*-object (i.e. an impression or ideas that does *not* represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness)?

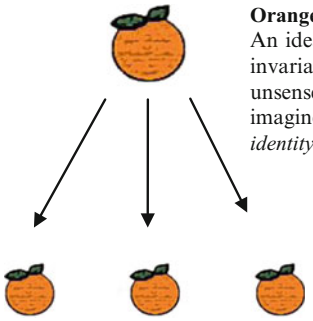
3 The Answers

Hume writes immediately after the passage cited above:

> Whenever we discover such a *perfect resemblance* [of a new object that resembles that which was formerly present to the senses], 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 74 emphases added)

There are cases where we may grasp a certain "species of *objects*," (emphasis added) and in turn, determine if there is some "cause" that could be responsible for any "change and resemblance" in the given species. This "cause" constitutes the "secret cause" noted earlier. Yet before we examine this secret cause in any more detail we must first ask (and immediately answer): Does such a species of objects consist of *proto*-objects? Or, do such species consist of objects that actually possess (assuming they are mind-independent objects) the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness? Or does such a species consist of a series of impressions and/or ideas that merely *represent* these properties? Answering these questions will not only help to clarify a fundamental respect in which Hume uses the word 'object' here—i.e., those things that constitute a perfectly resembling species—but will help to determine just how the members of such species are distinct from those objects that are alleged to cause them.

As we saw earlier, the process of imagining the perfect identity of an object is the *same* as imagining that objects are contiguous and remote. In both cases, we must imagine that there is some "secret cause" that is responsible for certain properties



Orange Object (secret cause): An idea that is imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted; an unsensed imagined cause that we imagine to admit of a perfect *identity*

Orange Proto-Objects: Perfectly resembling impressons and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions; they are the interrupted imagined effects of the Orange Object.

Fig. 5.1 Proto-objects v. secret causes

that obtain of an object, viz. respectively, invariability and uninteruptedness and contiguity and remoteness (distinctness). We know that in the case of contiguity and remoteness (distinctness), we must do this because we do not sense such properties; we must imagine them. Thus, by parity of reasoning, we know that here, Hume must mean that we do not *sense* the properties of invariability and uniteruptedness (c.f. T 1.4.2.29–30; SBN 200–1 and Chap. 7, where we discuss this passage in detail), and thus, we must *imagine* that some object that *does* have these properties is the cause of what we are sensing, particularly "the species of objects," where these "objects" are "perfectly resembling." This squares with the fact that this set of perfectly resembling objects consists of objects that are "present to the senses" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74), which means that they are *impressions*. Accordingly, they are "interrupted" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74). Moreover, Hume also implicitly includes ideas that exactly represent impressions (memories) in this set, for he explains that unless we image a secret cause, "[we cannot] otherwise have any security that the object is not chang'd upon us, however much the new object may resemble *that which was formerly present to the senses* [i.e. a memory]" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74).

Thus, the objects in such a perfectly resembling species are indeed, *proto-objects*, i.e. impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions, and thus perceptions that do *not* represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness. Thus, consistent with what we saw to be the case in Chap. 4, ***proto-objects are objects that do not admit of perfect identity*** (see Fig. 5.1).

With these clarifications in mind, let's now take the second half of the passage cited above into closer consideration. Recall the entire passage:

> Whenever we discover such a perfect resemblance [of a new object that resembles that which was formerly present to the senses], 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 74; emphasis added)

According to Hume, we consider this set (species) of what we now know must consist of perfectly resembling proto-objects and attempt to determine what factor *made* it a set. We attempt to discover "whether possibly or probably any cause cou'd

operate in producing the change and resemblance." By doing so, we try to discover (using the imagination) the *source* of the perfect resemblance of our set of proto-objects, *or*, any changes that may occur between each proto-object. According to Hume, if we *do* discover such a source (which we know is "secret," i.e. is not sensed), we simultaneously discover the *identity* of the object, i.e. the perfect identity.

However, with this in mind, we must recall our conclusion that (perfect) identity consists of an imagined cause, and so, is an *idea*, seems to contradict what he claimed earlier. Note:

> 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. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73)

For here, as explained earlier, Hume seems to suggest that we apprehend the relation of identity by way of *impressions, not* by imagining "secret causes." However, this contradiction is alleviated if we realize that here, Hume could very well be talking about identity strictly in terms of the set of proto-objects at hand; it's through the *senses* that we apprehend an impression that causes an idea of a proto-object. And only later, thanks to the imagination, and some kind of causal reasoning, do we associate a proto-object with a perfectly resembling set of other proto-objects that in turn, is imagined to be caused by an invariable and uninterrupted object. So, in this passage Hume seems to be talking about only the *first* stage of identity; i.e. the stage where, by means of impressions and memories of impressions, we accumulate a set of proto-objects, which have *no* identity. When the *second* stage of identity is realized, we imagine that some invariable and uninterrupted thing *causes* the entire set.

Accordingly, immediately after the passage cited above, Hume is led to conclude: "Here then it appears, that of these three relations [identity, time and place and causation], which depend not upon the mere ideas, the only one, that can be trac'd beyond our senses, and informs us of existences and objects, *which we do not see or feel*, is *causation*" (T 1.3.2.3; SBN 74; emphases added). That is, as noted a number of times now, out of the three non-demonstrative philosophical relations—identity, time and place and causation—the last is the only relation that can take us *beyond* the realm of sense impressions; permitting us to grasp the notion of an object in the form of an imagined or "secret cause;" i.e. something "*which we do not see or feel*" (emphases added). However, as we have seen, the kind of causation that Hume is thinking about here could *not* be natural, or philosophical, despite the fact that he includes it with other "philosophical" relations. For an imagined secret cause is not a function of the habituated experience of two impressions (we never have an impression of a "secret cause;" we do not "see or feel it"), nor does it involve a comparison of two ideas. Rather, upon experiencing a set (a "species") of perfectly resembling proto-objects (i.e. impressions and memories of impressions) we imagine that an invariable and uninterrupted object causes that set. Thus, we have effectively uncovered what I referred to in Chap. 2 as transcendental causation, i.e. transcendental probable reasoning. Because we never sense the properties of invariability

and uninterruptedness—and nor are these properties indirectly based on any kind of sensation—we must, via some kind of transcendental imagination, imagine that they obtain of "secret causes." Our ordinary experience, where we frequently identify and distinguish between objects seems to presupposes our ability to do so. However, just how we have a perception of an object that is both invariable and uninterrupted (or continuous and distinct), where we never have an impression of these properties, cannot be explained in more depth until we read Chaps. 6 and 7.

Meanwhile, to help clarify and synthesize our analysis of these two pages in 1.3.2, "Of probability and the idea of cause and effect," let's systematically answer the 12 questions raised earlier. For although to some degree these queries have already been addressed, review will prove helpful.

[Q1] In what respect, according to Hume, may a relation be applied to impressions and not ideas; particularly, how do we "perceive" identity purely in terms of impressions rather than in terms of ideas? In response, we may say that this is a somewhat misleading question, as already suggested above. For as we have seen, it is clearly *not* the case that we *perceive* (perfect) identity. We do not, according to Hume, see, smell, taste, touch or hear the relation of (perfect) identity. Instead, the (perfect) identity of an object consists in imagining a "secret" cause of a perfectly resembling set of proto-objects, where these proto-objects either are impressions, or are ideas that exactly represent impressions. As a result, in this respect, we may conclude that the first stage of (perfect) identity is grasped solely by means of impressions. So, we might conclude that according to Hume, this entire process is triggered by an impression that causes an idea of an object that belongs to such a series. For instance, in order for me to think of the orange in my refrigerator, I must either have an impression of the orange, or, think of an idea that exactly represents such an impression (where both the impression and the idea are proto-objects). In turn this impression or idea enables me to contextualize this idea in terms of an entire series of ideas of the given orange, which I then imagine as being *caused* by an invariable and uninterrupted orange (i.e. an object that we imagine to have a perfect identity).[2]

[Q2] Why is the relation of identity "philosophical?" Technically, as we just saw, imagining perfect identity, i.e. a "secret cause" could not be philosophical in the respect that we are comparing two ideas. Rather, we imagine that some invariable and uninterrupted object causes various impressions (or memories of impressions). The process of doing so involves what I have referred to as a transcendental causal inference. However, how and why this process involves any kind of "comparison" and so, would be more "philosophical" than natural, viz., instinctual, is yet to be determined.

[Q3] When Hume speaks of the "[discovery of] the real existence or the relation of *objects*," (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73; emphasis added), it is unclear in just what respect he is using the word 'object.' In particular, is he referring to a proto-object?[3] In some

[2] As we will see further on in this book, this process is similar to the way in which Hume thinks we conceive of abstract ideas (see Chap. 7).

[3] Recall, once again, the entire passage: "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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73).

respects, this question has already been answered in the course of answering [Q1]. In particular, we may assume that the objects he is referring to in this passage are imagined causes and *not* proto-objects. For as noted, we have no access to imagined causes by way of just impressions, just as we don't sense the properties of contiguity and remoteness (distinctness), we do not sense the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness. Instead, according to Hume, we come to think in terms of imagined causes, thanks to the relation of causality and the faculty of the transcendental imagination. In this way, we "go beyond what is immediately present to the senses … to discover the real existence or the relations of objects *which we do not see or feel*" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73; emphases added).

[Q4] Why does the fact that the relation of identity does *not* yield "reason" prevent us from "discovering" the "real existence or the relations of such objects?" Or, put another way, in just what respect does reason grant us access to "real existences and relations?" In response, we may say that in light of what we have seen, the first stage of identity—where we gather a set of proto-objects in the mind—does not by itself yield *causal* reasoning. Rather, as noted, the relation of causality must be applied to such a set. Moreover, as we have seen, the fully developed relation of (perfect) identity is a *result* of such reasoning, where the (perfect) identity relation actually consists of an imagined object that is thought of as causing a set of resembling impressions and memories of impressions (proto-objects). Ironically, in this respect the object is, according to Hume, "real." For as we see in later chapters, imagined causes are as "real" as objects get for Hume, there is no other kind of reality (namely, "*de re*" reality) that he may discuss with a good conscience. As a result, only causality will allow us to access the "the real existence or relations of objects."

[Q5] In what respect does causation assure us of the existence of any object α given the preceding or proceeding "action" or existence of another object β? Recall Hume's own words to this effect: "'Tis only *causation*, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence of one object that it was follow'd or preceded by any other existence or action" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4). Hume could have two things in mind here. In Chaps. 2 and 3 we saw that the causal relation is an existence inference, where an impression p may automatically cause us to think of an idea q'_{n+1}, where we believe that q'_{n+1} is "real." It could be in this respect then, that Hume asserts here that only the relation of *causation* can assure us of the "existence" of one object that follows (is caused by) or precedes (causes) the existence of another object. Second, in light of our immediately preceding analysis, he could also mean that only causation allows us to "connect" each resembling proto-object (in virtue of imagining an "object" that allegedly causes each and every member of the set) such that each proto-object that "follows" or "precedes" every other member in the set is related in terms of "existence" and or "action." In still other words, each proto-object "exists" or "acts" the way it does in virtue of being an effect of the same (identical) imagined and "secret" cause. However, exactly *which* option Hume has in mind here is not clear. But we might conclude that it's the latter, given the fact that here, Hume is focusing on the phenomenon of imagined causes.

To answer [Q6] and [Q7], we must first recall the entire passage that motivated them, which is, in part, comprised of the line considered immediately above: "'Tis only *causation*, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the

existence of one object that 'twas follow'd 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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4). Having reminded ourselves of the passage, now recall the questions: [Q6] In just what respect may the relations of identity and time and place "affect" our reasoning and vice versa? and [Q7] For that matter, just what does Hume have in mind by 'reasoning' here? In particular, in light of the emphasis he places on causality in this passage, does he mean *causal* reasoning, or reasoning in general, where we may assume that reasoning consists simply of a *comparison*, where at least one of the objects being compared must be an idea? Taking [Q7] first, it seems that we may answer that Hume could have *both* causal reasoning and reasoning *simpliciter* in mind—where, for our purposes at this point in our analysis; we may say that the former specifically involves causal relationships and the latter consists in a broader range of comparisons. For (a) he is simply not clear one way or the other, and (b) It just makes good sense to assume that he has both respects of 'reason' in mind here. For in the spirit of Hume's thought, it seems that once we imagine an object such that it grants us the idea of the (perfect) identity of a given object (say, an orange) such an identity could enable us to make actual comparisons between "objects" (imagined causes) that, as such, are imagined to have at least the properties of being invariable and uninterrupted (and so, we conceive of as existing *distinctly* from our perceptions of them).[4] For if this were otherwise, how could we effectively compare two objects that we did not even comprehend as distinct from ourselves? In this respect, it would seem that the relation of identity has a profound effect on our general reasoning (which, as just noted, consists of comparing, where what is being compared must consist of at least one idea). As for how the relation of identity affects our *causal* reasoning, we may surmise that according to Hume, once we have imagined an object as a thing that has an identity, we can conceptualize it in various, more complex causal relations. For once again, if we could *not* conceptualize a given object as an invariable and uninterrupted thing—and so, as a thing that may be *identified*—how could we conceptualize it in causal relationships?[5] For instance, how could I come to imagine that my key starts my car (that is, *causes* it to start), if I cannot even identify my key or my car, much less distinguish them from each other?

Recall that [Q8] was: Does Hume have a special kind of "philosophical" relation of causality in mind in 1.3.2? Yes. We have seen that he has what I call transcendental causation in mind. In particular, upon experiencing an impression that belongs to

[4] Recall that in Chap. 4, we concluded that the property of uninterruptedness is interchangeable with the property of continuity. We also saw that according to Hume, continuity implies distinctness. Thus, if we conceive of an object as being uninterrupted, we must also conceive of it as being distinct.

[5] However, as will be shown in Chap. 12, it is not the case that we must imagine ideas that we think have a perfect identity in order to think in terms of natural causal relations. However, our ability to think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relations does seem to presuppose our ability to imagine ideas of objects that we think admit of a perfect identity.

a set of perfectly resembling impressions and/or memories of impressions, we imagine that an invariable and uninterrupted object is the cause, or source, of this set of interrupted perceptions. Doing so enables us to imagine the "perfect identity" of an object.

As we did with [Q6] and [Q7], to answer [Q8] and [Q9], we must first recall the passage that inspired them: "There is nothing in any object to perswade us that they are either always *remote* or *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" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; emphases added). And now the questions: [Q9] Just what does Hume have in mind by 'object' here? [Q10] Moreover, why must we assume that an object is always "remote" (distinct) or "contiguous"? In response, we may say that it should be fairly clear by now that the word 'object' in this passage must refer to a proto-object; for in this passage, the objects are *not* apprehended as "remote" (distinct) or "contiguous." For, as we saw in Chap. 4, if an idea is not distinct (from our perception), it could not be continuous. Thus, by definition, it is interrupted. Thus, such "objects" would lack one of the necessary properties of perfect identity, and thus, must be proto-objects. As far as [Q10] is concerned, it would seem that according to Hume, if we did *not* apprehend an imagined cause as necessarily remote or contiguous, we could not make sense of the world in the way we do. For instance, as noted earlier, how could I make sense of my car as an independent object if I did not consider it to be remote (namely, *distinct* from) my perception of it?

Finally, to answer our last questions, we must, as we did with the others, recall the passage that originally inspired them:

> 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 chang'd upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses. (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; first emphasis added)

With this in mind, recall that the questions are: [Q11] Just *how* does this causal imagining occur, particularly in light of Chap. 2, where we saw that our conception of causal connections emerges from the constant conjunction of *impressions*, while in this, case, we must explicitly move "*beyond* the impressions of our senses?" (emphasis added) This is a tough question. In fact, to properly answer it, we need to carefully examine the role that the "constancy" and "coherence" of our impressions play in the role of perfect identity, which we do in Chap. 6. Moreover, we must examine the role that unity and number play in the relation of perfect identity which we do in Chap. 7. So, we have to temporarily suspend our answer to this question.

[Q12] In what respect does Hume use the word 'object' in the passage noted immediately above? In light of all that we have seen, it is fairly evident that Hume must have a proto-object in mind here. For he is telling us that if we did *not* have some imagined cause in place, then any "object" that appears to our senses—however much it resembles any other "object" that we may have previously experienced—has no secure (perfect) identity—we can have no "security that the [proto] object is not chang'd upon us, however much the object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74).

4 Summary

In this chapter we developed a preliminary understanding of what an imagined, or "secret" cause is and why the relation of identity cannot be understood as distinct from it. In fact, in 1.3.2 we see Hume's *first* account of *perfect* identity, however implicitly introduced. In particular:

1. We experience a set, or "species" of perfectly resembling proto-objects; this set consists of impressions and/or memories of impressions.
2. We "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) imagine that an idea of an object with perfect identity *causes* this species contra at least Price (1940).[6] As a result, this idea of an object is imagined to represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness.[7] Meanwhile each proto-object in the set of the imagined effects of the cause is not.
3. As a result, we may say that *imagined* ideas of objects have a (perfect) *identity* while proto-objects do *not* (although proto-objects may or may not *resemble* each other).
4. Moreover, because such an object is an *imagined* idea, and so, does *not* exactly represent a simple or complex impression (as proto-objects do); it is a "secret" cause, where its "secrecy" consists in the fact that it has *never* been seen, tasted, touched, felt or heard; we do not "see or feel" it (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74). Also, because a secret cause does not exactly represent any impression, it could not be a simple idea (since all simple ideas must exactly represent impressions). As such, it seems that Hume does, indeed, have something like Wilbank's "supposal" sense of the imagination in mind (1968). However, this is not quite the story; *some* representation seems to be involved in this imaginative process in the respect that the imagined cause seems to indirectly represent one of the proto-objects it is alleged to cause (see Chap. 7 where I discuss this indirect representation in more depth).
5. Also, it seems that a complex object must also be imagined as "contiguous." However, Hume only discusses this stipulation in passing in T 1.4.5.8–16 and T 1.4.6.22, and thus, it seems to be merely a corollary to his notion of identity.
6. Our idea of perfect identity appears to be *transcendental* in the respect that we must imagine the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability in order to conceptualize a world of objects that we think admit of a perfect identity. Imagining objects that we think admit of a perfect identity appears to be an instance of transcendental probable reasoning.

[6] Recall that Price argued that we cannot imagine causes (1940, p. 26).

[7] As well as, continuity (i.e. contiguity) and distinctness (i.e. remoteness), assuming that these pairs of properties are roughly interchangeable. See the summary of Part II of this book for more detail.

Chapter 6
A Mysterious Kind of Causation: The Second Account of Transcendental Perfect Identity

1 Introduction

Traditionally, scholars have argued that 1.4.2 may be split into *two* general sections: one that concerns the "vulgar" conception of objects, and another that concerns the "philosophical" conception of objects. I argue that there is a *third* position: *Hume's*, which includes two more accounts of how we transcendentally conceive of perfect identity. We examine one of those accounts of perfect identity here (which constitutes Hume's *second* account of how we transcendentally conceive of perfect identity) and the other in Chap. 7 (which constitutes Hume's *third* account of how we transcendentally conceive of perfect identity). In Chaps. 8 and 9, I show why all three instances of how we transcendentally conceive of perfect identity are *not* to be confused with the vulgar position on objects, nor with the philosophical position.[1]

As shown in Chap. 4, in the opening passages of 1.4.2, Hume makes it clear that objects must be conceived of as being continuous and distinct. This portion of 1.4.2 is also devoted to determining whether (1) the senses, (2) reason or (3) the imagination is responsible for this attribution. Having already explained why the senses could *not* be responsible for our belief that objects are continuous and distinct in Chap. 4, we may immediately proceed to Hume's discussion of reason and the imagination. Accordingly, in Sect. 2 of this chapter, we see why Hume thinks that our belief in the continuity and distinctness of objects is not due to reason. In Sect. 3, we see why Hume thinks that the imagination is responsible for this belief. More specifically, in the course of discussing the imagination, Hume introduces certain kinds of impressions, particularly, impressions that are *constant and coherent*. He tells us that by appealing to a special "kind" of causation, constant and coherent impressions enable

[1] I am grateful for the feedback I received when presenting earlier versions of this chapter at the *Upstate New York Early Modern Workshop,* Syracuse University (2005), the *NY/NJ Consortium in the History of Modern Philosophy,* NY, NY (2006) and *New Philosophical Perspectives on Hume*, University of San Francisco (2007).

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us to imagine ideas of objects that we think are continuous and distinct. Ultimately, our focus in this chapter will be on this special kind of causation. For, I argue, it is precisely *this* special kind of causation that enables us to imagine secret causes, i.e., as we saw in Chap. 5, ideas of objects that we imagine to admit of a perfect identity.

2 Reason

After a lengthy discussion of the three categories of impressions,[2] Hume claims that: "We may also observe in this instance of sounds and colours, that we can attribute a distinct and continu'd existence to objects without ever consulting REASON, or weighing our opinions by any philosophical principles" (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 193). We don't need *reason* to think of objects as continuous and distinct. But why is Hume so sure? Because, he continues, although "philosophers" (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 194) can come up with sophisticated arguments to "establish the belief of objects independent of the mind"[3] (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 193) these reasoned arguments are surely *not* what convinces the every-day person—the vulgar person—that there are mind-independent bodies, i.e., objects that admit of both continuity and distinctness. This means that rigorous, *reasoned* philosophical arguments are *not* responsible for our everyday and seemingly reflexive belief in bodies. For, we might ask in the spirit of Hume, what normal 6 year old—who, by all accounts seems to believe in a world of continuous and distinct objects—has been convinced of this by rigorous philosophical inquiry?

In fact, if you think about it, Hume continues, reasoned philosophical inquiry brings us to the opposite conclusions of our everyday account of the world, an account that Hume specifically attributes to the vulgar. According to the philosophers, the world consists of nothing but fragmented perceptions, while the vulgar *do* seem to attribute continuity and distinctness to objects:

> Accordingly we find, that all the conclusions, which the vulgar form on this head, are directly contrary to those, which are confirm'd by philosophy. For philosophy informs us that everything, which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind; whereas the vulgar confound perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct and continu'd existence to the very things they feel or see. (T 1.4.2.14: SBN 193)

Thus, reason doesn't enable us to believe that objects are continuous and distinct.

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[2] A detailed discussion of these three categories of impressions is not relevant to our project. However, the reader might note that they are: (a) impressions that convey mass and volume, (b) impressions that comprise sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch and (c) impressions of pain and pleasure.

[3] Note that here, and for most of the remainder of "Of skepticism in regard to the senses," Hume no longer distinguishes between impressions of type (a)–(c), but instead, refers to just impressions in general (with a partial exception being his discussion of constancy and coherence).

However, we need to remind ourselves that at this point in the text, Hume has ruled out the senses as well. The "vulgar" or commonplace account of objects, consists of identifying objects with sense impressions (i.e. what is generally referred to as Hume's "phenomenological" approach to objects; see Haymond (1964) and Grene (1994)). As a result, although the vulgar think that objects *are*, in fact sense impressions, it could not be the case that the senses are *actually* capable of attributing continuity and distinctness to impressions. For as we saw in Chap. 4, Hume spends 5 pages (T 1.4.2.3–13; SBN 188–193) carefully explaining why we do not sense continuity and distinctness. So, if objects equate to *just* what we sense, it simply follows that objects are not continuous and distinct.

This is very important to keep in mind. For in the passages where Hume discusses why reason could not be responsible for attributing continuity and distinctness to impressions, his argument might seem to proceed as follows: The everyday (i.e, vulgar) conception of objects is not a product of reason, but instead, is a product of the *senses*. Thus, it *might* seem that Hume is contradicting himself here, claiming at first that the senses could *not* be responsible for attributing continuity and distinctness to impressions (T 1.4.2.3–13; SBN 188–193), and then, to eliminate reason as the source of this attribution, he implicitly claims (by invoking a "common" conception of objects) that it *is* the senses which do as much—at least in the case of the vulgar.

But this is not quite what is going on. Rather, we should understand the general structure of Hume's argument on T 1.4.2.14: SBN 193 as follows: Most everyone, even children, attribute continuity and distinctness to what they take to be "objects." However, to do this, they don't have to appeal to reason. But this doesn't mean that they appeal to their *senses* either, although this might very well be what the vulgar mistakenly *think* they are appealing to when they conceive of an "object" as having the properties of continuity and distinctness. So, what are they actually doing? They are imagining causes, i.e. imagining ideas of objects that admit of perfect identity. But precisely how and why this is the case can't be explained until we work our way through this chapter and Chap. 7. For now then, we must leave this as a tentative solution to what, on the face of it, seems like a contradiction.

3 The Imagination

If neither the senses nor reason are the source of our belief in the continuity and distinctness of objects, what is the source? The only remaining option is the "IMAGINATION" (T 1.4.2.14: SBN 193). In fact, Hume stresses, "the assurance of the continu'd and distinct existence of body" is "*entirely* [owed] to the imagination." The notion of a properly conceived-of object is it seems, a function of *just* the imagination. And as suggested in Chap. 5, this function seems to consist of "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4) imagining "secret causes" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4).

3.1 Constancy and Coherence

Immediately after claiming that the "IMAGINATION … must now be the subject of our enquiry," Hume explains that he has to determine (a) What impressions enable us to imagine ideas of objects that have a distinct and continued existence and following (b) Figure out just what it is about such impressions that allows us to imagine ideas of objects as being continuous and distinct.

3.1.1 Impressions Are Never Imagined

Before we take a look at these special impressions, we need to remind ourselves that according to Hume, we never *imagine* impressions (recall Chap. 1). However, in the initial stages of Hume's discussion of constancy and coherence, he repeatedly refers to a process where, if not read with extreme care, he seems to suggest that we *do* indeed, imagine *impressions* that admit of continuity and distinctness. Note:

> Since all my impressions are internal and perishing existences, and appear as such, the notion of their distinct and continu'd existence must arise from a concurrence of some their qualities with the qualities of the imagination; and since this notion does not extend to all of them, it must arise from certain qualities peculiar to some impressions. 'Twill therefore be easy for us to discover these qualities by a comparison of the **impressions**, to which we attribute a distinct and continu'd existence, with those, which we regard as internal and perishing. (T 1.4.2.15: SBN 194; emphasis added)

Here, Hume seems to clearly be saying that *impressions* admit of the imagined properties of continuity and distinctness. In fact, and seemingly more damning still, he immediately continues:

> We may observe, then, that 'tis neither upon account of the involuntariness of certain impressions, as is commonly suppos'd, nor of their superior force and violence, that we attribute to **them** a reality, and continu'd existence, which we refuse to others, that are voluntary and feeble. (T 1.4.2.16: SBN 194; emphasis added)

We appear to "attribute a reality [i.e. a distinctness from our perceptions] and continu'd existence" to *impressions*, not ideas.

But this can't be the case, for one powerful reason. A bit further on in his discussion of this matter, Hume discusses "supposing" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198)—or in other words, *imagining*—an "insensible" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198) object that admits of continuity and distinctness. As a result, this "object" could simply *not* be an impression because (a) it is imagined, and as noted above, according to Hume we do not imagine impressions and (b) it is "insensible" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198) and so, *simply by definition*, it could not be an impression. So, from here on out, the reader should keep in mind that where Hume uses the word 'object,' or 'body,' he means an *idea*, not an impression. Why Hume seems to indicate otherwise at the beginning of his discussion of constancy and coherence is a mystery; it might just be terminological carelessness.[4]

[4] To some degree, Price (1940, pp. 32–35) also distinguishes between Hume's notion of an object and the impressions that we believe obtain of such objects, particularly in regard to T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194. However, Price does not argue that according to Hume, an "object" is an idea, but rather,

3.1.2 Constant Impressions

Having removed what could be a major obstacle in our reading—i.e. the mistaken assumption that Hume thinks that we imagine that the properties of continuity and distinctness belong to *impressions*, not ideas—let's examine how Hume thought this imaginative process worked.

Hume explains that contrary to the vulgar perspective, it is not the "involuntariness" (T 1.4.2.16; SBN 194) nor the "force and violence" (T 1.4.2.16; SBN 194) of certain impressions that causes us to imagine objects that are continuous and distinct. For although pains and pleasures are involuntary, as well as, occasionally, forceful and violent, we generally do *not* conceive of pains and pleasures as being *objects*, much less as being *objects* that admit of continuity and distinctness. Rather, we tend to think that pains and pleasures are just intermittent sensations: "[For instance] the pain [of a fire] which it causes upon a near approach, is not taken to have any being except in the perception" (T 1.4.2.16; SBN 194).

Having established as much, Hume concludes that all those objects that we do *imagine* as "continu'd" (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194–5) and so, one may conclude, as distinct as well,[5] are derivative of impressions that "have a peculiar *constancy*, which distinguishes them from the impressions, whose existence depends on our perceptions" (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194–5). The properties of continuity and distinctness seem to presuppose the property of *constancy* in certain impressions. Thus, "constancy" is one of the special qualities that we are looking for. As a result, if we imagine an object that is continuous and distinct, we must be basing our imagined idea of the object on impressions that are constant, where this constancy *is not a function of our constantly having* a certain impression. Instead, this "constancy" obtains despite any interruptions that we may experience while we are having such impressions.

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is a mind-independent material object: "If we are to be accurate and avoid begging questions, we must define constancy entirely in terms of *impressions* (sense data). This Hume himself does not trouble to do; he speaks of mountains, houses, and trees, of his bed and table, books and papers, all of which are, of course, material objects." However, Hume never explicitly asserts that there *are* mind-independent objects. In fact, all of 1.4.2 is devoted to explaining how we come up with *ideas* of objects, not to explaining the nature of mind-indepdent objects (for more on why Hume must be understood as an agnostic in regard to the mind-independent existence of objects, see Chap. 12). Also, Price conflates Hume's account of how we may properly conceive of an object based on the constancy and coherence of our impressions with the vulgar position (parts 2 and 3 of Hume's four-part system; see Chap. 8 for more detail). As a result, I think that Price's account of constancy and coherence is fundamentally misleading; and to some degree, for the same reasons, I think that this is also the case with the majority of the analyses of Hume's account of constancy and coherence. See for instance, Collier (1999) and Stroud (1977).

[5] Recall, as explained in Chap. 4, that Hume is certain that if an object admits of continuity, it must *also* admit of distinctness, and *vice versa*. As a result, his mention of continuity in the line cited above must be understood as standing for both continuity *and* distinctness. As a result, contrary to Bennett's claim, it could not the case that at this point in the text, Hume abruptly begins to "deal with continuity only, independence being silently dropped" (Bennett 1971, p. 322). For recall that distinctness is elliptical for independence and externality (see Chap. 4) Therefore, any discussion of a continued body is, implicitly, a discussion of a distinct body, and so, also, a discussion of an external and *independent* body. Hume is simply assuming that we are keeping these implications in mind.

This is what Hume means when he claims in the line cited above that there are certain constant impressions whose constancy is to be *distinguished from* those impressions whose "[constant] existence depends on our perception." For instance, Hume explains, no matter how often he turns away from certain objects (such as mountains, houses, trees, tables, books and papers), when he senses them again, they always appear the same: "My bed and table, my books and papers, present themselves in the same uniform manner, and change not upon account of any interruption in my seeing or perceiving them" (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194–5).

3.1.3 Coherent Impressions

But are constant impressions sufficient for our imagined conception of objects that are continuous and distinct? No, Hume explains, impressions must be *coherent* as well. This is the case because although certain "bodies" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195) may change slightly over time, we nevertheless tend to think of such things as being the *same* body. For instance, I am certain that the brown rotting orange in my refrigerator is the same orange that was in the fridge last month, although the impressions that I have of it today are quite different from the impressions that I had of it last month. Hume immediately attempts to sketch how and why this is case by introducing a "kind of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195):

> Bodies often change their position and qualities, and after a little absence or interruption may become hardly knowable. But here 'tis observable, that even in these changes they preserve a *coherence*, and have a regular dependence on each other; *which is the foundation of a kind of reasoning from causation; and produces the opinion of their continu'd existence*. (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195; emphasis added).

Despite the changes a body, say, an orange, may experience, these changes cohere in terms of having a "regular dependence on each other." As such, this coherence provides a "foundation" for a "*kind*" of causal reasoning. In turn, this peculiar kind of causal reasoning enables us to imagine an object that has a continued existence.

Moreover, this coherence is a property of certain *impressions*, e.g. the multiple impressions of the rotting orange: "the opinion of the continu'd existence of body depends on the CONSTANCY and COHERENCE of certain *impressions*" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195; emphasis added). However, just what this mysterious *kind* of reasoning from causation is, and why Hume abruptly throws it into the mix here, is not yet clear. Why does he characterize this process in terms of a peculiar *kind* of causal reasoning, rather than causal reasoning *simpliciter*?

4 Altered States of Perception

We can answer this question if we continue to work our way carefully through the text, beginning with an examination of Hume's account of external v. internal impressions.

4.1 External v. Internal Impressions

Hume explains that although certain *internal* impressions (such as pains and/or emotions) are coherent, they are coherent in a way that is *different* from the impressions that seem to be derivative of those objects (i.e. ideas) that we imagine to be continuous and distinct.[6] In particular, Hume explains, although our internal impressions *do* have a certain "mutual connexion with and dependence on each other" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195), it is just not the same kind of connection and dependence that occurs with those impressions that we "discover in bodies" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195), i.e. those bodies that admit of continuity and distinctnesss. What then, is this *special dependence and connection* that impressions discovered in bodies enjoy, but internal impressions do not?

To answer, Hume explains that in the case of internal impressions, we do *not* need to "suppose" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196), i.e. imagine,[7] that they continue to exist in virtue of obtaining of some internal "object" that continues to exist when we are not perceiving it. However, in the case of those impressions that we discover in bodies, we *do* need to suppose that the object that we find them in *does*. For instance (thankfully enough), I need not suppose that after my headache has been wiped-out by the appropriate medicine—such that I am no longer having headache impressions—that it still exists somewhere, ready and waiting to attack at the most inopportune moment. However, "the case is not the same with external objects" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195). For instance, I generally *do* assume that my car continues to exist when I am not having impressions of it. As a result, Hume argues, external objects *must* be imagined as being continuous (and so, distinct as well), despite our interrupted perceptions of them; "[External objects] *require* a continu'd existence, or otherwise lose, in a great measure, the regularity of their operation" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195–6; emphasis added).

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[6] In Hume's words: "we may observe, that 'tho those internal impressions, which we regard as fleeting and perishing, have also a certain coherence or regularity in their appearances, yet 'tis of somewhat a *different nature*, from that which we discover in bodies" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 195). Note that in regard to this passage, some scholars have, I think, fallen into the trap of Hume's terminological carelessness explained above in Sect. 3.1.1. Some think that Hume *does* have *impressions* in mind when he refers to objects that admit of continuity and distinctness. See for instance, D.F. and M.J Norton, eds. Hume's *Treatise* (Hume 2002): "[Here] Hume argues that some of our internal and perishing impressions have a coherence that others lack. If we believe the *objects-impressions* we are currently experiencing are real, it is because we take them to form a coherent set with countless other *objects—impressions*, some of which we only remember, and some which we may never have experienced" (p. 474, note # 20; emphasis added). The Nortons assume that when Hume speaks of objects here, he is simultaneously speaking of impressions, namely, "object-impressions." See also Kemp Smith (1941): "It is quite otherwise with outer *impressions*, they must be supposed to have a *continued existence*, since otherwise they could not possibly have the regularity of operation which we in fact experience them as having" (p. 471; emphases added). Kemp Smith seems to think that Hume is implying that we may *imagine* that continuity is a property of certain impressions. However, as explained above, this cannot be the case.

[7] We may conclude that 'suppose' is interchangeable with 'imagine,' given Hume's earlier claim that the properties of continuity and distinctness must be *imagined* (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 193).

Thus, because we need not imagine that internal impressions occur as a result of some continuous (and so, distinct) object (e.g. a headache that continues to exist somewhere when I am not having it) such internal impressions do not enjoy the same kind of special dependence and connection—or in other words, the *coherence*—that impressions that appear to be caused by *external* objects enjoy. My impressions of my car cohere in a manner that is *different* from the manner in which my headache impressions cohere *in virtue of the fact* that I imagine my car to be continuous (and thus, distinct as well), while I do not do so with my headache.

Speaking of headaches, Hume seems to have abruptly *reversed* his position here. For earlier, as explained in Sect. 3.1.3, we saw that the coherence that obtains of certain impressions "is the *foundation* of a kind of reasoning from causation, and *produces* the opinion of a *continu'd existence* [and thus a distinct existence]" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195; emphases added). According to this line of thought, *continuity (and thus distinctness) presupposes coherence*. Yet here, in regard to the distinction he sets up between internal and external impressions, Hume claims that the special coherence obtaining of impressions that we discover in bodies is a function of our thinking of such objects as being continuous (and thus, distinct). So, according to this line of thought, *coherence presupposes continuity (and thus distinctness)*. Which is it then? The answer to this puzzle, as we will see shortly, is *both*, although at this point in the text, Hume is not nearly as explicit in these matters as he could be. Thus, a summary of both of these processes may help to clarify this puzzle:

A Kind of Reasoning from Causation

1. We experience constant and coherent impressions.
2. *In virtue of* these constant and coherence impressions, we, thanks to a special kind of causation, imagine an idea of an object that represents the properties of continuity and distinctness.

External Objects

1. We have an idea of an object that represents the properties of continuity and distinctness.
2. *In virtue of* that idea, impressions seem constant and coherent.

4.2 The Porter in the Room and Mail on the Desk

To work our way towards Hume's more explicit account of how continuity (and thus distinctness) could *both* presuppose and be presupposed by the coherence that obtains of certain impressions, realize that immediately after presenting the distinction between internal and external impressions, Hume presents three examples that pertain to causality and reality. By doing so, Hume returns, although in a roundabout manner, to that mysterious kind of reasoning from causation mentioned above. I say 'roundabout' because he does so by first examining instances of causal reasoning that are meant to stand in *contrast* to the kind of reasoning from causation introduced earlier

in regard to coherence. This is a distinction that, I think, a majority of scholars are not as clear on as they might be; see for instance, Steinberg (1981).

With this warning in mind, realize that at this point in the text, Hume is still concerned with the continuity (and thus, distinctness) that we must ascribe to external objects in order to think of their impressions as being coherent in a way that internal impressions are not. Thus he writes immediately after distinguishing between internal and external perceptions: "My memory, indeed, informs me of the existence of many objects; but then this information extends not beyond their past existence, *nor do either my senses or memory give any testimony to the continuance of their being*" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196; emphasis added). Although Hume has located the two special properties that belong to impressions (i.e. constancy and coherence) that enable us to imagine an object (i.e. an idea) as continuous and distinct, he is nevertheless, certain that these properties could not be *fully* responsible for the idea that the objects around him afford a continued (and thus distinct) existence. So what else is needed?

4.2.1 Reality Revisited

Hume's answer is: reasoning from cause and effect. However, the reasoning from causation that he discusses here is ***fundamentally distinct*** from the *kind* of reasoning from causation brought up in regard to the coherence that obtains of impressions. To see why, first recall our discussion of reality, belief and causation in Chaps. 2 and 3. There, we saw that Hume thinks that we may take an object to be real only if: (1) We have an idea that exactly represents an impression, or, is an impression itself (i.e. belongs to Hume's first system of reality and so, is an *elementary* belief) or (2) (a) we have some "present impression" (T 1.3.7.5; SBN 96) e.g. an impression p, that (b) triggers us to reflexively conclude q'_{n+1}, and concomitantly, believe that p is a cause and that q'_{n+1} is an effect and that it exists. This is what we referred to as a *causally-produced* belief in Chap. 2. Meanwhile, as we saw in Chap. 3, we may also have *indirect* beliefs, where we may believe in the reality of objects that we have never had impressions of, where these impressions do not *resemble* any impressions we have had. Both indirect and causally-produced beliefs belong to Hume's second system of reality.

With this in mind, consider the three examples presented on T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196–197 where the underlying point of all three is: Based on past experience, or what Hume refers to here as "common experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196), he comes to believe in certain causal relationships. And so, he believes in the *reality* of certain consequents and/or antecedents that fit into those causal relationships. Thus, at this point in 1.4.2, Hume is revisiting his notion of causally-produced beliefs and his second system of reality.

The first example proceeds as follows: Hume explains that he may conclude that the noise of a door indicates that someone (probably a porter) is on the other side of it, pushing it, although he did not actually *see* the door move:

> I have never observ'd that this noise cou'd proceed from anything but the motion of a door; and therefore conclude, that the present phaenomenon is a contradiction to all past experience, *unless* the door, which I remember on the other side of the chamber, be still in being. (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196; emphasis added)

This claim is equivalent to the claim: If it is not the case that the door still exists, then what I have just experienced, and concluded as result of that experience (the door existing) contradicts my past experience. So, the causal relation derivative of Hume's "past experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196) here is: If I hear the sound of the door in my room moving (p), then there is a door moving (q). He *does* hear the sound of the door moving, so he may conclude q'_{n+1}, and so, conclude, evidently by using philosophical causal reasoning,[8] that q'_{n+1} is real; the idea of q'_{n+1} is real (it is "in being"). It has become "bestowed" with vivacity.

The second example proceeds as follows: If it's the case that the stairs have been annihilated, then the porter must have somehow floated up to his room, an event that contradicts Hume's past experience. So, the causal relationship that is derivative of Hume's past experience here is: If the porter is in my room (p), then he must have used the stairs to do so (q). The porter *is* in the room, (p) so Hume may conclude, once again using philosophical causal reasoning, that he must have used the stairs (q'_{n+1}), and so, the stairs (q'_{n+1}) are *real*.

Third, Hume explains that in order for him to be reading a letter from a friend in a distant location, then, according to what is "comformable to my experience in other instances" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196), it must be the case that posts and ferries brought him that letter. So, the causal relationship is: If I have a letter in my hand from a distant friend (p), then posts and ferries must have brought me the letter (q). He *does* have a letter from distant friends in his hand (p), so he can, using philosophical causal reasoning, conclude that posts and ferries brought him the letter (q'_{n+1}), and concomitantly, that posts and ferries are *real*. In fact, to believe that posts and ferries do *not* continue to exist when he receives a letter on his desk, would be a "contradict[tion] to common experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196).

If the reader is in doubt that Hume is revisiting his notion of reality here, consider his own summary of the three examples given in 1.4.2:

> There is scarce a moment in my life, wherein there is not a similar instance presented to me, and I have not occasion *to suppose the continu'd [and thus distinct] existence of objects*, in order to connect their past and present appearances, and give them such a union with each other, as I have by experience to be suitable to their particular natures and circumstances. Here then I am naturally led to regard the world, *as something **real** and durable, and as preserving its existence*, even when it is no longer present to my perception. (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 197; italics and boldness added)

Note that here, in 1.4.2, Hume adds that objects that he thinks are *real*, are continuous and distinct (recall that Hume did not explicitly mention continuity and distinctness—nor invariability and uninterruptedness when discussing reality in 1.3).

However, Hume immediately infers, *this* brand of reasoning from causation, which is necessarily based on "common experience" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197), *is simply not enough* to grant us the idea of an object that admits of continuity

[8] For it seems as though Hume is actively comparing two ideas here, rather than reflexively concluding that q'_{n+1} is real. Recall that philosophical causal reasoning is based on natural causal reasoning, where we may classify both natural and philosophical causation as "ordinary causation."

(and thus distinctness). That is, what we called "ordinary causation" in Chap. 2 is not enough. For, the implication is, although ordinary causation certainly *reassures* us of the continued (and thus distinct) existence of such objects, it is the mysterious "***kind*** of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195; boldness and italics added) mentioned earlier that enables us to *initially* think of objects as being continuous and distinct. So we might conclude that this special "kind of reasoning of causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195) appears to occur *prior* to the reasoning from causation that is based on "common experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196).

In regard to these examples, Bennett (1971) claims that "The notion of 'contradiction' has no place here unless I already accept a large body of theory: the proposition that I inhabit a world of objects, many hypotheses about their general behavior, and some hypotheses of the form 'I have perceptions of kind K only when in the presence of objects of kind K'" (p. 324). In fact, Bennett concludes, "This is the greatest case yet of Hume's failure [to properly] set the scene for an analysis of objectivity-concepts" (p. 324). However, as suggested above, Hume surely does have a "large body of theory" in place regarding the nature of objects; this is precisely why he must introduce the notion of a special "kind of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195) to explain how and why we believe we live in a world of objects. In fact, the remainder of 1.4.2 is meant to illustrate just how this unusual reasoning from causation properly takes place v. (a) How it does not take place, specifically, in terms of a "vulgar" misconception of objects and (b) How it is misunderstood by the philosophers. See also Steinberg (1981), who suggests that "belief in continued existence [as illustrated by the three examples noted above] involves a belief about identity" (p. 110). Here, Steinberg is, I think, indirectly referring to the identity that turns on a kind of causal reasoning that is not directly based on experience.

4.3 A Kind of Reasoning from Causation: In More Detail

4.3.1 Not Directly Based on Experience

To see that Hume thinks that reasoning from causation that is based on "common experience" (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 196) is *not* capable of providing us with our *initial* notion of a continued (and thus distinct) object, realize that immediately after his discussion of the three examples mentioned above, he writes:

> But tho' this conclusion from the coherence of appearances may seem to be of the same nature with our reasonings concerning causes and effects; as being deriv'd from custom, and regulated by past experience [as illustrated by the three examples given above]; we shall find upon examination that they are at the bottom *considerably different* from each other, and that this inference arises from the understanding, and from custom in an *indirect and oblique manner.* (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197; emphases added)

Hume's line of thought here may be understood as follows: Indeed, "this conclusion from the coherence of appearances" does seem to be *like* the causal reasoning "deriv'd from custom" explained above in terms of the three examples. However, it

is not. In fact, "this conclusion from the coherence of appearances" is, Hume clearly states, "*considerably different*" (emphasis added) from causal reasoning that is derivative of custom. In particular, although "this conclusion" does "arise" from custom, it does so in a decidedly "indirect and oblique manner." Thus, we are *not* dealing with ordinary causation here.

Also, it *must* be the case that "this conclusion from the coherence of appearances" is a direct reference to the kind of reasoning from causation mentioned earlier in regard to the coherence that admits of impressions (recall Sect. 3.1.3 of this chapter). There are three reasons for concluding as much: (a) Such a "conclusion" could *not* be a reference to the causal reasoning that takes place in terms of the three examples summarized above because, as noted, all three of these examples illustrate cases where the causal reasoning at hand *is* directly derivative of custom, while the "conclusion" noted above is clearly not. (b) Nevertheless, "this conclusion from the coherence of appearances" must be some kind of *causal* reasoning because Hume specifically refers to it here as an "inference." Recall that according to Hume, there are only two kinds of inference, demonstrative and causal. As a result, since there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Hume has a demonstrative "inference" in mind here, he must, by default, have a *causal* inference in mind. (c) Finally, we saw in Sect. 3.1.3 that this certain kind of reasoning from causation has a "foundation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195) in the coherence that we discover in impressions and, when supported as such, this causal reasoning, allows us, somehow, to think of an object as continued (and thus, as distinct). Thus, this kind of reasoning from causation is in fact, a *conclusion* that is based on the coherence that admits of certain impressions, which is precisely what Hume seems to be referring to here, i.e., "this *conclusion* from the coherence of appearances" (emphasis added).

Consequently, it is clear that Hume has decisively switched gears in the paragraph cited above. He moves from discussing causal reasoning based on *experience*, to a "**kind**" of reasoning from causation that is *not* directly based on experience, which allows us to imagine an object (i.e. an idea) as being continuous and distinct.[9] A question lingers though—is this an instance of the *indirect* causation that we discussed in Chap. 3, where we have not had impressions of the effect q'_{1-n}? No. For recall that in the case of indirect causation, we must appeal to custom—in the form of a principle that allows us to imagine an effect q'_{n+1}. We must also appeal to other people's experiences. We see no such principles at work here, nor any mention of other people's experiences.

Thus, we have once again run up against a very unusual kind of causation, which we have already examined at some length in Chap. 5, i.e. *transcendental causal reasoning*; it is a kind of reasoning that seems to be presupposed by our ordinary, or "common" experience. In particular, it allows us to come with ideas of continuous and distinct objects such that we may think of those objects as participating in ordinary and indirect causal relations (c.f. Kemp Smith 1941, pp. 133–134). Moreover, Hume

[9] Where, as noted above, I suggest that former process presupposes the latter process, and thus, contrary to Bennett's claim does seem to "set the scene for an analysis of objectivity-concepts" (1971, p. 324).

is abundantly clear that we do not sense the properties of continuity and distinctness (recall Chap. 4). Rather, we imagine them. Thus, our "perception" of such properties, could not be an instance of *ordinary* Humean perceptions, i.e. impressions and/or ideas that represent impressions.

Relatedly, Hume immediately tells us that some might complain that it seems that we could *never* come up with any kind of "regularity" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197) that goes *beyond* the regularity of our perceptions. For, as Hume puts it: "'twill readily be allow'd that … nothing is ever really present to the mind, besides its own perceptions" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197). Because all ideas are ultimately derivative of impressions, any regularity that impressions admit of, must, it seems, originate *in* those impressions. To argue otherwise it seems, would be a contradiction.[10] As a result, it appears that transcendental causal reasoning—which is *not* directly derivative of custom—is a non-starter. *However,* Hume immediately continues:

> But 'tis evident, that whenever we infer the *continu'd existence* of the objects of sense *from their coherence, and the frequency of their union*, 'tis in order to bestow on the objects a greater regularity than what is observ'd in our mere perceptions. We remark a connexion betwixt two kinds of objects in their past appearance to the senses, but are not able to observe this connexion to be *perfectly constant,* since the turning about of our head, or the shutting of our eyes is able to break it. (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197–8; emphasis added)

Here, Hume claims that based on the constancy (which Hume refers to as kind of "frequency") and coherence that we do glean from *impressions* (i.e. proto-objects)—which is not perfect, namely, is not "perfectly constant,"[11]—we imagine an object to be continuous (and thus distinct). We "*infer* the continu'd [and thus distinct] existence of the objects *from* [certain impressions'] coherence and the frequency of their union" (emphasis added). This means that by using that special kind of reasoning from causation—which is not directly based on experience—we "infer" that some continuous and distinct object must be the *cause* of the impressions (i.e. proto-objects) in order to explain the constancy and coherence that our impressions do clearly admit of. For how else, the idea is, could my impressions of say, a mountain, be constant and coherent, no matter how many times they are interrupted, *unless* there is some continuous and distinct object *causing* those impressions?[12] Here then, is the "conclusion

[10] Recall that Hume also makes this point in T 1.2.6.8–9; SBN 67–68, and in fact, reminds us of as much at the very beginning of his discussion of constancy and coherence (T 1.4.2.3; SBN 188). Or, as Hume puts it on T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197: "For 'twill readily be allow'd that since nothing is ever really present to the mind, besides its own perceptions, 'tis not only impossible, that any habit shou'd ever be acquir'd otherwise than by the regular succession of these perceptions, but also that any habit shou'd ever exceed that degree of regularity. Any degree, therefore, of regularity in our perceptions, can never be a foundation for us to infer a greater degree of regularity in some objects, which are not perceiv'd; since this supposes a contradiction, *viz.* a habit acquir'd by what was never present to the mind."

[11] And nor, we must assume, perfectly coherent, although Hume does not explicitly say as much here. However, he does just a bit further on in the text (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198).

[12] Some might argue that as a result, Hume is trotting out what he will characterize a bit further on in 1.4.2 as the "philosopher's" position (T 1.4.2.43–1.4.2.57; SBN 209–218). However, we must realize that this is *not* the case, for a somewhat simple reason: According to the philosophers,

from the coherence[13] of appearances" which, as we saw above, is equivalent to a certain kind of reasoning from causation, or in other words, what Hume refers to in the line just cited, as an "infer[ence]." In turn, *in virtue of imagining* an object to be continuous (and thus distinct), such objects simultaneously admit of a "*greater regularity* than what is observ'd in our mere perceptions" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197; emphases added).

Yet why, one might ask, isn't this mysterious kind of reasoning from causation (i.e. what I am calling "transcendental" reasoning) based on experience in the way that ordinary reasoning from causation is? Hume answers this question in the immediately following passage, where he claims that we must "suppose" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198) that "***in*sensible**" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198; emphasis added) objects *continue* to exist, despite our interrupted sensations of them, where, important to note, by 'suppose' he must mean 'imagine:'[14] "What then do we *suppose* in this case, but that these objects still *continue* their usual connexion [and so, are distinct], notwithstanding their apparent interruption, and that the irregular appearances are join'd by something, of which we are ***insensible***?" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198; emphasis added) Having noted this, Hume finds it necessary to immediately repeat his point that this continuous (and thus distinct) "insensible" object that we "suppose," i.e, imagine, thanks to the constancy and coherence that admits of certain impressions, could not be a function of *custom*. This is the case simply because by definition, ***we never have an impression of an insensible object***. And so, once again (recall Chap. 5) we must reject at least Price's notion of a transcendental imagination (1940). For recall the Introduction to Part II of this book, where we saw Price claim that according to Hume, we cannot, in principle, imagine an insensible cause (1940, p. 26). However, in the case of transcendental causation, we clearly *do* imagine an insensible cause. When we imagine a continuous and distinct object to be the cause of our constant and coherent impressions (i.e. proto-objects), we are imagining a cause that we have never actually experienced, and so, it simply follows that *this* kind of causal reasoning is, as Hume warned us above, "*considerably different*" from the causal reasoning that *is* a direct function of custom (i.e. ordinary causal reasoning). As a result, Hume immediately remarks after the line cited above, that this special kind transcendental causal reasoning takes place thanks to the "co-operation of some *other* principles" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198; emphasis added).[15]

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thanks to just *reason*, we may conclude that objects must exist as the causes of our various interrupted and variable impression of them. As a result, the philosophers claim that external objects (objects that exist independent of our perceptions of them) must exist. However, here, Hume is *not* claiming that objects admitting of continuity and distinctness *must* exist. Rather, such objects are necessarily *imagined*, a point that the philosophers are never aware of. See Chap. 9 for more detail.

[13] We will see shortly that is not just the coherence of impressions that Hume has in mind here, but also, their constancy (see T 1.4.2.23; SBN 199).

[14] This simply follows given Hume's earlier claim that the properties of continuity and distinctness must be imagined (T 1.4.2.14; SBN 193). As a result, in this case, 'suppose' is interchangeable with 'imagine.'

[15] Or as Hume puts it, "But as all reasoning concerning matters of fact arises only from custom, and custom can only be the effect of repeated perceptions, the extending of custom and reasoning beyond the perceptions can never be the direct and natural effect of the constant repetition and connexion, but must arise from the co-operation of some other principles" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198).

4.3.2 An Indirect and Oblique Kind of Custom

To explain what these "other" principles are, particularly in terms of how they may be driven by an "indirect and oblique" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197) kind of custom, realize that immediately after the line cited above Hume writes:

> I have already observ'd, in examining the foundation of mathematics, that the *imagination*, when set into any train of thinking, is apt to continue, even when its object fail it, and like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse. This I have assign'd for the reason, why, after considering several *loose* standards of equality, and correcting them by each other, we proceed to imagine so correct and *exact* a standard of that relation, as is not liable to the least error or variation. (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198; emphases added)

Hume's reasoning may be understood as follows: Mathematics has a pyschological "foundation" just as the notion of continuity (and thus distinctness) does.[16] In particular, although we might—evidently by way of impressions—have certain "loose standards of equality," we may, after comparing a number of such loose standards, imagine "a[n] exact standard of that relation [of equality]." As a result, the implication is, we may then think of our "loose" standards of equality *in terms of* our newly-minted "precise" standards; i.e. the former are evaluated in terms of the latter. As a result, our "exact" notion of equality is, in an *oblique* manner, based on our impressions. It's just that the imagination has elevated our notion of equality to a level that we never actually experience in the world. Having established this, Hume immediately and now, finally, *explicitly* explains that an analogous process occurs when it comes to imagining an object to be continuous (and thus distinct). Note:

> *The same principle makes us easily entertain this opinion of the continu'd existence of body.* Objects have a certain coherence even as they appear to our senses; but this coherence is much greater and more uniform, *if we suppose the objects to have a continu'd existence;* and as the mind is once in the train of observing an uniformity among objects, it naturally continues, till it renders the uniformity as compleat as possible. The simple supposition of their continu'd existence suffices for this purpose, and gives us a notion of a much greater regularity among objects, than what they have when we look no farther than our senses. (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198; emphases added)

Just like equality, coherence[17] is initially perceived somewhat "loose[ly]," or as Hume puts it here: "[proto] objects have a *certain* coherence even as they appear to our senses" (emphasis added). However, as a result of "supposing," or in other words,

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[16] Recall Sect. 3.1.3 where we discussed Hume's claim that the coherence that admits of impressions "is the *foundation* of a kind of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195; emphasis added).

[17] Granted, Hume only mentions coherence here. But note that shortly after this passage, he includes constancy as well: "But whatever force we may ascribe to this principle, I am afraid 'tis too weak to support alone so vast an edifice, as is that of the continu'd existence of all external bodies; and that we must join the constancy of their appearance to the coherence, in order to give a satisfactory account of that opinion" (T 1.4.2.23; SBN 199). That is, in order to imagine a continuous and distinct object, impressions must be coherent *and* constant. He also claims that objects are also capable of being understood as "perfectly constant" on T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198.

imagining that "insensible" continuous and distinct objects cause our impressions, these impressions, i.e. these proto-objects take on a "greater and more uniform coherence." That is, our impressions seem more "compleat." For instance, in virtue of imagining a continuous and distinct mountain (of which I have never had an impression), as the cause of my impressions (proto-objects), my impressions (proto-objects) subsequently seem even more constant and even more coherent; they take on a greater regularity. Thus, although the idea of a continuous and distinct object does not *exactly* represent any impression (it is "insensible"), it is "obliquely" and "indirectly" related to experience. In Chap. 7, we see just how this oblique relationship is cashed out in regard to Hume's notion of an abstract idea.

5 Summary: Transcendental Causation and the Connection to Secret Causes

Recall that in the Introduction to Part II of this book, we established that for our purposes, 'transcendental' simply means "presupposes ordinary experience." I think it is clear then, that the special "kind" of causation that we explicated in this chapter fits this description. This is the case for the following reasons:

1. Neither (a) the senses, nor (b) reason, enable us to believe that an object is continuous and distinct. We saw why (a) was the case in Chap. 4. As for (b), Hume explains that reason (particularly, philosophical reasoning) leads us to believe that the world—including all objects—is *fragmented,* not continuous and distinct. So *reason* can't be responsible for our beliefs that objects are continuous and distinct.
2. Rather, the *imagination* enables us to believe that objects are continuous and distinct. But the imagination can only do so with the help of *constant* and *coherent* impressions, i.e. constant and coherent proto-objects.
3. We may characterize the "loose" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) or imperfect (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197) constancy and coherence that we initially apprehend in impressions (proto-objects) as **Level 1 constancy and coherence**.
4. Meanwhile, the more "regular" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) way in which impressions (proto-objects) appear to us *in virtue of* imagining continuous and distinct objects, may be characterized as **Level 2 constancy and coherence**.
5. This means that the puzzle raised in Sect. 4.1 of this chapter may finally be answered: continuity (and thus distinctness) does indeed presuppose Level 1 coherence (as well as constancy). For it is the initial and incomplete constancy and coherence of our impressions (proto-objects) that somehow[18] inspires us to imagine

[18] Hume is admittedly vague here in regard to just how this inspiration works, however, he does write that "the explication of [this process] will lead into a considerable compass of very profound reasoning" (T 1.4.2.24; SBN 199), where that explication is given in part 1 of his four-part system presented in 1.4.2. In Part III of this book, we see why this process is not to be confused with the vulgar position.

continuous and distinct objects as being the "insensible" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) causes of such initial impressions (proto-objects). In fact, it is in precisely the respect that such Level 1 constancy and coherence prompts us to imagine continuous and distinct objects as the *causes* of our impressions (proto-objects), that this special "kind of reasoning from causation" is "indirect[ly] and oblique[ly]" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197) rooted in experience; it is guided by Level 1 constancy and coherence. Meanwhile, Level 2 coherence (and constancy) does indeed presuppose our imagined notions of continuous and distinct objects. This is the case because in virtue of imagining continuous and distinct objects as being the respective causes of external impressions, such external impressions (proto-objects) admit of a more "uniform" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) coherence (and constancy) than internal impressions do. And so, in this qualified respect, constancy and coherence *both* presupposes and is presupposed by continuity (and thus distinctness).

6. Thus, we may refer to this special kind of causation as *transcendental* causation. It is not to be confused with ordinary causation (discussed in Chap. 2 where, recall, ordinary causation includes natural and philosophical causation), nor with indirect causation (discussed in Chap. 3). In particular, it seems clear enough that according to Hume and contrary to Bennett (1971, p. 324), that this special "kind of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195) *must* occur prior to at least philosophical causal reasoning, where the latter, as noted in Sect. 4.2. seems to, at best, *reassure* us of an object's continuous and distinct existence. We might then, in this respect refer to these imagined objects as "pre-theoretical" (c.f. Pears 1990; Mounce 1999).[19] For, it seems, if we did not *first* imagine objects, say X and Y, as continuous and distinct from our perception of them, we could not conceive of two mind-independent objects X and Y as standing in a causal relationship, at least from a *philosophical* point of view.[20]

However, one might ask: How can we "perceive" (imagine) secret causes if, technically speaking, we seem to have no perception of them, i.e. they are "insensible"? According to what we have seen in this chapter, Hume's answer is: the (Level 1) constancy and coherence of our impressions (proto-objects) triggers us to imagine

[19] However, Pears does not distinguish between Hume's position and the vulgar position, and so, I think, does not effectively capture what is going on in 1.4.2. Meanwhile Mounce writes: "The naturalism which appears in the profounder aspects of Hume's work is the same as the Scottish naturalists … It holds that the source of our knowledge lies not in our experience or reasoning but in our relations to the world which for the most part pass beyond our knowledge. Thus in all our experience or reasoning we presuppose our belief in causality or in an independent world" (Mounce 1999, p. 8; also see Kemp Smith (1941)). But this is not quite right. Rather, the constancy and coherence of our impressions (our experience) *does*, indeed, initially regulate us such that we can imagine the causes we do. See Parts III and IV of this book for more detail.

[20] However, our ability to think in terms of *natural* causal relations does not seem to presuppose our ability to think of continuous and distinct objects. Rather, as shown in Chap. 2, we need only appeal to elementary beliefs, or equivalently, proto-objects, which, as we saw in Chap. 4, are not continuous and/or distinct, and nor do we imagine them to be continuous and/or distinct. For more detail on this matter, see Chap. 12, Sect. 3.

an "insensible" cause of such (Level 1) constancy and coherence. In this respect, our imagined idea is "obliquely" and "indirectly" related to impressions and thus, although such insensible causes could not "represent" (recall Chap. 1) impressions (proto-objects) in the respect that they represent the properties of continuity and distinctness, they *are* "indirectly" related to impressions (proto-objects). Thus, we must be dealing with a *special case* of "indirect" perceptions here, where these perceptions regulate, or order our impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions (i.e. proto-objects), specifically, they make them more constant and coherent than they would be otherwise.[21]

Also, our ability imagine an insensible *property* must be a product of a special kind of imaginative ability. For recall that in Chap. 1, we saw that ordinarily, the imagination may re-order and re-arrange the manner in which impressions occur to us, such that we may, say, imagine the idea of a unicorn by combining our ideas of our impressions of a horse and a goat. However, as we saw in Chap. 4, the ideas of continuity and distinctness are not based on impressions. Rather, as pointed out a number of times now, in order to apprehend our impressions (proto-objects) as more constant, and as more coherent, we must imagine these unsensed properties. Thus, we may think of this special aspect of the imagination as being *transcendental;* it is presupposed by ordinary experience.

Moreover, the insensible imagined causes that Hume discusses in this Section of 1.4.2 bear a striking resemblance to the secret causes discussed in Chap. 5 in regard to 1.3.2. For although in this Section of 1.4.2, Hume explains how we imagine a cause that we think admits of *continuity* and *distinctness*, and in 1.3.2 he discusses an imagined cause that we think admits of *invariability* and *uninterruptedness*, in both cases we are dealing with an object that we imagine thanks to a set, i.e. a "species" of resembling (i.e. constant) impressions (proto-objects). Also in both cases, it seems that we must do so in order to conceive of a world of objects and the various relations that obtain of them. Thus, setting aside the precise relationship between the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness v. continuity and distinctness for the moment, it seems clear that in both cases, Hume has "secret causes" in mind, i.e. objects that we believe admit of a perfect identity. Moreover, in both cases we employ what looks to be a transcendental faculty of the imagination, and transcendental causal reasoning.

[21] Think, for instance, of Kant's "pure intuitions" of space and time. They are presupposed by our ability to have empirical intuitions and thus, are not to be identified with them; nevertheless, both are intuitions. Very generally speaking, Hume seems to have had something similar in mind in regard to perceptions, viz. perceptions of a continuous and distinct object that are presupposed by ordinary, i.e. empirical perceptions and thus, are not to be identified with such empirical perceptions.

Chapter 7
Unity, Number and Time: The Third Account of Transcendental Perfect Identity

1 Introduction

Immediately after discussing what we identified in Chap. 6 as transcendental causation in 1.4.2, Hume introduces his four-part system. A detailed explanation of this system is lacking in the literature, although Kemp Smith (1941), does parse it into respective parts, and gives a brief explanation of it *as* a four-part system (pp. 474–487). However, in the next few chapters I give a much more exhaustive account.[1]

Before we begin, it will be helpful to sketch the general overview of the system (T 1.4.2.25–43; SBN 199–210). In part 1, Hume explains his "*principium individuationis*," i.e. his principle of individuation. In the second part, he explains what I argue is the vulgar's *initial* conception of objects. Meanwhile, the third part consists of what I show is the vulgar's *second* account of objects (c.f. Rocknak 2007). Finally and fourthly, he explains why we might be inclined to *believe* in vulgar position II. Immediately following his presentation of this system, Hume explains how the philosophers react to the vulgar and why this reaction is inherently flawed (T 1.4.2.43; SBN 209–57).

In this chapter, we focus on part 1 of his system, the principle of individuation. In the course of doing so, we explicate Hume's *third* account of perfect identity, where, I argue in Chaps. 8 and 9, perfect identity is not to be confused with the vulgar account of identity, nor with the philosophical account of identity.

[1] Moreover, in the course of explaining this system, Kemp Smith does not distinguish between the vulgar position and Hume's position (see Part III of this book for more on this distinction). As a I result, I think that he significantly compromises his analysis.

S. Rocknak, *Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects*,
The New Synthese Historical Library 71, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-2187-6_7,

2 Identity: The Imagined Medium Between Unity and Number

Hume begins part 1 of his system with the remark that "As to the principle of individuation, we may observe, that the view of any *one* object is not sufficient to convey the *idea* of identity" (T 1.4.2.26; SBN 200; emphases added). Thus, not only do we see, once again, that identity is an *idea*, but we see further textual evidence to support the fact that according to Hume, identity is not derived from a *singular* "object" (recall Hume's first account of perfect identity, where he discussed a perfectly resembling "species" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) of proto-objects; see Chap. 5). However, in 1.3.2, Hume only briefly sketched why the idea of identity is linked to a "species" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) of proto-objects. There, he merely tells us that a "secret," i.e., imagined, cause is "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) posited as the source of such a species.

But in 1.4.2, immediately after the line cited above, Hume attempts to explain in more detail *why* a single object (as opposed to a "species") is not enough to convey the idea of identity:

> For in [the following] proposition, *an object is the same with itself*, if the idea express'd by the word, *object*, were in no ways distinguish'd from that meant by *itself*; we really shou'd mean nothing, nor wou'd the proposition contain a predicate and a subject, which however are imply'd in this affirmation. One single object conveys the idea of *unity,* not that of *identity.* (T 1.4.2.26; SBN 200; last two emphases added)

To determine if an object possesses identity, which in this case, would mean it is identical with itself—you'd have to have at least two similar, but somehow *distinguishable* objects to make the comparison. Otherwise, the comparison "shou'd mean nothing." Thus, Hume adds, because a single object may not be distinguished from itself, it is impossible for it to convey the idea of identity. Instead, it merely conveys the idea of **unity**.

May then, the idea of identity be "conveyed" by a comparison of a *number* of objects? Hume answers immediately after the passage cited above:

> On the other hand, a multiplicity of objects can never convey this idea [of identity], however resembling they may be suppos'd. The mind always pronounces the one not to be the other, and considers them as forming two, three, or any determinate number of objects, whose existences are entirely distinct and independent. (T 1.4.2.27; SBN 200)

Upon consideration of a number of objects, however "resembling," the human mind does not immediately come up with the idea of identity. This is the case simply because it continues to think of these objects as distinct. Thus, according to Hume, with consideration of a *set* of resembling objects, the idea of **number** is conveyed, rather than the idea of identity.[2]

[2] Note however, that the vulgar initially seem to do just that—they reflexively identify a number of resembling perceptions into what they take to be an "object." But for the reasons noted above (in addition to the problems Hume points out further on in 1.4.2), this could not be a proper account of identity.

Yet if a human being cannot grasp the notion of identity with consideration of a single object, *nor* from a multiplicity of objects, where does it come from? From what is it "conveyed?" Hume's immediate reply:

> Since then both number and unity are incompatible with the relation of identity, it must lie in something that is neither of them. But to tell the truth, at first sight this seems utterly impossible. Betwixt unity and number there can be no medium; no more than betwixt existence and non-existence. After one object is suppos'd to exist, we must either suppose another also to exist; in which case we have the idea of number: Or we must suppose it not to exist; in which case the first object remains at unity. (T 1.4.2.28; SBN 200)

An object is either "unified" or "numerous" but never both, for these are mutually exclusive concepts, just as existence and non-existence are. As a result, just as an object either exists or does not, there are sets of ("numerous") objects or single ("unified") objects, but, it seems, an object cannot be both simultaneously. However, Hume immediately continues:

> To remove this difficulty, let us have recourse to the idea of time and duration. I have already observ'd that time, in a strict sense, implies succession, and that when we apply its idea to any unchangeable object, 'tis only by a fiction of the *imagination*, by which the unchangeable object is suppos'd to *participate* of the changes of the co-existent objects, and *in particular of that of our perceptions*. This fiction of the *imagination* almost universally takes place; and 'tis by means of it, that a single object, plac'd before us, and surveyed for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation, is able to give us a notion of identity. (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1; emphases added)

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. 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."

2.1 A Brief Discussion of Time

To date, Baxter's book, *Hume's Difficulty* (2008) gives the most comprehensive and careful account of Hume's notion of time and identity in 1.4.2. Thus, to properly frame my discussion of time and identity in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system, we must work through a brief analysis of Baxter's account. Our particular focus will be on Baxter's understanding and application of "steadfast" objects, which we must reject. In turn, we must reject the bulk of Baxter's analysis concerning time and identity since it pivots on his interpretation of steadfast objects. Moreover, Baxter does not take Hume's other discussions of perfect identity into careful account—particularly, the discussion of perfect identity given in 1.3.2 (recall Chap. 5), and the discussion of perfect identity given earlier in 1.4.2, just before he introduces his four-part system (recall Chap. 6). As a result, Baxter cannot effectively contextualize

Hume's account of identity given in part 1 of 1.4.2's system. Nor does Baxter sufficiently distinguish between Hume's position and the vulgar position; in fact, in Chap. 8, it will become clear why some "steadfast objects" reflect the *vulgar* misconception of objects.

2.1.1 Baxter and Steadfast Objects

According to Baxter, time is an "abstract idea of any succession *qua* many things in a succession" (2008, p. 17). The idea of time is an idea of particular succession that calls to mind ideas of other, resembling successions, where these successions resemble each other in virtue of being successions (2008, p. 19). Generally speaking, this account squares with at least Garrett's (1997) account of time, where Garrett writes: "One's abstract idea of time is thus a temporally complex idea [of a succession], associated with a general term that revives a disposition to call up other temporally complex ideas. This temporally complex idea is either directly or in its simpler parts copied from corresponding impressions" (1997, p. 53).

However, although both Baxter and Garrett agree that according to Hume, time is an abstract idea, Garrett, along with at least Kemp Smith (1941, p. 274), Falkenstein (1997a, p. 180), and Frasca-Spada (1998, p. 74), emphasizes the "manner" or the *way* in which our impressions occur, where the "manner" of a set of successive impressions is their very successiveness. Such impressions are perceived *as* a succession, i.e. this is the *way* in which they occur to us. This manner is analogous to the "manner" or, the *way* in which impressions are arranged, such that we can come up with an abstract idea of space. Or as Garrett puts it: "space is a *manner* in which two or more such *minima sensibilia* are ordered or arranged relative to one another" (1997, p. 53; first emphasis added). The "manner" that obtains in the case of space is the way in which impressions are simultaneously (i.e. not successively) related to each other, e.g. one impression might be above another impression while being below another impression. Hume also refers to this as the way in which our impressions are "dispos'd" (T 1.2.3.4; SBN 34).

In a footnote, Baxter explains how his account both differs and squares with Garrett's (1997):

> Although Garrett says that space and time themselves are *manners*, I think our accounts of the abstract ideas of space and time are otherwise perfectly compatible. He focuses on what the ideas *are*, I focus here on what they are *of*. The ideas he describes are not simply of manners, I think, but also of simples arranged in these manners. (2008, fn 19, p. 103; emphasis added)

As noted above, Garrett emphasizes Hume's talk of the way in which certain impressions appear to us, i.e. their manner, or their particular arrangement. Meanwhile, Baxter's account focuses on the parts that *comprise* these manners, i.e. these arrangements—in addition to keeping the manner, i.e. their successiveness in mind. To defend this emphasis, Baxter writes:

> For Hume there is no distinction between the idea of a manner and the general idea of objects arrayed in that manner. For us who make the distinction, however, Hume's idea of time is more perspicuously thought of as the latter. There is an added advantage to my view.

> Thinking of time as a manner makes it hard to see what parts of time could be. How would a manner have parts? But surely it is not hard to conceive how a succession in general has parts. (p. 21; emphasis added)

To properly discuss the parts of time (and analogously, space, although this is not Baxter's focus here), we must be able to coherently speak of the parts of successions. These parts, Baxter explains, are *moments*. However, we need to distinguish between actual moments and our ideas of moments. Our idea of a moment, just like our idea of time, is an abstract idea. More specifically, our idea of a moment is an idea of a particular moment that brings to mind other resembling members of the succession (i.e. what Garrett (1997) would refer to as the "revival set"). Baxter writes: "the idea of a moment is the idea of a member of a succession *qua* member" (2008, p. 17). However, Baxter claims, according to Hume, only successions have "duration," i.e. last for any period of time (2008, p. 21). Our abstract idea of time amounts to an abstract idea of a succession, and likewise, of a duration. Baxter writes: "Hume seems to use 'time' and 'duration' interchangeably within T 1.2.3.6–11; SBN 34–7, 39 … Thus, 'time,' 'a succession' and 'a duration,' when used generally are interchangeable for Hume" (2008, p. 19). Relatedly, Baxter writes that according to Hume: "*all* successions have duration. Since the idea of duration is the idea of a succession *qua* succession, it applies to any succession" (2008, p. 21). In fact, Baxter continues, *only* successions have duration. This is the case because "objects which exist only for a brief moment do not have duration" (2008, p. 21).

However, Baxter claims that according to Hume, there are objects that are "stedfast and unchangeable" (T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37), which, as such, would *seem* to last longer than a brief moment. Yet they are objects that do not admit of "any change or succession" (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65). Thus, Baxter concludes, because "steadfast" objects are only single objects, not successions of distinct objects, it follows that "the idea of a steadfast object *cannot* serve as an idea of a duration" (2008, p. 21; emphasis added). Baxter cites T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37 as evidence. Meanwhile, moments, Baxter claims, do not have any duration either, i.e. they do not last or "endure" (2008, p. 30). Thus, Baxter argues that according to Hume "moments" (things that lack duration) are actually the "steadfast" objects noted above. These moments/steadfast objects, Baxter argues, are what Hume has in mind when he speaks of those parts of time that are not infinitely divisible: "moments are not composed of briefer moments and so are single things, whereas durations and successions are really many things" (2008, p. 22).

To show that this is the case, Baxter presents a sympathetic reconstruction of Hume's arguments regarding the finite divisibility of time. By doing so, Baxter joins the ranks of a minority of scholars,[3] which include Franklin (1994), Frasca-Spada (1998), Holden (2002), Jacquette (2002) and Falkenstein (2006). Meanwhile, many other commentators have either ignored Hume's discussion of space and time, or have attacked his analysis (e.g. Kemp Smith 1941; Hendel 1963; Broad 1961; Flew 1976;

[3] It should be noted that Baxter defends Hume's arguments regarding the finite divisibility of time in earlier works as well, e.g. (1988).

Fogelin 1985). However, the details of Baxter's defense—although very interesting—are not relevant to our project.[4] Rather, all we need to know is that Baxter ultimately concludes that according to Hume, "moments are single things" (2008, p. 29), which as such, are indivisible units, i.e. are "steadfast objects." Relatedly, Baxter writes:

> as seen in the Malezieu argument, anything divisible is really many things. So durations and successions [i.e. time] are really many things. The things in time are either temporal simples or temporal complexes. Only the former are single things; only the latter have duration. (2008, p. 29)

Having established that Hume's arguments regarding the finite divisibility of time should be taken seriously, Baxter proceeds to give more textual evidence that seems to show that Hume did, indeed, believe in steadfast objects (recall that earlier, he cited T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37 and T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65). In particular, he cites T 1.4.6.8; SBN 255, where Hume seems to claim that steadfast objects can move; "For example, Hume says the parts of a mass of matter can continue uninterruptedly and invariably the same whatever motion they engage in" (2008, p. 30).

Baxter then argues that some steadfast objects (which "do *not* endure" 2008, p. 30) *co-exist* with successions (which *do* endure). Baxter's argument for concluding as much is as follows (2008, p. 31):

1. If something has temporal parts, then it consists of a "number of things" that occur in succession.
2. Thus, if something is not a succession, then it does not consist of a number of things that occur in succession.
3. Thus, if something is not a succession, it is a single thing.
4. "So a single thing remaining unrealized lacks temporal parts because it is not a succession" (2008, 31).
5. "Thus, Hume thinks that a single thing lacking temporal parts can coexist with a succession of things" (2008, p. 31).

Baxter acknowledges that this position seems rather incoherent, writing: "Hume may have held this view, but it seems inconsistent: a steadfast object lacks duration because it is not a succession, but would *seem to have duration* because it exists more than just briefly" (2008, p. 36; emphases added). On the one hand, because a steadfast object is not a succession, it lacks duration (see above). Yet on the other hand, because it is *steadfast*, it seems to last, such that it may coexist with something that does have duration, i.e. a succession.

But before Baxter can present his explanation for why this position is *not* incoherent, he cites textual evidence that, he argues, supports the interpretation that

[4] Generally speaking, Baxter proceeds as follows: In order for the Malezieu argument, presented on T 1.2.2.3; SBN 30–1 and the Additional argument, presented on T 1.2.2.4; SBN 31 to be taken seriously, Baxter must defend three assumptions made by Hume: (1) The Divisibility Assumption (T 1.2.2.2.; SBN 29–30), i.e. the idea that if something is actually divisible, then it has parts. (2) The Plurality Assumption (T 1.2.2.3; SBN 30), i.e. the idea that if something has parts, then it is many things, not a single thing. (3) The Existence Assumption (T 1.2.2.3; SBN 30), i.e. the idea that "only single things really exist" (2008, p. 26).

Hume thought that steadfast objects (single moments) may co-exist with successions (durations). In particular, he cites T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65 again, where Baxter claims that "Hume specifically discusses a steadfast object regarded at different times, coexisting with a 'continual succession of perceptions, in our mind'" (2008, p. 31). Baxter also cites T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1, as well as T 1.2.3.7; SBN 35, T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203, and 1.4.2.35; SBN 204.

Having cited these passages, Baxter proceeds to address various scholarly accounts that preclude the existence of steadfast objects, e.g. Stroud (1977), Bennett (2001), Green (1886), Price (1940) and Waxman (1992). These scholars all defend some version of what Baxter calls the "Brevity Assumption," i.e. they think that "all temporally simple perceptions (both impressions and ideas) are uniformly exceedingly brief in their existence…they say that perceptions that *seem* long are really uninterrupted successions of exactly resembling perceptions" (2008, p. 33; emphasis added). Generally speaking, to defend his position, Baxter refers to the passages he cited earlier regarding steadfast objects, while explaining away other passages that seem to support the Brevity Assumption. All of these passages are examined at length in the remaining sections of this chapter and in the remaining chapters of this book.

Following, Baxter explains why Hume's position regarding the relationship between steadfast objects and successions is not incoherent. Baxter writes: "The problem arises because we think that existing more than just briefly means existing at more than one moment (which on the Humean view amounts to being a succession with parts at those moments)" (2008, p. 36). "However," Baxter continues, "Hume in effect proposes an alternative: Existing more than just briefly can alternatively mean existing at a single moment that coexists with successive moments" (2008, p. 36). In order for a steadfast object to exist "more than just briefly," it need not exist for *more* than one moment, and thus, it need not be a succession. Thus, when Hume claims that a steadfast object may coexist with a succession, he is not being incoherent. Some moments are just *longer* than others, while, nevertheless, retaining their status as moments (2008, p. 38).

However, Baxter claims, "Despite the fact that steadfast objects lack duration, we naturally come to think of steadfast objects as having duration—that is, as being successions—because of the coexisting successiveness of perceptions in our minds (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65)" (2008, pp. 43–44). That is, although, according to Hume, moments are not durations, we come to imagine moments *as* successions, i.e. as enduring, precisely because they coexist with successions.

It is at this point that Baxter applies his analysis of time to Hume's account of identity, particularly, the account of identity given in part 1 of 1.4.2's four part system:

> [By the time we acquire the idea of identity] … we have acquired the tenacious habit of regarding everything that coexists with a succession as having duration. At some point, we then fully appreciate the steadfastness of a steadfast object perceived as such. We do not instantly confound the idea with an idea of a succession, as before. Thinking of the object as steadfast, we think of it as one. Yet the strong habit reasserts itself. Thinking of the object as having duration, we think of it as many. The idea of identity arises when we

> realize that we are thinking of the steadfast object as both one and many. Afterwards, we start applying the idea of identity to what are really successions when acquiring the ideas of body and self (T 1.4.2.31–7, 1.4.6.5–16: SBN 202–5, 253–60). Even later we distinguish bodies from perceptions (T 1.4.2.44–66; SBN 210–11). (2008, p. 44)

Baxter's thought process here may be parsed as follows:

1. We come to recognize, or "appreciate" that a steadfast object is indeed steadfast, i.e. is a moment that lasts longer than other moments.
2. Yet we do not immediately or "instantly" conflate, i.e. "confound," the idea of a steadfast object with the idea of a succession.
3. Rather, we initially think of the steadfast object as "one."
4. Yet, being habituated to conflate the idea of a steadfast object with an idea of duration, we do eventually conflate the two.
5. Thus, we come to think of the steadfast object as being many, i.e. as being a succession of many moments.
6. "Afterwards, we start applying the idea of identity to what are really successions when acquiring the ideas of body and self" (2008, p. 44).

It is in this respect that, according to Baxter, our idea of identity is an idea of both one and many; recall that it is this one/many problem that motivates Hume's characterization of identity in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system. Baxter writes a bit further on regard to this notion of identity:

> [Hume] takes …[invariableness and uninterruptedness] to be essential to identity, because the experience of something with these qualities—namely a steadfast object—is necessary for acquiring the idea of identity. Only such an experience can cause the idea of identity, and then, only with the prior conviction that anything which does not exist briefly, endures (i.e. has the third quality). (2008, p. 48)

According to Baxter, we experience, i.e. we *perceive* a steadfast object, which is both invariable and uninterrupted, which then "causes" our idea of identity. A third quality, Baxter argues, is also at work. i.e. our idea that things that do not "briefly" exist must "endure."

2.1.2 Response to Baxter

In this section, I show why we must reject Baxter's interpretation of "steadfast" objects and thus, concomitantly, why we must reject the bulk of his analysis concerning Hume's notion of time and identity. I begin by reminding the reader what we have already discovered in Chaps. 4, 5, and 6 of this book regarding the properties of continuity, distinctness, uninterruptedness and invariability. Following, I address a number of the passages that Baxter cites to support his interpretation of steadfast objects. Still other passages are accounted for throughout the proceeding sections of this chapter, and the rest are addressed at length in Chap. 8, where I discuss parts 2 and 3 of 1.4.2's four-part system (the vulgar position), and in Chap. 10, where I discuss Hume's notion of personal identity.

A Brief Review

Recall that in Chaps. 4, 5, and 6 of this book, we saw that according to Hume, we *cannot* perceive the properties of continuity and distinctness, nor, relatedly, the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (recall that the properties of continuity and uninterruptedness are interchangeable). Nor can we reason our way to them. Rather, all of these properties must be *imagined.* Hume is quite explicit in this regard: "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) He continues on the next page: "our reason neither does, nor is it possible it ever shou'd upon any supposition, give us an assurance of the continu'd and distinct existence of body. That opinion must be entirely owing to the IMAGINATION" (T 1.4.2.14 ; SBN 193). Just *how* we imagine a continuous and distinct object was explained, in detail, in Chap. 6, where we worked through 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8. In particular, we saw that we must imagine an unperceivable continuous and distinct cause of our variable perceptions (proto-objects). Doing so makes these perceptions seem more constant and coherent than they initially appear to us. Moreover, because this imagined cause is not based on sense perceptions, it invokes what we have identified as a "transcendental" imagination and "transcendental" causation.

In Chap. 5, we saw that in T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4, Hume claims that we must *imagine* an uninterrupted and invariable "secret cause" of a set of resembling perceptions (proto objects). Hume explicitly tells us here that we do not *perceive* an object that is both invariable and uninterrupted; such an idea is a "conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74). Moreover, it is one that "can be founded *only* on the connexion of cause and effect" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74; emphasis added). Thus, here we also saw that Hume's account of perfect identity implicitly appeals to a transcendental imagination and transcendental causation. Relatedly, Hume writes elsewhere that "'Tis *impossible* for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable time; nor can it by its utmost efforts ever arrive at such a constancy" (T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283; emphasis added). We *cannot* fix our minds upon one object such that it appears "steady," or "constant" to us. Consider 1.4.6.2; SBN 251 as well: "there is *no* impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd" (emphasis added).

Thus, we already have abundant evidence that we do not "experience", i.e. have an impression of an object that is continuous and/or distinct, nor do we have an impression of an object that is invariable and/or uninterrupted. Generally speaking, this is why our ability to imagine such an object turns on a transcendental imagination and transcendental causation. However, as we just saw, Baxter thinks that a steadfast object is an "object" that we, via our sense impressions, perceive to be constant, or "steadfast," which he claims, equates to being both invariable and

uninterrupted. Such an impression, or "experience" is required to cause the idea of identity. Recall Baxter's own words to this effect:

> [Hume] takes …[invariableness and uninterruptedness] to be essential to identity, because the experience of something with these qualities—namely a steadfast object—is necessary for acquiring the idea of identity. Only such an experience can cause the idea of identity, and then, only with the prior conviction that anything which does not exist briefly, endures (i.e. has the third quality). (2008, p. 48)

Thus, it seems that we must immediately reject Baxter's interpretation of steadfast objects, and thus, the bulk of his analysis concerning time and identity. However, in an attempt to discredit the "Brevity Assumption," i.e. the idea that all perceptions are brief, Baxter does write:

> Hume says that "there is no impression constant and invariable." But it's clear from the context that he means there is none constant and invariable 'thro' the whole course of our lives' (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251). He is not asserting here that all are exceedingly brief. Also, Hume does say, "'Tis impossible for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable amount of time" (T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283). But a length of time may very well not be a considerable length of time and yet still be longer than a brief moment. The Brevity Assumption cannot be sustained. (2008, p. 35)

However, I do not think that Baxter's explanation (and dismissal) of T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251 and T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283 is convincing. For in 1.4.6, where Hume discusses personal identity, there are a number of passages that indicate that Hume's claim here is not restricted to ruling out just those impressions that last our entire lives, as Baxter asserts. Although we discuss this matter at length in the course of discussing 1.4.6 in Chap. 10, it will be helpful to cite just a few of those passages now: "The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away…They are the successive perceptions *only*, that constitute the mind" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252–3, emphasis added). According to Hume, *all* perceptions occur in succession *all the time,* a claim that reflects the point made in T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251 "there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations *succeed* each other, and never all exist at the same time" (emphasis added).[5] Thus, Hume is not excluding just the possibility of an impression of the self that somehow, would last the course of our lives. Rather, he is ruling out the possibility of *any* impression of an invariable and uninterrupted self (see Chap. 10 for more detail).

Moreover, and relatedly, Hume makes it clear in 1.4.6 that we must "suppose," or *imagine* our respective ideas of our selves: "what then gives us so great a

[5] Elsewhere, Hume does say that some impressions may be *co-existent* (e.g. T 1.4.6.16; SBN 259–60)). However, according to Hume, even co-existent perceptions would have to occur in the context of a succession. For instance, if I experience a number of co-existent chair impressions (A_1, B_1, C_1) upon looking at what I perceive to be a chair, these impressions will inevitably all be interrupted (recall Chap. 6 and c.f. Chap. 8 of this book), to be replaced by a new set of co-existent chair impressions e.g. (A_2, B_2, C_2), and so on. Thus, an impression, e.g. A_1, may be both co-existent with its respective co-existent set (i.e. B_1, C_1) while simultaneously occurring in a succession, (i.e. A_1–A_n).

propension to ascribe identity to these successive perceptions and to *suppose* ourselves possest of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro' the whole course of our lives?" (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253 emphasis added) Further on in 1.4.6, Hume writes: "we *feign* the continu'd existence of the perception of our senses to remove interruption … we are not able … to find any thing [i.e. any impression] invariable and uninterrupted to justify our notion of identity" (1.4.6.6; SBN 253–5 emphasis added). Because we never have an impression of an invariable and uninterrupted self (at any time), we must imagine such a thing; Hume is quite clear in 1.4.6 that there is *no impression* of a "steadfast" object such that enables us to think of a "self" (again, see Chap. 10 for more detail).

Having noted these passages, and recalling once again our analyses of 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8, we must conclude that Baxter's explanation and dismissal of T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283 is equally unconvincing. Recall Hume's remark: "'Tis *impossible* for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable amount of time" (emphasis added), where, in response, Baxter claims: "But a length of time may very well not be a *considerable length of time* and yet still be longer than a brief moment. The Brevity Assumption cannot be sustained" (2008, 35; emphases added). However, thus far, we have run across no explicit textual evidence that supports Baxter's notion of a "steadfast object," i.e. the idea that we have impressions of some moments that last longer than others, without being successions, where this "lasting longer" is not equitable to a "considerable amount of time," although the impression at hand is invariable and uninterrupted. On the contrary, we have examined an abundant amount of textual evidence that explicitly does *not* support this interpretation (1.3.2.1–2; SBN 73–4, 1.4.2.11; SBN 192, 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8, 1.4.2.3–10; SBN 188–191, 1.4.6.2: SBN 251–2, 1.4.6.4; SBN 252–3, 1.4.6.5; SBN 253, 1.4.6.6; SBN 253–5). Thus, it is simply more plausible to take Hume at his word here, i.e. we cannot "fix our mind steadily," which seems to mean: we do not have impressions of "steadfast objects." However, as noted above, Baxter *does* cite a number of passages which inform his interpretation of T 2.1.4.2; SBN 283. Let us examine a number of those passages now to determine if, somehow, they provide enough evidence to justify a radical reinterpretation of the evidence we have cited thus far to oppose Baxter's position. We will see that they do not.

Baxter's Evidence

Hume uses the term "stedfast" just three times in the *Treatise*, where only two of those usages refer to "objects" (T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37 and T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65). However, in these passages he does use the word 'steadfast' interchangeably with the word 'unchangeable." Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that, for the most part, when Hume refers to an "unchangeable object" elsewhere in the *Treatise*, he is referring to a "steadfast object." Hume does so on eight separate occasions, where the majority of these references may be found in his discussion of space and time: T 1.1.5.4; SBN 14, T 1.2.3.7; SBN 35, T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–6, T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37, T 1.2.5.29 SBN 65,

T 1.4.3.3 SBN 220, T 1.4.3.4, SBN 220. Moreover, he uses also the word 'invariable' interchangeably with 'unchangeable' on a number of occasions: 1.4.2.3; SBN 188–9, 1.2.5.6; SBN 56, 1.2.4.29; SBN 50–1, 1.3.1.1; SBN 69–70, 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4. Accordingly, when Hume refers to an "invariable object," we may conclude that he is referring to a "steadfast" or "unchangeable object." All of these references occur in either 1.4.2, or 1.4.6, i.e.: T 1.4.2.30; SBN 201, T 1.4.2.31; SBN 201–2, T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203–4, T 1.4.2.37; SBN 205–6, 1.4.6.5; SBN 253, T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253–5, T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255. Finally, there are at least three instances where Hume uses the word 'constant' to mean "invariable," or likewise, "unchangeable" or "steadfast." Sometimes, as we saw in Chap. 6, 'constant' applies to the way in which we perceive, and sometimes it pertains to "objects," particularly proto-objects: T 1.1.5.4; SBN 14, T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4, T 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8.

Baxter cites many of these passages to make his case regarding steadfast objects, but not all of them. In particular, he does not carefully incorporate 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8 into his analysis. This is problematic, for in Chap. 6, we saw that Hume explicitly tells us that our impressions initially appear constant to us—*at least to a degree.* For recall that initially, our perceptions *are* somewhat constant and coherent (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194–5). However, it is only upon *imagining* that they are caused by some "insensible" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198) continuous and distinct object that the constancy (and coherence) of our perceptions (proto-objects) becomes "compleat;" in particular, they *seem* "perfectly constant" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197–8) in virtue of the fact that they we have imagined them to be caused by an continuous and distinct object (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198). Thus, not only do we *not* perceive an invariable "object," but our perceptions (proto-objects) are *not* initially "compleat[ly]" constant, i.e. they are not initially "compleat[ly]" uniform, which seems to mean that they are not completely *invariable* (recall that I characterized this as *incomplete* constancy and coherence as *Level 1* constancy and coherence).

However, such Level 1 perceptions are, indeed, "constant" in the respect that they occur in a succession where each perception in the succession exactly *resembles* the other. As such, these perceptions do *not* appear to change, although they are interrupted; recall that it is this interruption that keeps them from appearing "compleat[ly]" constant, or "perfectly" constant: "We remark a connexion betwixt two kinds of objects in their appearance to the senses, but are *not* able to observe this connexion to be *perfectly constant*, since the turning about of our head, or the shutting of our eyes is able to break it" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197–8, emphasis added).

With this in mind, we need to realize that Hume does not say that our idea of time or duration can be derived from *any* succession. Rather, he is clear to point out that the idea of time must be a product of a succession of *changing* perceptions.[6] Thus, successions that do not admit of change, i.e. successions that are comprised of a

[6] Hume does write that "the idea of time, [may be] deriv'd from the succession of our perceptions of *every* kind" (T 1.2.3.6). However, by "every kind," Hume is not including successions of somewhat constant, or alternatively, "compleat[ly]" constant impressions. Rather, he immediately continues: "[these perceptions include] ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensation." The point is that successions may be comprised of all kinds of *perceptions*, e.g. impressions of sensation, and ideas and impressions of reflection, not all kinds of *successions*.

series of exactly *resembling* perceptions, and so, are Level 1 constant (and thus, are somewhat invariable) will *not* give us an idea of time, or likewise, an idea of duration. Baxter, however, seems to confuse successions that are comprised of Level 1 constant, i.e. exactly resembling and thus "unchangeable" perceptions, with his notion of a "steadfast object," i.e. an invariable and uninterrupted impression that is not a succession, and thus has no duration but lasts longer than an instant. As we see in Chap. 8, the vulgar make the very same mistake.

Note, for instance, one of the first passages that Baxter cites to make his case regarding steadfast objects:

> I know that there are some who pretend, that the idea of duration is applicable in a proper sense to objects, which are perfectly interchangeable, and this I take to be the common opinion of philosophers as well as that of the vulgar. But to be convinc'd of its falsehood we need but reflect on the foregoing conclusion, that the idea of duration is always deriv'd from a succession of changeable objects, and can never be convey'd to the mind by any thing *stedfast and unchangeable*. (T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37; emphasis added)

Hume's line of thought may be understood as follows: (1) Some, particularly philosophers and the vulgar (c.f. Chap. 8), think that the idea of duration may be applied to objects that are "perfectly interchangeable." (2) However, this is false. (3) We may be convinced of this if we realize that the idea of duration must always be deriv'd from a "succession of *changeable* objects" (emphasis added) and *not* by any "thing" that is "steadfast and *un*changeable" (emphasis added). Hume immediately continues:

> For it inevitably follows from thence, that since the idea of duration cannot be deri'vd from such an object, it can never in any propriety or exactness be apply'd to it, nor can any thing unchangeable be ever said to have duration. Ideas always represent the objects or impressions, from which they are deriv'd, and can never without a fiction represent or be apply'd to any other. By what fiction we apply the idea of time, even to what is unchangeable, and suppose, as is common, that duration is a measure of rest as well of motion, we shall consider afterwards. (T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37; emphasis added)

That is, picking up where we left off: (4) Because the idea of duration cannot be derived from "such an object," the idea of duration cannot be "apply'd" to such an object either. (5) Rather, duration (i.e. what Hume refers to as "time" here), must be applied to the idea of an unchanging thing by way of a "fiction." (6) Hume promises to speak more of this in 1.2.5, particularly, 1.2.5.29; SBN 65, a passage that we discuss at length in the next section of this chapter. Meanwhile, recall that we cannot fix our mind on anything for more than an instant, primarily because our perceptions are naturally successive, and thus, are naturally interrupted (1.2.5.29; SBN 65, 1.3.2.1–2; SBN 73–4, 1.4.2.11; SBN 192, 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8, 1.4.2.32–5; SBN 202–4, 1.4.6.2: SBN 251–2, 1.4.6.4; SBN 252–3, 1.4.6.5; SBN 253, 1.4.6.6; SBN 253–5). Thus, what is "steadfast," or invariable here, could only be the way in which, or the *manner* in which our perceptions appear to us. Despite any of the necessary interruptions that naturally occur as we perceive, there are cases, as noted above, where each perception exactly *resembles* the other. In these cases, our perceptions do not appear to *change*, although they are interrupted. As a result, although they are not "perfectly" constant, they appear to be *constant* in the respect that "my bed and table, my books and papers, present themselves in the same

uniform manner, and *change not* upon account of any *interruption* in my seeing or perceiving them" (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194–5; emphases added). However, such a "steadfast" and "unchangeable" succession cannot afford us the notion of time, since we cannot effectively distinguish between the perceptions due to their resemblance.[7] Such an unchanging, or constant succession of perceptions seems to be what Hume has in mind by "steadfast and unchangeable" "thing" here; there is no evidence to suggest that he has a Baxterian steadfast object in mind.

Baxter also repeatedly cites 1.2.3.7; SBN 35 to make support his case regarding steadfast objects. Here, Hume writes:

> A man in a sound sleep, or strongly occupy'd with one thought, is insensible of time and according as his perceptions succeed each other with greater or less rapidity, the same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination. It has been remarked by a great philosopher, that our perceptions have certain bounds in this particular, which are fix'd by the original nature and constitution of the mind, and beyond which no influence of external objects on the senses is ever able to hasten or retard our thought. If you wheel about a burning coal with rapidity, it will present to the senses an image of a circle of fire; nor will there seem to be any interval of time betwixt its revolutions; merely because 'tis impossible for our perceptions to succeed each other with the same rapidity, that motion may be communicated to external objects. Wherever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even tho' there be a real succession in the objects. From these phaenomena, as well as from many others, we may conclude, that time cannot make its appearance to the mind, either alone, or attended with a *steady unchangeable object*, but is always discover'd by some *perceivable* succession of changeable objects. (emphases added)

Hume's line of thought here may be understood as follows: (1) When asleep and focused on "one thought," we are "insensible of time." (2) Relatedly, at some points during sleep, our perceptions "succeed each other" very slowly, and so, the duration "appears" longer to the imagination. Conversely, if they succeed each other with more rapidity, the duration appears shorter to the imagination. (3) According to Locke, i.e. "a great philosopher," the way in which we perceive the world limits us, such that "external objects" have no effect on us, one way or the other. (4) To illustrate this point, Hume explains that a burning coal "wheel[ed] about" will look like a continuous circle of fire simply because we cannot effectively perceive the discrete succession of coal impressions; we blur them into one continuous line. (5) Thus, we do not, in this case, perceive a succession of "*changeable* objects", and thus, we "have no notion of time, even tho' there be a real succession in the objects." (6) In sum, we have no sense of time unless we can perceive a succession of *changeable* "objects" as opposed to perceiving what appears to be a "steady unchangeable object," which, in this case, is a circular ring of fire. However, here again, Hume is not necessarily speaking of a perception that lasts, yet is not a succession (i.e. a Baxterian "steadfast object"). Rather, because all the discrete perceptions of the burning coal *resemble* each other, they do not appear to change, and thus, they do not appear to us *as* a series, i.e. as a succession of perceptions, although, technically speaking they *are*

[7] Hume discusses a similar case in more detail in 1.4.2 in regard to the vulgar position. We examine this case in detail in Chap. 8.

successive, "there [is] a *real* succession in the objects" (emphasis added).[8] In this respect, some successive perceptions of Level 1 constant perceptions, although they "real[ly] are" successions, do not *appear* to us as successions. We might even refer to them as "invisible successions." Given the textual evidence that we have compiled thus far, it certainly seems more plausible to conclude that this is what Hume has in mind by a "steady unchangeable object" here rather than a Baxterian "steadfast object."[9]

Further, there can be no question that Hume is very careful to explain that our notion of time must be derived from different, i.e. *not* Level 1 constant, or exactly resembling perceptions: "'Tis evident, that time, or duration consists of *different* parts" (T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–6; emphasis added). Further on, he writes: "[the idea of time] can plainly be nothing but *different* ideas, or impressions, or objects dispos'd in a certain manner, that is, succeeding each other." (T 1.2.3.10; SBN 36–7 emphasis added). Elsewhere he writes:

> If it be a sufficient proof, that we have the idea of a vacuum, because we dispute and reason concerning it, we must for the same reason have the idea of time *without any changeable existence*; since time is no subject of dispute more frequent and common. But that we really have no such idea is certain. (T 1.2.5.28)

And in the next paragraph he writes: "it will be impossible to show the impression, from which the idea of time *without a changeable existence* is deriv'd" (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65).

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 35–6). 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

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[8] Some might complain that by "real succession," Hume is talking about a real mind-independent succession here, i.e. the burning coal as it moves from point to point. However, Hume is careful to point out in the *Appendix* that in regard to his discussions concerning space and time that "As long as we confine our speculations to the *appearances* of objects to our senses, without entry into disquisitions concerning their real nature and operations, we are safe from all difficulties, and never be embarrass'd by any question …If we carry our enquiry beyond the *appearance*s of objects to the sense, I am afraid, that most of our conclusions will be full of skepticism and uncertainty" (T 1.2.5.26 fn 12; SBN 638–9). Thus, it is clear that Hume is not making a reference to a mind-independent coal here. Rather, he is speaking of the "reality" of our perceptions, namely, a "real succession" of perceptions.

[9] See Chap. 8 for a more detailed explanation of how a succession of resembling perceptions may be mistaken for an idea of invariable and uninterrupted object. Technically speaking, we do not, according to Hume, perceive an invariable and uninterrupted object (i.e. a Baxterian "steadfast object"), although in some cases, we *think* we do thanks to the disposition that a succession of resembling perceptions invokes in us (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203).

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."

Thus, at this point we know that a number of the passages that Baxter cites to support his interpretation of steadfast objects do not do the work he needs them to do. Two of the passages examined thus far indicate that in certain cases where Hume talks of "steadfast," or "unchanging," or "invariable" or "constant" objects, it seems more likely (and more consistent with the text) that he is talking about Level 1 constant (i.e. exactly resembling) proto-objects. These proto-objects are constant, due to their resemblance, but they are not "compleat[ly]" constant.[10] In the other passage that we examined, Hume seems to be referring to perceptions that *do* appear to be "compleat[ly]" constant, thanks to our ability imagine their respective invariable and uninterrupted causes (i.e. they appear to be what I characterized in Chap. 6 as Level 2 constant and coherent).

To begin to address the other passages that Baxter cites to make his case regarding steadfast objects, we may pick up where we left off in our analysis of Hume's account of perfect identity in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system. In particular, we may return to an analysis of the role that time plays in this account.

2.1.3 A Brief Discussion of Time (Continued)

I am in complete agreement with Baxter and Garrett that according to Hume, time is an abstract idea. In one respect, time is a complex idea of a particular succession of changing perceptions that, in virtue of being associated with a general term, brings to mind resembling ideas of other successions of changing perceptions (i.e. what Garrett refers to as the "revival set"). However, our idea of time is not *just* an idea of a particular succession of changing perceptions that brings to mind other resembling successions of changing perceptions. Rather, there is a second way in which we may think of time. According to Hume, we may also imagine an idea of an "*unchanging time*," which we think is some kind of *object* that seems to "act" on us.

[10] Thus, in a certain qualified respect, I am defending a version of what Baxter refers to as the "Brevity Assumption." Recall that Baxter characterizes this as "[the assumption that] perceptions that seem long are really uninterrupted successions of *resembling* perceptions" (2008, 33; emphasis added). However, as noted above, according to Hume, all successions are necessarily interrupted (in fact, this is what makes a succession a succession). Thus, rather than defending Baxter's interpretation of Stroud's, Bennett's Green's and Price's collective position, I find it more instructive to present my own analysis of the relevant passages.

Realizing that Hume employs these two notions of time plays a pivotal role in his explanation of perfect identity in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system.

The Idea of Time as an Unchanging Causal Agent

After discussing the idea of extension—i.e. space—for some ten pages, Hume ends 1.2.5 with a page and half discussion of time, which is meant to rest on his discussion of extension. Setting aside all the difficulties regarding the finite divisibility of time, the fundamental idea behind Hume's account of extension is: "*the idea of space or extension is nothing but the idea of visible or tangible points distributed in a certain order*" (T 1.2.5.1; SBN 53). Thus, "it follows that we can form no idea of a vacuum, or space, where there is nothing visible or tangible" (T 1.2.5.1; SBN 53). Because the very idea of space is derived *from* observing "things" ("visible or tangible points") arranged in a certain manner, we could not possibly conceive of space with*out* things. In other words, we could not possibly conceive of a vacuum. The same idea, Hume argues, applies to the idea of time:

> As to the doctrine, time is nothing but the manner, in which some real objects exist; we may observe, that 'tis liable to the same objections as the similar doctrine with regard to extension. If it be a sufficient proof, that we have the idea of a vacuum, because we dispute and reason concerning it, we must for the same reason have the idea of time without any *changeable existence*, since there is no subject of dispute more frequent and common. But that we really have no such idea, is certain. For whence shou'd it be deriv'd? Does it arise from an impression of sensation or of reflexion? Point it out distinctly to us, that we may know its nature and qualities. But if you cannot point out *any such impression,* you may be certain you are mistaken, when you imagine you have *any such idea*. (T 1.2.5.28; SBN 65; emphases added)

If we had an idea of a vacuum, it seems that we might, by parity of reason, also have an idea of time that is independent of the changeable "things" that it has been derived from, i.e., a "pure" concept of time with*out* things; a time "without any *changeable* existence" (emphasis added). This would, somehow, be an idea of time that is *not* an abstract idea of a succession of changing perceptions. However, as Hume labored to show in the previous ten pages (T 1.2.5; SBN 53–64), we do *not* have an impression of a vacuum, nor do we have an impression of a changeless, "pure" objectless time. As a result, any idea that we think we have of an unchanging thing, "time" would have to be imagined. And indeed, Hume admits, we *do* imagine such ideas. Note his elaboration to this effect, which directly pertains to our discussion of identity:

> But though it be impossible to shew the impression, from which the idea of time ***without a changeable existence*** is deriv'd; yet we can easily point out those appearances, ***which make us fancy that we have that idea***. For we may observe, that there is a continual succession of perceptions in our mind; so that the idea of time being for ever present with us; when we consider a ***stedfast object*** at five-a-clock, and regard the same at six; we are apt to apply to it that idea in the same manner as if every moment were distinguish'd by a different position, or an alteration of the object. The first and second appearances of the object, being compar'd with the succession of our perceptions, seem equally remov'd as if the object had really chang'd. To which we may add, what experience shews us, that the

> object was susceptible of such a number of changes betwixt these appearances; as also that the unchangeable or rather fictitious duration has the same *effect upon* every quality, by encreasing or diminishing it, as that succession, which is obvious to the senses. From these three relations we are apt to confound our ideas, ***and imagine we can form the idea of time and duration, without any change or succession.*** (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65; emphases added)

We may break Hume's reasoning down as follows: (1) Although it is clear that we have no impression of a changeless time, it may be shown how and why we tend to "*fancy*" or "*imagine*" that we have such a notion. (2) As noted earlier in this chapter, our mind is in a constant state of succession: "there is a continual succession of perceptions in the mind," where here, Hume seems to mean a succession of *changing* perceptions, such that "the idea of time [is] for ever present with us."[11] (3) Thus, when we "consider" a "stedfast object," e.g., an orange,[12] at state$_1$—five o'clock—and then that orange (stedfast object) at state$_2$—six o'clock, "we are apt to apply to [the orange] that idea [of time as a succession of changing perceptions]" such that the separate perceptions that constitute the succession of changing perceptions noted above seem to constitute *changes* or "alterations" in, or "different positions of" the orange. (4) Further, if we compare the orange at state$_1$ and the orange at state$_2$ with that "the succession of perceptions," (i.e. the "continual succession of perceptions in the mind") the two oranges seem *different*, they are "remov'd" from each other. (5) This gives us the sense as if the object orange is "really chang'd." (6) But *what* changed the orange? Do we conclude that it changed itself? No. We conclude that the "unchangeable or rather fictitious duration has the same *effect* upon every quality [of the oranges]" (emphasis added) that is manifest in the continual succession of changing perceptions, where this succession is "*obvious to the senses*" (emphases added). Meanwhile, the "unchangeable and fictitious duration" is *not* obvious to the senses precisely because it is imagined, i.e. is "fictitious." (7) Thanks to this rather complicated thought process, we come to imagine an idea of time "without a changeable existence;" i.e. time as an object, which as such, "effect[s]" change, although we have no impression of such a thing; it is *not* "obvious to the senses." What we *do* have impressions of are "continual successions of [changing] perceptions." We conflate the changeable nature of these properties with what we imagine to be the *effects* of an imagined, changeless object time, which we

[11] This does not rule out the possibility that we may simultaneously perceive successions of perceptions that exactly resemble each other, i.e. are not changing. Rather, Hume's comment could be interpreted as suggesting that we can perceive successions of perceptions that exactly resemble each other while simultaneously perceiving successions of changing perceptions. For instance, while perceiving a succession of exactly resembling perceptions of what I think is a chair, I could be simultaneously perceiving a successions of changing auditory perceptions, etc. Moreover, perceptions that belong to a succession of changing perceptions might also *resemble* each other, although not exactly. For instance, as a light source changes, my perceptions of what I perceive to be an orange could change, but they may still resemble each other.

[12] Hume does not use an orange to illustrate his point, but doing so helps to illuminate his thought process.

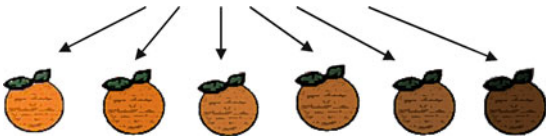
	Time; an *imagined* "unchangeable and fictitious duration" that as such, seems to "effect" change
This succession is what we *actually* perceive; it is "obvious to the senses."	 succession of what we perceive to be changing "stedfast" objects which seem to change as a result of time because we imagine them to be the "effects" of time (note that these perceptions may resemble each other, although not exactly)

Fig. 7.1 Time as a cause

believe, endures, i.e. has a duration, even though it does not change (and thus, this duration is "fictitious"). As a result, we imagine that this thing "time" seems to cause objects, in this case, "stedfast" objects, *to* change (see Fig. 7.1).

Thus, there is no evidence here to suggest that the "stedfast object" that Hume refers to in this passage is an invariable and uninterrupted perception that is not a succession and does not endure, but lasts for more than an instant (i.e. is a Baxterian steadfast object). And thus, I do not think that this passage supports Baxter's case. Rather, contrary to Baxter, we see that here, we are not imagining that the "stedfast object" (e.g. the orange) has an "unchangeable or rather fictitious duration." Rather, as explained above, what is being imagined here is the idea of an *unchanging time*, where what is being *affected* are the "stedfast objects;" Hume is quite clear that these are what we think are "really chang'd." In fact, given what we have seen in Chaps. 4, 5, and 6, it seems likely that in this passage, a "steadfast object" is an idea of an object (e.g. an orange) that we do indeed, at some point, *imagine* to be invariable and uninterrupted, and thus, we think of it as "stedfast." However, according to this passage, it seems that although we imagine certain objects to be invariable and uninterrupted, we think that such objects can also admit of change, thanks to the passage of what we think is the object "time."[13]

It is precisely in this respect that we believe that time is an "object." "It" is what we (mistakenly) blame with aging our bodies, our houses and our cars. Likewise, "it" is what we (mistakenly) thank for dulling painful memories and easing adolescent angst. But as noted, according to Hume, this "it" is no more than a product of the *imagination*; we have no *impression* of "it," of "time."

[13] How and why this could make sense to Hume is explained at the end of this chapter.

3 Identity: Continued

Having explained the relevant points concerning Hume's thoughts on time, let's now revisit the passage from "Of Skepticism with regard to the senses" that prompted our segway into a discussion on time:

> To remove this difficulty, let us have recourse to the idea of time and duration. I have already observ'd that time, *in a strict sense*, implies succession, and that when we apply its idea to any *unchangeable object*, 'tis only by a fiction of the *imagination*, by which the *unchangeable object* is suppos'd to participate of the changes of the co-existent objects, and in particular of that of our perceptions. This fiction of the *imagination* almost universally takes place; and 'tis by means of it, that a single object, plac'd before us, and surveyed for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation, is able to give us a notion of identity. (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1; emphases added)

Hume's thought may be parsed as follows here: (1) When we think of time "in a strict sense" we must think of a succession, particularly, as noted above, a succession of *changing* perceptions. (2) However, when we "apply its idea to any unchangeable object," i.e. when we think of the idea of a succession in which perceptions change (i.e. "time") *as* an unchanging object, i.e. as a thing "without a changeable existence" (T 1.2.5.29: SBN 65), we are imagining things. (3) In particular, we imagine that the "object" time "participate[s] of the changes" of our perceptions, i.e. we imagine that it has causal agency; *it* changes our perceptions. (4) This "fiction of the imagination" is a "universal" phenomenon; it is something that we all seem to experience. (5) *Analogously*, and equally universally, when we have a perception and it seems to be invariable and uninterrupted it must be because we have imagined that some invariable and uninterrupted thing is causing it, similar to how we imagine that the unchanging "object" time changes what we believe are the "objects" populating our universe. (6) Thus, it is "***by means of***" (emphasis added) our ability to imagine that an "unchangeable" (uninterrupted) object is causing our perceptions that a "single object surveyed for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation is able to give us a notion of identity."

Contrary to Baxter (2008, p. 48), and consistent with what we have seen in Chaps. 4, 5, and 6, we do *not* have an impression of an object that does not admit of "any interruption or variation." Rather, *in virtue of* ("by means of") imagining an uninterrupted and invariable cause of a set of resembling perceptions, we may come to think of any perception, i.e. a "single object," as being invariable and uninterrupted—similar to how we may think of our perceptions as being "compleat[ly]" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) constant upon imagining that they are caused by a continuous and distinct object (recall Chap. 6). This coming to think of an "object," i.e. a single perception, as being invariable and uninterrupted, this "fiction of the imagination," gives us our "notion of identity."

However, Hume immediately continues, the story of how we acquire our "notion of identity" is much more complex than we saw to be the case in Chaps. 5 and 6. Here Hume claims that we have to integrate our idea of time in the "strict sense" (i.e. "time" *qua* a succession of changing perceptions) and our idea of time

as an imagined *object* into the phenomenon of imagined identity, particularly, perfect identity:

> For when we consider any two points of this time we may place them in different lights: We may either survey them at the very same instant; in which case they give us the idea of number, both by themselves and by the object; which must be multiply'd, in order to be conceiv'd at once, as existent in these two different points of time: Or on the other hand, we may trace the succession of time by a like succession of ideas, and conceiving first one moment, along with the object then existent, imagine afterwards a change in the time without any *variation* or *interruption* in the object; in which case it gives us the idea of identity. (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201)

Hume's thoughts in this passage may be explained as follows: (1) Take "two points of this time." They may (as we have already seen), be conceptualized in *two* distinct manners: (a) First, one may assume that certain objects are distinct from each other, while "time" remains constant. In other words, the "objects" in time change while time does *not,* as explained above in regard to our imagined idea of an unchanging time. For instance, the orange at five o'clock exists at the "same time" as the orange at six o'clock, and so, we have *two* objects existing "at the same instant." Thus, we are really only dealing with *one* time. This conveys the idea of "**number**" (emphasis added) to us, where what is "numerous" is the orange, for we have the "five o'clock orange" and the "six o'clock orange." These "objects" would naturally resemble each other, although not exactly, since they partially constitute a succession of changing perceptions. (b) Or, we may amalgamate our second conception of time with the first, where, somehow, we imagine that the object stays the *same* at these "two points" (i.e. it has a certain **unity**), while only *time* changes, i.e. time is a "succession of ideas," particularly, changing perceptions; here we view time in its "strict sense" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). This way of thinking gives us the idea of **identity**, where we imagine that an object persists *through* a changing time "without any *variation* or *interruption* in the object."

This somewhat complex marriage between our two conceptions of time provides us with a more exact account of the origin of our idea of identity. In fact, this marriage gives us our *properly formed*[14] concepts of objects, prompting Hume to write immediately after the passage cited above: "Here then, is an idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it: *And this idea we call that of identity*" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201; emphases added). When we think of objects occurring in two different notions of time, we are provided with *both* an idea of number and unity, which solves the problem of identity. For recall Hume's earlier remark where it seemed that "at first sight [the solution to this problem] seems utterly impossible. Betwixt unity and number there can be no medium; no more than betwixt existence and non-existence" (T 1.4.2.28; SBN 200).

[14] What would an improper conception be? See Chaps. 8 and 9 for, respectively, a discussion of the vulgar position and the philosophical position. Also note T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255 where Hume discusses "properly" v. "improperly" conceived of notions of identity.

Case A. Time is Unified

Classification	**Objects**	**Time**
Distinct	Yes	No
Numerous	Yes	No
Singular	No	Yes
Unified	No	Yes

Case B. Objects are Unified

Classification	**Objects**	**Time**
Distinct	No	Yes
Numerous	No	Yes
Singular	Yes	No
Unified	Yes	No

Fig. 7.2 Case A. Time is unified. Case B. Objects are unified

But at this point in the text, just how and why we may grasp this "medium" is still somewhat unclear, leading Hume to immediately clarify as follows:

> We cannot, in any propriety of speech, say, that an object is the same with itself, unless we mean, that the object existent at one time is the same with itself existent at another. By this means we make a difference, betwixt the idea meant by the word, *object*, and that meant by *itself*, without going the length of number, and at the same time without restraining ourselves to a strict and absolute unity. (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201)

Here's what's going on: As explained above, we have two options when it comes to conceptualizing objects in time: First, one may assume that the *objects* are distinct from each other and so, are "numerous." Meanwhile time remains constant. In this respect, as explained above, *time* is conceived of as an independent thing, it is a "unity." Or alternatively, one may assume that *time* changes, while a singular object remains the same throughout the course of time; in this respect "time" is a succession of changing perceptions, as explained above. As a result, the object is unified. Meanwhile, time is numerous, and so, it is not a "unified thing." Notice then, that these two conceptualizations simultaneously provide us with notions of objects as being unified and numerous *and* time as being unified and numerous (see Fig. 7.2).

However, as noted earlier, to imagine the idea of *identity* in regard to objects (excluding the object "time") we must, somehow, respectively engage in *both* assumptions, namely, case (a) *and* case (b). We must do so because, as explained above, in order to claim that the object is the "same as itself," we must differentiate the object *from* itself in order to make a comparison which divulges "sameness." According to this passage, one may make such a comparison by appealing to the first assumption—the idea of number. One appeals to the notion that time remains constant while the objects change (such that she has ideas of, say, multiple oranges over the course of time). However, to simultaneously maintain this idea of *sameness* between these objects, one must *also* appeal to the second assumption—i.e., to the idea of unity; or in other words, to the notion that an object remains the same while it is time that changes (such that she has, say, an idea of *one* orange over the course of time). So, we must amalgamate our ideas of multiple oranges into the idea of one complete orange, where, as such, this complete orange is more than just a "unity."

Thus, the idea of identity is not derivative of a singular object—since this would only provide the idea of unity—nor is it derivative of a series of objects—since this would only provide the idea of number. Rather, as has been explained, according to Hume, identity is not "derived" at all. Instead, it is an *imagined*, particular object. Not surprisingly, as explained above, in regard to T 1.4.29; SBN 201, Hume explicitly defines this imagined object as the **invariable** and **uninterrupted** *source* of any number of resembling but distinct and changing "objects." As a result, Hume is giving us another (the third) account of *perfect identity* in Book I of the *Treatise*. Moreover, consistent with what we saw in Chaps. 5 and 6, such an idea does *not* represent invariability and uninterruptedness in the respect that such properties obtain of some corresponding impression or impressions. Rather, as explained earlier, Hume is quite clear that we must *imagine* such properties such that we come to believe that a single perception "plac'd before us" is actually an invariable and uninterrupted object. Recall the passage where Hume makes this clear:

> 'tis only by a fiction of the ***imagination*** by which the unchangeable object is suppos'd to participate of the changes of the co-existent objects, and in particular of that of our perceptions. This fiction of the ***imagination*** almost universally takes place; and 'tis by means of it, that a single object, plac'd before us, and survey'd for any time without our discovering in it ***any interruption or variation***, is able to give us a notion of identity. (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1)

At this point, we may also conclude that the numerous objects that appear in an unchanging time (case a.), are *proto*-objects (i.e. impressions or ideas that exactly represent impressions), as opposed to objects that admit of a perfect identity. This must be the case because these numerous objects *have no genuine identity*; they are merely *numerous*. Meanwhile, the succession of changing perceptions that constitute our notion of a changing time would have to be proto-objects as well. For recall that they are "obvious to the senses;" i.e. they are impressions, or, are ideas that exactly represent impressions (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65). Not surprisingly, these sets of proto-objects are reminiscent of the "species" of resembling proto-objects that Hume discusses in 1.3.2 (recall Chap. 5), and the sets of constant and coherent perceptions that he discusses in the opening pages of 1.4.2 (recall Chap. 6).

Time is Unified; Proto Objects are Interrupted

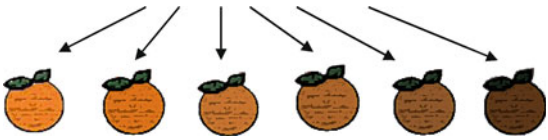
	Time (unchanging and enduring); an *imagined* "unchangeable and fictitious duration" that as such, seems to "effect " change. Thus time is perceived as being constant.
Proto-objects Numerous and changing, but resembling. Interrupted and thus have no identity. We pereive them with the senses.	 succession of changing perceptions (proto-objects) which seem to change as a result of time because we imagine them to be the "effects" of time

Fig. 7.3 Case A. Time is unified; proto objects are interrupted

Moreover, analogous to how time is imagined to "participate" in (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1) and "effect" (T 1.2.5.29; SBN 65) the changes of an object, the imagined invariable and uninterrupted object is alleged to "participate" in and "effect" the changes of the numerous proto-objects. Not surprisingly, this reminds us of Hume's notion of a "secret cause," presented in 1.3.2 (recall Chap. 5) and the object that is imagined—thanks to a "kind of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195)—to be the continuous and distinct "cause" of our Level 2 constant and coherent perceptions (recall Chap. 6).

It might be helpful to augment this textual analysis with a few more charts, where in case (a) we apprehend objects as merely numerous and we imagine that time is an unchanging causal agent which is responsible for these changes (as explained above). Meanwhile in case (b), we apprehend objects as merely unified, and we think of time as changing, i.e. we think of it as a succession of changing perceptions (i.e. we think of time in its "strict sense" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). Finally, in case (c) we imagine that we have an idea of an object that is both invariable and uninterrupted and it is an imagined cause of numerous perceptions. As such, this idea is more than a mere "unity;" it admits of a perfect identity. Moreover, we should remind ourselves that imagining that we have an idea of an invariable and uninterrupted object that "participates" in the changes of our perceptions is an phenomenon that "almost universally takes place" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201); it seems to be something that we *always* do (Figs. 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5).

As is made clear on Fig. 7.5, it seems as though we imagine that an invariable and uninterrupted object causes our numerous perceptions of it, while we simultaneously imagine that time causes these perceptions to change. However, this should not come as a surprise. For as we saw in Sect. 2.1.3 of this chapter, Hume explained that we imagine that time causes "steadfast" objects to change, e.g. an orange that we imagine is invariable and uninterrupted. As a result, (although this is not captured by Fig. 7.5) it would not be inconsistent for Hume to claim here that we imagine that time causes the changes in our various perceptions "of" what we imag-

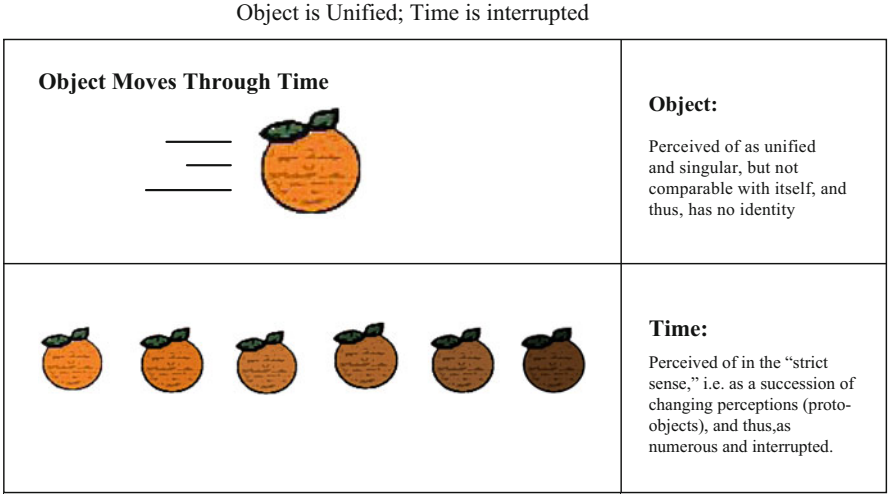


Fig. 7.4 Case B. Object is unified; time is interrupted

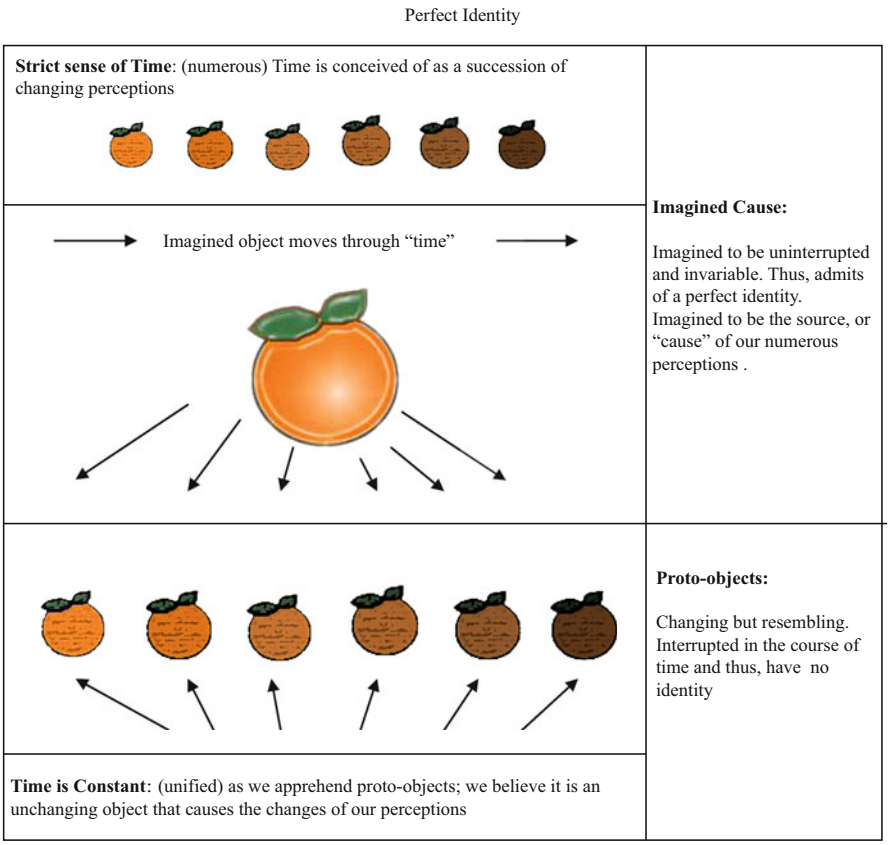


Fig. 7.5 Case C. Perfect identity

ine to be the "stedfast" orange, while we simultaneously imagine that the orange is the source (cause) of our perceptions. Moreover, once we imagine an idea of an object that we think admits of a perfect identity in the respect explained above, we may imagine it (e.g. an orange) as being changed by time, while imagining that it retains its identity. For instance, even if the orange begins to rot (over "time"), I would nevertheless imagine that it is still the same orange, and thus, in virtue of being the same orange, I continue to imagine that it is invariable and uninterrupted, i.e. it continues to admit of a perfect identity. Meanwhile, our perceptions "of" it may change, thanks to "time."

At this point, it should also be clear that we must not make the mistake of simply identifying our changing, but resembling numerous ideas and/or sense impressions with each other, and in turn, call this "identification" an "object." For if we did, Hume warns, we would only be imagining an idea of an *invariable* object, but not an *uninterrupted* object, and thus, we would only have an idea of "number." In fact, we will see in the next chapter that Hume explicitly informs us that such a conclusion constitutes a significant portion of the *vulgar* mistake, and thus, this mistake should not be confused with Hume's account of the principle of individuation. Similarly, we should not confuse any instances where Hume refers to a "steadfast" object (or any equivalent "object," e.g. an "unchanging" or "invariable" object) as a succession of unchanging perceptions (e.g. T 1.2.3.7; SBN 35 and T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37) with instances where he refers to a "steadfast" object (or any equivalent) as an imagined invariable and uninterrupted *cause* of a succession of perceptions (e.g. T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–6, T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1).

4 Objects as Abstract Ideas

Finally, we are in a position to see that imagining that we have an idea of object with a perfect identity appears to be rather similar to how, according to Hume, we come up with an abstract idea: "*'tis by means* [of this imaginative process] that a single object [i.e. a proto object] placed before us, and surveyed for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation, is able to give us a notion of identity" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1; emphasis added). Evidently, upon experiencing a single "object" (proto-object), other resembling (although changing) proto-objects are brought to mind. However, in the course of doing so, we also imagine that the initial proto-object we brought to mind is both invariable and uninterrupted, *and*, is the cause of all the other resembling and changing proto-objects. This gives us an idea of identity, particularly, perfect identity, which as such, is an idea of an *object.* This would mean that although ideas of invariable and uninterrupted objects do *not* exactly represent impressions, they are, as explained above, based on impressions (i.e. proto-objects). They are "single [proto] objects" that we have impressions of, but we imagine them to be invariable and uninterrupted. In this respect, we may say that our ideas of objects that admit of a perfect identity *indirectly* represent

proto-objects, just as we concluded in Chaps. 5 and 6; in particular, recall that in Chap. 6, we saw that our imagined idea of a continuous and distinct object is "obliquely" and "indirectly" related to our experience (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197).

As a result, we are now in position where we can, with good reason, partially reject Wilbank's (1968) "supposal" sense of the imagination, at least in regard to objects that admit of perfect identity (recall that according to Wilbanks, when we "suppose" an idea, this idea does *not* represent an impression). For imagined ideas of objects *do* represent impressions, albeit indirectly. However, the *properties* of uninterruptedness and invariability do not represent the property of any impression, indirectly or not. We do not have "stedfast" impressions, and thus, these properties must, indeed, be "supposed" in a Wilbankian non-representational sense. As a result, they, along with the idea of any object that is invariable and uninterrupted, are a product of what I have characterized as a transcendental imagination in Chaps. 5 and 6. Although we imagine an object that admits of a perfect identity, this perception does not represent any perception that is based on impressions. Some might argue that this violates Hume's principle of exact representation (i.e. the Copy Principle), but, as shown in Chap. 1 of this book, no principle is without exceptions. Whether or not this is too *much* of an exception for Hume to legitimately accept is touched on in Chaps. 11 and 12 of this book, when we address the notion of a justified idea of an object.

Meanwhile, recognizing that objects are abstract ideas addresses the "act/object" problem that has been recently circulating in literature (see for instance, Ainslie (2008). For our purposes, we may frame the problem as follows: assume that Humean objects are perceptions. Does this mean that Humean objects are mental *acts*, i.e. "perceivings" (Ainslie 2008), or, are they mental "objects?" Given what we have seen, we must answer: *both*. In the respect that an object is an abstract idea, it is an act of mind; upon thinking of one proto-object, we bring to mind the set of resembling proto-objects. However, an object is also a mental object, i.e. what has occasionally been referred to as an "intentional" object in the literature (Grene (1994)). It is the idea of a proto-object that we imagine to be the invariable and uninterrupted cause of a set of resembling proto-objects.

5 Summary

We have established the following points in this chapter:

1. To come up with the idea of perfect identity, we have to imagine a "medium betwixt unity and number" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201).
2. This consists of imagining an invariable, uninterrupted cause of a series of resembling but interrupted and changing proto-objects (i.e. impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions). This process is analogous to how we may conceive of time as an unchanging causal agent.
3. Time is conceived of in two senses: as variable in regard to the invariable imagined cause, but invariable in regard to the series of resembling proto-objects.

4. This means that imagining a singular cause of a set of numerous, resembling proto-objects is a "marriage" between unity and number in a two-fold respect:
   (a) We imagine that a singular *unified* object causes a set of *numerous* and resembling (although changing) proto-objects. This cause is imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted; it has a perfect identity.
   (b) We imagine that this invariable and uninterrupted object exists in a time that changes (in this case, time is "*numerous*") while the set of resembling proto-objects that it is imagined to cause seem to exist in a time that does not change (in this case, time is *unified*).
5. In order to come up with an idea of perfect identity, we must imagine an object that has properties that we have no experience of (invariability and uninterruptedness). Doing so enables us properly think of "objects." As a result, we must be appealing to a transcendental imagination. Moreover, to imagine an invariable and uninterrupted *cause* of all our interrupted perceptions (proto-objects), we must, it seems, appeal to a peculiar kind of causation, i.e. a *transcendental* causation. For we are imagining a cause that we have never had an impression of, and thus, Hume could not have ordinary causation in mind here, nor indirect causation (recall Chaps. 2 and 3).
6. This account of perfect identity, although more complex, squares with the two other explanations that Hume gives of perfect identity in Book I. Recall those accounts:
   (a) In Chap. 5, we saw that in 1.3.2, Hume specifically refers to identity as an idea that we imagine as *causing* a series, i.e. a "species," of resembling (proto) objects. Here, we saw that (perfect) identity is an idea that is imagined to represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness. Hume refers to this cause as "secret" because we never have an impression of it. And thus, this secret cause does not exactly represent an impression we have had, and thus, it seems to be a product of a transcendental imagination and transcendental caustion. Moreover, imagining this cause is something that we "always" (1.3.2.2; SBN 74) do. This constitutes Hume's *first* account of perfect identity (recall Chap. 5).
   (b) In Chap. 6, we saw that in order to imagine that an idea of an object is continuous and distinct, we must, via transcendental causation, imagine that we have an idea of a continuous and distinct cause of our Level 1 constant (resembling) and coherent impressions. This imagined cause is, Hume tells us, "insensible." Thus, the idea of this imagined cause does not *exactly* represent any impression that we have ever had, or will have; *we have no impression of it*. We merely imagine that we have such an idea based on the constancy and coherence of our impressions; it is "indirectly" and "obliquely" related to our experience. Moreover, this appears to be a process that we must *always* engage in. This is Hume's *second* account of perfect identity.
7. We are now in a position to suggest that according to Hume, the idea of perfect identity is an abstract idea, with some qualifications. Similar to what we

saw to be the case in Chap. 6, we see that when bringing a "single [proto] object" to mind, other, resembling proto-objects are brought to mind, which we imagine to be caused by the "single object," now imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted.

8. Why these three accounts must *not* be confused with Hume's understanding of the vulgar position (nor the philosophical position) is explained at length in Part III of this book.
9. We have seen that Baxter's account of "steadfast" objects does not square with the text. Rather, there is abundant evidence to suggest that, contrary to Baxter, we never have impression of an invariable and uninterrupted "object" that, as such, lasts longer than most moments (although it has no duration). Rather, in some cases, what Hume has in mind by a "steadfast" object (or any equivalent), is a succession of exactly resembling (or Level 1 constant) perceptions (T 1.2.3.7; SBN 35 and T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37). In other cases, where Hume speaks of a "steadfast" object (or any equivalent) Hume as an imagined cause in mind (T 1.2.3.8; SBN 35–6, T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). As result, we are forced to reject Baxter's analysis of identity, particularly, his account of identity in part 1 of Hume's four part system in 1.4.2.

Summary of Part II

1 Where We Are So Far

We have now worked through the notion of proto-objects (impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions), and three accounts of perfect identity, the first occurring on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4, and the remaining two occurring in the most difficult section of Book I: 1.4.2. In all three cases concerning perfect identity, Hume claims that we must *imagine* that we have an idea of an object. In one case, we must imagine an idea of an object that we think represents the properties of continuity and distinctness while in the two other cases, we must imagine an idea of an object that we think represents the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (where—at least on the face of it—invariability and uninterruptedness are interchangeable with the properties of continuity and distinctness). This means that according to Hume, particular objects that seem to admit of what he calls a "perfect identity" are imagined, complex *ideas*. In fact, as we saw to some degree in Chap. 6, and in more detail in Chap. 7, ideas of objects that we think admit of a perfect identity appear to be abstract ideas, although they do not exactly represent any impression. Rather, they represent a proto-object that (a) is imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted (or continuous and distinct) and (b) belongs to the set of proto-objects that it is alleged to cause. However, the fact that the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (or continuity and distinctness) do not exactly or, even indirectly represent any impression does not mean that according to Hume, we cannot have *perceptions* of such properties. Rather, in what appears to be an exception to the Copy Principle, we must *imagine* these properties, thanks to a *special* kind of imagination, and moreover, we imagine that objects that seem to represent these properties are causes of sets of resembling proto-objects thanks to a *special* kind of causation. Our ability to imagine such objects is a phenomenon that seems to "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) and "universally" take place (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201).

This suggests that there are transcendental aspects of probable (causal) reasoning and the imagination—at least in the respect that these processes seem to be a *conditions of possibility* for a certain kind of experience—experience that we might call *ordinary* experience. In Chap. 5, we saw that we must move "beyond the impressions of the senses" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) to imagine a "secret cause" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) such that in turn, we are better able to make comparisons (i.e. reason about) objects that admit of a perfect identity (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4). In Chap. 6 we discussed the two levels of constancy and coherence that obtain of our impressions. In particular, we saw that previous to at least philosophical and indirect causation (recall Chaps. 2 and 3),[15] we must employ transcendental causation (a special "kind of causation" (T 1.4.2.19; SBN 195)) to imagine an "insensible" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198)

[15] However, as we will see in Chap. 12, according to Hume, our ability to think in terms of *natural* causal relations does not seem to presuppose an ability to imagine objects that we think admit of a perfect identity.

idea of an object that represents continuity and distinctness. As a result of doing so, our perceptions seem "compleat[ly]" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198) constant and more "uniform" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198). Once again, doing so seems to better enable us to think of philosophical and indirect causal relations as obtaining between *objects*, particularly, between objects that we think admit of a perfect identity. In Chap. 7, we saw that according to Hume, our idea of "time" has a significant role to play in perfect identity. Here, Hume explains that we must *imagine* (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1) that an invariable and uninterrupted object causes ("participates in the changes" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1) of successions of resembling (although changing) proto-objects. Doing so allows us to think of an object with a perfect identity as existing in "time," where it may change in "time" while retaining its identity.

Thus, at this point we may highlight what appears to be a fifth kind of belief at work in Book I of the *Treatise*: transcendental belief.[16] This is the belief in an object that we imagine to have a perfect identity thanks to transcendental causation and our ability to imagine, via the transcendental imagination, the insensible properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (or continuity and distinctness). Although Hume does not explicitly call attention to such a belief, it would make sense that we believe in the objects that we imagine to have a perfect identity. And thus, these ideas would be particularly vivacious; recall Chap. 2. More textual evidence for this kind of belief is presented in Chaps. 11 and 12. Meanwhile, note that in some respects, this kind of belief should remind us of Kemp Smith's notion of the "natural" belief in objects (recall the Introduction to Part II of this book).[17] However, it is not clear if Hume thought that we *believe* in a relation of transcendental causation, or, if we are just naturally compelled to imagine causes of our various perceptions (proto-objects). For recall that in Chap. 2, we saw that according to Hume, we do not *believe* in the natural relation of causality, although this relation produces beliefs.

2 *Continuity and Distinctness v. Invariability and Uninterruptedness*

Thus far, we have assumed that the properties of continuity and distinctness are roughly interchangeable with the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness. Before we continue, we need to examine the relationship between these two sets of properties in a bit more detail. Recall that Hume's first discussion of perfect identity consisted of an explanation of how we imagine an object to be invariable and uninterrupted (1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4). However, as we saw in Chaps. 6 and 7, in 1.4.2, Hume abruptly moves from a discussion of how the imagination enables us to come up with ideas of objects that are *continuous* and *distinct* (T 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–199), to a discussion of how the imagination enables us

[16] Where the other four are, recall, elementary belief, causally-produced belief, philosophical belief, and indirect belief.

[17] C.f. Gaskin (1974) and his notion of natural belief.

to come up with ideas of objects that are *invariable* and *uninterrupted.* Recall that this transition occurs precisely when he begins Part 1 of his system, i.e. his discussion of the principle of individuation.

As explained in Chap. 4, throughout Book I, Hume *does* seem to use the properties of continuity and distinctness interchangeably with the property of uninterruptedness. For if an object is conceived of as uninterrupted, then it is, simply by definition, also conceived of as continuous and so as distinct (recall that according to Hume, continuity implies distinctness and *vice versa*; see Chap. 4). The reverse is also true: if an object is conceived of as distinct, it is conceived of as continuous and so, simply by definition, it is conceived of as uninterrupted.

But what about invariability? If an idea of an object is conceived of as continuous and distinct, is it also conceived of as invariable? Or, put another way, given the interchangeability of continuity with uninterruptedness, does uninterruptedness imply invariability?

As explained in Chap. 7, we *cannot*, according to Hume, have a continuous or uninterrupted perception; the very nature of our perceptions ensures that they will always be interrupted. However, as explained at length, we can imagine that an uninterrupted (i.e. continuous) object is causing our perceptions. The question is, if we imagine a merely uninterrupted object, e.g. an idea of a chair, such that we think of it as *continuing* when we do not perceive it, would we necessarily be imagining an invariable chair as well? No. For we might imagine that "time" changes the chair despite the fact that we simultaneously imagine that it continues to exist, uninterrupted, independent of our perceptions of it. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that uninterruptedness (and so, continuity and distinctness) do not necessarily imply invariability. Thus, it seems that continuity and distinctness are not strictly interchangeable with uninterruptedness and invariability.

Thus, it seems that in order to properly address just how an idea of object would be affected by "time," Hume must explicitly introduce the role of invariability into his discussion. But recall that he does *just this*, immediately after his discussion of the constancy and coherence of impressions in part 1 of his four-part system (recall Chap. 7). As a result, we might surmise (because Hume never explicitly says as much one way or another) that he so abruptly switches from a discussion of objects that are conceived of as continuous and distinct to a discussion of objects that are conceived of as uninterrupted *and* invariable in order to explicitly discuss the role of *time*, particularly in terms of how we imagine that "it" does or does not affect the *invariability* of objects that admit of a perfect identity (recall Chap. 7).

Moreover, we need to realize that conversely, Hume clearly does *not* think that invariability implies uninterruptedness. For the vulgar may come up with an invariable conception of objects, but *not* an uninterrupted one (see Chap. 8 for more detail and also recall Chaps. 6 and 7, particularly, our discussion of T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197–8). Common sense seems to indicate as much as well: My impression of my living room chair may not perceptively vary each time I enter the room, but despite this invariability, my perceptions *are* interrupted every time I leave the room. With this in mind, we might also conclude that the explicit introduction of invariability in part 1 of his system helps Hume to focus on the fundamental weakness of the vulgar position.

In particular, the vulgar can come up with an idea of an invariable object, but not an invariable *and* uninterrupted object (i.e. an idea that we think admits of perfect identity*;* see Chap. 8).

Thus, we might conclude that Hume's introduction of the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability is a clarificatory move. With more reflection (particularly, with the consideration of the role of time and the vulgar position), he realizes that continuity and distinctness do not do the work he needs them to do. Thus, he explicitly introduces the notion of invariability in part 1 of his four-part system. As a result, we should view his discussion of imagined ideas that admit of invariability and uninterruptedness given in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system as a revised version of his discussion of the continuity and distinctness that we imagine to hold of certain objects. In this respect, we may conclude that Hume thought that *both* the process of imagining a cause that is continuous and distinct *and* the process of imagining a cause that is invariable and uninterrupted produce ideas of perfect identity, although the account given in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system is the most developed, and the most complicated.

Part III
Imagining Causes in Reaction to the Vulgar: A Purely Philosophical Endeavor

Introduction to Part III

In Part III we come face to face with what appears to be a rather fundamental disconnect in Book I of Hume's *Treatise*. On the one hand, as shown in Part II, Hume seems to think we "always" and "universally" imagine ideas that admit of perfect identity. In fact, doing so appears to be a necessary condition of possibility for our ordinary experience, and so, is transcendentally necessary. On the other hand, while discussing the philosopher's position on objects, Hume suggests that we *only* imagine perfect identity in *reaction* to the vulgar, but not "always" and "universally," and definitely not transcendentally. In 1.4.6, where he discusses personal identity, we see Hume paradoxically endorse both of these positions. Hume's qualms about 1.4.6, famously presented in the Appendix to the *Treatise*, pertain to this paradoxical endorsement.

Thus, in Part III, we discuss the remainder of 1.4.2, as well as 1.4.6. In the course of doing so, I show why the vulgar perspective on objects must be understood as being *distinct* from (a) Hume's three accounts of how we "always" imagine perfect identity and (b) the philosopher's conception objects.

Chapter 8
The Vulgar Attempt to Achieve Perfect Identity

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I make two major claims, which conflict with most, if not all readings of 1.4.2, First, the vulgar perspective should be divided into *two* sections, which correspond to, respectively, parts 2 and 3 of Hume's system of identity. We may refer to these sections as vulgar perspective I, and vulgar perspective II.[1] Second, neither vulgar perspective I nor II should be confused with the three accounts of perfect identity that were explicated in Part II of this book.[2]

We proceed as follows: in Sect. 2, I explicate part 2 of Hume's system, i.e. vulgar perspective I. To preface this discussion, I give an introductory account of why the vulgar position should not be confused with Hume's position, namely, the transcendental conception of perfect identity. In Sect. 3 We explicate part 3 of his system, i.e. vulgar perspective II. In the course of doing so, we consider still more reasons why the vulgar position should not be confused with Hume's position. In Sect. 4, we explicate part 4 of Hume's system, where we examine why, according to Hume, we are inclined to *believe* in vulgar perspective II. Here, we uncover still more evidence to support a distinction between the vulgar position and Hume's position.

[1] However, this is not to suggest that these two perspectives are mutually exclusive. Rather, we might even characterize them as two "phases" of vulgar thought. In both perspectives, or phases, the vulgar think that objects are what we see, touch, taste, hear and/or feel, i.e. objects *are* impressions. However, *why* the vulgar think this is the case clearly shifts, and thus, we see what I characterize as two perspectives, or phases in their thought.

[2] The bulk of this chapter has been published in *Hume Studies*, 33 #1 (2007) 67–90. I am grateful for the feedback that I received when presenting earlier versions of it at the *32nd Hume Society Conference*, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 2005, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, 2005, and *The Third International Reid Symposium: Scottish Philosophy*, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen Scotland, July 2004.

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2 Vulgar Perspective I

2.1 Why This Is Not Hume's Position: An Introduction

According to Hume, the "vulgar," or everyday person—which includes all of us at least some of the time (T 1.4.2.36, 38; SBN 205, 207)—is consistently duped into thinking that certain resembling sense-impressions may be identified *with* each other. As a result of doing so, we tend to think that sets of resembling perceptions constitute the objects of the world. This somewhat pedestrian way of thinking may be understood as follows: If I look at, say, a motorcycle, at time T_1, then again at time T_2, and still again at time T_3–T_n, my current sense perceptions and my past impressions[3] of the motorcycle would all appear to significantly *resemble* each other. As a result, they appear to be what Hume also has occasion to refer to as "constant" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 201), or "invariable" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202).[4] Hume claims that I would naturally (albeit mistakenly) be inclined to believe that all of these resembling sense impressions are not only "identical" with each other, but they constitute the motorcycle. They *are* the "object" motorcycle. Thus, according to the vulgar perspective, the motorcycle is any combination of *what I see*, or *what I touch*, or *what I smell*, or *what I hear*, or perhaps even *what I taste*. But this is not to say that the vulgar acknowledge, or even recognize their claim that objects are sense impressions. Rather, the vulgar simply do not *distinguish* between perceptions and mind-independent objects. In this respect, the vulgar perspective comes about re*flex*ively, that is, without much, if any, re*flect*ion.[5] As a result, the vulgar

[3] There is an immediate flaw with the vulgar theory presented on T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202 that Hume does not point out until T 1.4.2.43; SBN 209–10: One could not, according to Hume, compare a set of resembling sense impressions if all of them were not *immediately* present to the senses. According to Hume, we do not remember sense *impressions,* but instead, ideas *of* sense impressions (recall Chap. 1). As a result, in the course of his explanation of the vulgar position, Hume implicitly assumes (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203) and then explicitly states on T 1.4.2; SBN 209–10, that although the vulgar think that they are identifying sense impressions, they are actually relating either a set of *ideas* with each other or are relating a set of ideas with a *current* sense impression or impressions. For instance, I might relate all of my *memories* of my impressions of a motorcycle with my current sense impressions of the motorcycle, and *then* proceed to mistakenly identify this set of ideas and impressions with the "object" motorcycle. Oddly though, commentators have tended to overlook this somewhat fundamental detail. See for example, Price (1940, pp. 33–44): "Let us now try to state Hume's meaning more clearly. As before, we must describe the situation *entirely in terms of impressions*…here again we find that there is an interrupted series of *impressions*, a series with a gap in it" (p. 35; emphasis added).

[4] Hume seems to have Level 1 constancy in mind here, for, as we will see above, the vulgar do not imagine a cause of their perceptions such that in turn, these perceptions appear to be Level 2 constant (and coherent).

[5] However, some reflection is clearly involved in what I call vulgar perspective II. But this reflection does not concern the vulgar's seemingly instinctive inability to distinguish between objects and impressions. Rather, it concerns their attempt to alleviate the contradiction that results from this inability. See Sect. 3 of this chapter for more detail.

inadvertently mistake resemblance for identity, and concomitantly, collections of resembling impressions[6] for objects (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202).

But identifying sets of resembling impressions is clearly conceptually *distinct* from the account that Hume gives of perfect identity in part 1 of his system of identity (recall Chap. 7). There, we saw that to imagine an object with perfect identity, we do *not* identify sets of numerous resembling objects *with each other*. Rather, we imagine a *cause* of this set, where we imagine that that unified cause moves through time. Very generally speaking, this constitutes the complicated "marriage" between unity and number. In fact, if the vulgar merely identified a set of resembling proto-objects with each other, they would only get the idea of *invariability*, since they would still be thinking of these objects as numerous, and so as *interrupted*. Recall Hume's remarks to this effect in part 1 of his system:

> A multiplicity of objects can never convey [the idea of perfect identity], however resembling they may be suppos'd. The mind always pronounces the one not to be the other, and considers them as forming two, three, or any determinate number of objects, whose existences are entirely distinct and independent. (T 1.4.2.27; SBN 200)

In fact, Hume tells us, this is just what happens in the case of the vulgar—they can only come up with an idea of an *invariable* object. This is an idea that Hume characterizes here as admitting of just "perfect *numerical* identity— "numerical" because the vulgar focus just on the set of numerous, resembling perceptions, and so, leave *out* the role of unity. There is no "marriage" taking place with the vulgar position. As a result, Hume writes at the beginning of part 2 of his system:

> I now proceed to explain the *second* part of my system, and shew why the constancy of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them a *perfect numerical identity*, tho' there be very long intervals betwixt their appearance, *and they have only one of the essential qualities of identity, viz. invariableness.* (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 201–202; emphases added)

Thus, already we know that Hume's account of perfect identity given in part 1 of his system should *not* be confused with the vulgar position. Moreover, Hume's very *first* mention of the vulgar (while discussing his four-part system) occurs precisely where he introduces part 2. He also explicitly tells us: "That I may avoid all ambiguity and confusion on this head, I shall observe, that I here account for the opinions and belief of the vulgar with regard to the existence of body; and therefore must entirely *conform myself* to their manner of thinking of expressing themselves" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202; emphasis added). To best, and perhaps, most honestly explain how and why this manner of thinking is so pervasive, Hume finds it appropriate to "adopt" the vulgar perspective for approximately the next seven pages (up to T 1.4.2.43; SBN 209). As a result, it's clear that Hume is not speaking for himself here, while he *does* seem to be speaking for himself when he gives his three accounts

[6] Although, as noted in the immediately preceding footnote, Hume is fully aware that regardless of what the vulgar claim, these could not be sets of resembling impressions, but instead, they must be sets of resembling ideas or sets of resembling impressions *and* ideas of impressions.

of transcendental perfect identity (where, in the course of which, virtually no mention of the vulgar is made[7]).

Hume immediately proceeds to explain that as part of his vulgar charade, he will assume that sets of resembling sense impressions are indeed, to be identified with objects, giving himself pedestrian license to use the words 'object' and 'perception' interchangeably. Doing so underlines the vulgar assumption that there is no distinction to be made between objects and perceptions where, as noted above, according to the vulgar perspective, the latter consist of sense impressions (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202). Also, reminding us still again that he is merely *pretending* to adopt the vulgar point of view, he assures us that he will tell us when he *stops* doing so; making it still *clearer* that we should not confuse Hume's characterization of the vulgar perspective with Hume's position: "*I shall be sure to give warning, when I return to a more philosophical way of speaking and thinking*" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202; emphases added).

Already then, it seems clear enough that we should distinguish the vulgar position from Hume's position. However, throughout the remainder of this chapter, we will see still more reasons why we should make this distinction. Meanwhile, note that traditionally, Hume scholars have *not* distinguished Hume's position from the vulgar perspective (see at least, Price 1940; Bennett 1971; Stroud 1977; Wilson 1989; Grene 1994; Baxter 2008; and to some degree, Kemp Smith 1941; Steinberg 1981). Yet doing so has, I think, generated a great deal of undue confusion. For as we will see by the end of this book, if we do not carefully separate Hume's position from the vulgar position, we cannot properly understand perfect identity, personal identity, the relationship between objects and the relation of causality, and relatedly, the role of elementary belief, justification and the principle of uniformity.

2.2 Vulgar Perspective I: In Detail

2.2.1 Dispositions

A General Overview

Immediately after distancing himself from the vulgar, Hume turns his attention to the relation of resemblance. He is certain that it is *this* relation that so endemically lures the unthinking lot of us—i.e. the vulgar—into identifying sense impressions with objects. Naturally then, the question that Hume wants to answer first is: How and why could resemblance have such a profound and far-reaching effect on the unreflecting mind? (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203) To answer this, Hume immediately proceeds to introduce the notion of a "disposition," a notion that has, I think, been

[7] On the one occasion where Hume does mention the vulgar, he does so to *distinguish* their point of view from the transcendental account of identity: T 1.4.2.16–17; SBN 194.

absent in most commentaries on 1.4.2 (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203).[8] In particular, he begins by explaining that the tendency to mistakenly identify the causes of resembling *dispositions* is behind our propensity to mistakenly identify resembling *perceptions*. And so, as far as the vulgar conception of objects is concerned, we are, Hume tells us, actually dealing with *two* kinds of resemblances, leading him to write in a footnote, "there are *two* relations, and both of them resemblances which contribute in our mistaking the succession of our interrupted perceptions for an identical object" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 205 fn 1; emphasis added). In particular, he continues: "The *first* is the resemblance of the perceptions; the *second* is the resemblance, which the act of the mind in *surveying* a succession of resembling objects bears to that in *surveying* an identical object" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 205 fn 1; emphases added).

However, to be precise, we must realize that Hume is actually dealing with *three* kinds of resemblance here, where the first two that I list below are, respectively, the two that Hume notes above. As far as the third is concerned, we will examine it at length in the next section. However, it will be helpful to give an overview here, for as Hume admits at the beginning of the footnote cited above, "This reasoning [regarding dispositions and the relation of resemblance], it must be confest, is somewhat abstruse, and difficult to be comprehended." (1) the resemblance that obtains *between each perception in a set* of successive and similar perceptions, e.g. the resemblance that obtains between each perception in a set of similar and successive motorcycle perceptions. For ease of reference, we may refer to this kind of resemblance as R_p. (2) The resemblance that obtains *between resembling dispositions*—where, at this point in our analysis, we may simply understand a "disposition" as the way in which we "conceive" (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203) of an idea or a set of ideas. This means that a disposition is an "act of the mind" that "survey[s]" the idea or ideas at hand (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 205 fn 1). We may refer to this kind of resemblance as R_d. (3) The resemblance between a set of similar and successive perceptions (that is, a set consisting of perceptions that admit of R_p) with an idea that admits of "perfect identity" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203). However, important to note, this set and this idea *resemble each other in virtue of the similar* ***effect*** *that they have on the mind.* In particular, each "place[s]" (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203) the mind in similar, if not the *same*[9] dispositions (namely, dispositions admitting of R_d). In turn, Hume explains, because the given set of (R_p) resembling perceptions and the idea of an object that

[8] Stroud does mention dispositions, but only in passing (1977, p. 103), as does Kemp Smith (1941, p. 478 fn 2) and D.F. and M.J. Norton (2002, p. 476). However, all three mention dispositions without, I think, making it clear that Hume is speaking for the *vulgar* here and not himself.

[9] To be precise, we should note that initially, Hume tells us that he is looking for dispositions that are either similar *or* the same as those caused by ideas of perfect identity: "not only [does the relation of resemblance cause] an association of ideas, but also of dispositions, and makes us conceive the one idea by an act or operation of the mind, *similar* to that by which the conceive the other. This circumstance I have observ'd to be of great moment; and we may establish it for a general rule, that whatever ideas place the mind in the *same* disposition or *in similar* ones are very apt to be confounded" (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203; emphases added). However, shortly after this passage, he seems

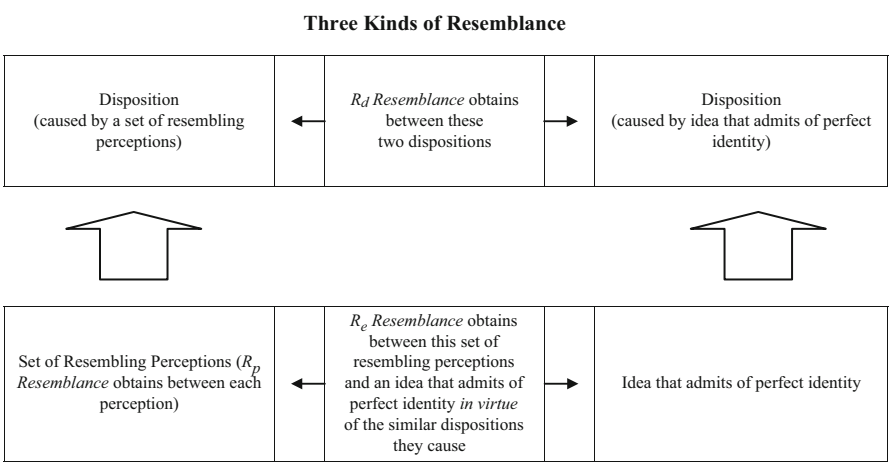

Fig. 8.1 Three kinds of resemblance

admits of perfect identity place the mind in (R_d) resembling dispositions, we tend to "confound" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203, 204) the set of successive, resembling perceptions *with* the idea of an object that admits of perfect identity. This means that while in a vulgar state of mind, we *confuse* a set of resembling, successive perceptions with an idea that has perfect identity *in virtue of* the similar effects that they have on the mind. Or as Hume puts it: "whatever ideas[10] place the mind in the *same* disposition or in *similar* ones are apt to be confounded" (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203; emphases added). We may refer to this third kind of resemblance as R_e (where 'e' stands for effect) (see Fig. 8.1).

to restrict his discussion to dispositions that are not just similar, but in fact, are the *same*: "Now what other objects, besides identical ones [namely, ones that admit of perfect identity], are capable of placing the mind in the *same* disposition, when it considers them, and of causing the same uninterrupted passage of the imagination from one idea to another?" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203; emphasis added) And finally, in his last remark regarding dispositions at this juncture in the *Treatise*, he retreats to characterizing them as *almost* the same, and so it would seem, as merely similar: "An easy transition or passage of the imagination, along the ideas of these different and interrupted perceptions, is *almost the same* disposition of mind with that in which we consider one constant and uninterrupted perception [namely, a perception that enables us to think of an idea as admitting of a perfect identity]" (T 1.4.2.35; SBN 204; emphasis added, c.f. above, Sect. 4.1.2). However, although I think that we should, at least, be aware of Hume's oscillation on this point, I don't think it substantively affects his position regarding the distinction between what I call vulgar perspective I versus vulgar perspective II. As a result, we need not pursue its implications any further.

[10] Hume appears to be using 'ideas' quite loosely here. For given the context of this sentence, 'ideas' could mean a set of resembling perceptions (which could entail impressions and ideas), or it could mean an idea of an object that admits of "perfect identity."

Perfect Identity Revisited

Following Hume's lead "we must first examine the disposition of the mind in viewing any object[11] which preserves a *perfect identity*, and then find some other object, that is confounded with it, by causing a *similar* disposition" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203; emphases added). On the face of it, this claim is difficult to make sense of. For it would seem that simply by definition, perfect identity must apply to some *non*-vulgar way of looking at the world. After all, as we saw in Sect. 2.1 of this chapter, the vulgar are only capable of conceiving of an invariable object, *not* an invariable *and* uninterrupted object (recall that in order for an idea to admit of perfect identity, we must imagine that it represents *both* the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness). But maddeningly enough, Hume tells us that the vulgar are, in fact, capable of grasping perfect identity. Recall the passage that we began this section with: "we must first examine the disposition of the mind in viewing any object which preserves a *perfect identity*, and then find some other object, that is confounded with it, by causing a *similar* disposition" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203; emphases added). Here, Hume is discussing the *vulgar* position, where recall, he is looking for a disposition that is caused when the vulgar "view" an "object"[12] that "preserves a perfect identity." But how is it possible that the vulgar could have an idea of perfect identity?

Hume's answer is, I think, rather clever, although somewhat obscure: He presents an instance of perfect identity that does not contradict the vulgar opinion that "[our] very sensations … are … the true objects" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202), and which fits with his view that the vulgar identify their perceptions merely based on their "constancy" (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 201). 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.[13] 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

[11] As noted earlier, Hume warned us that he might, after the vulgar, use the word 'object' interchangeably with the word 'perception' (T 1.4.2.31; SBN 202). Here is a case where he seems to be doing so. For as explained earlier, Hume is clear that sets of resembling *perceptions* cause dispositions that are similar to, if not the same as, dispositions caused by the *ideas* of perfect identity. That is, in both cases, *perceptions* cause these dispositions, not mind-independent "objects," as Hume seems to imply in the passage noted above. But it may have just been easier for Hume to use the word 'object' here—in the spirit of the vulgar—however misleading it might be.

[12] Keep in mind that Hume is using the word 'object' here interchangeably with 'perception.'

[13] Again, Hume seems to be using the word 'object' interchangeably with the word 'perception' here—for at no point does he even suggest that the vulgar may somehow apprehend mind-independent "objects" such that they may "fix" their thoughts on them. Rather, the implication is that the vulgar simply focus on one kind of impression for an extended period of time, e.g. a violet impression, without, *seemingly*, entertaining any interruptions, e.g. looking away, at a chair. This point reminds us of "act/object" problem, discussed in Chap. 7. Recall that this problem is: Are impressions mental "states" or are they "objects" of mental states? In the passages cited above, Hume

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). Regardless of the fact that we barely notice it, this successiveness infuses a certain *interruptedness* to the impression and the idea at hand. So, for example, although one might initially assume that the impression and the corresponding idea of the violet are uninterrupted and invariable, they are *not*.

At this point, the imagination comes into play. Note Hume's remarks to this effect: "When we fix our thought on any object, and *suppose* it to continue the same for some time; 'tis evident we *suppose* the change to lie only in the time, and never exert ourselves to produce any new image or idea of the object" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203; emphases added). That is, in these rare vulgar cases where we "fix" our attention on an object without any apparent interruption we naturally "suppose," or in other words, *imagine* that the "object" is continuous, thanks to the *prima facie* continuity, i.e. the alleged uninterruptedness of the sense perception at hand, while it is "time" that is successive and thus, is interrupted and so, is "chang[ing]." This means—consistent with the vulgar perspective that *what we sense* comprises the objects of the world—that the *prima facie* continuity (uninterruptedness) of the sense perception at hand is, we "*suppose*," identifiable with the continuity (uninterruptedness) of the "object." 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

indicates that perceptions are *objects*. Certain dispositions (states of mind) survey resembling *objects*, where, as I have explained throughout, these "objects" are perceptions. However, one might argue that this usage is just an artifact of his attempt to adopt the vulgar position (where he uses the word 'object' interchangeably with 'perception'). But in this case, although perceptions are not mind-independent things, they are discrete, interrupted "things" that are "surveyed" by the mind. In this very general respect, perceptions do appear to be objects of the mind rather than being states of mind. However, it could be argued that regardless, they are discrete *experiences*, that, as such, are the "objects" of dispositions. And so, in this case, generally speaking, perceptions would be states of mind *and* objects, as is the case with transcendentally conceived of objects, but for entirely different reasons (recall Chap. 7).

[14] Although Hume is not entirely explicit in this regard, we may conclude that by "faculties of mind," he is referring to the *imagination* simply because in the next paragraph (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203–4), he explicitly tells us that the *imagination* is responsible for moving in an uninterrupted passage from one idea to another as time passes; and so, he is implicitly identifying the "faculties" that "continue" the idea at hand with the imagination: "Now what other objects, besides identical ones, are capable of placing the mind in the same disposition, when it considers them, and causing the same uninterrupted passage of the imagination from one idea to another?" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203)

have an uninterrupted impression, and thus, this passage does not support Baxter's notion of a "steadfast" object.

In short, the imagination makes the idea that is (a) caused by what *seems* to be an uninterrupted and invariable sense perception but is actually (b) interrupted by the successive nature of our impressions, *un*interrupted by "continu[ing]" the idea that corresponds to the sense impression. Or as Hume puts it, immediately after the sentence cited above: "*The passage from one moment to another is scarce felt*, and distinguishes not itself by a different perception or idea, which may require a different direction of the spirits, in order to its conception" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203; emphases added). So, thanks to the imagination's power to "continue" an idea that is otherwise made discrete by the "passage from moment to moment," the vulgar *are* given an idea of an object that is *both* interrupted and invariable, and thus, admits of "perfect identity."

As a result, Hume is actually operating with *three* kinds of uninterruptedness when it comes to his presentation of the vulgar idea of perfect identity: (**i**) An impression that, at least on the face of it, *seems* uninterrupted, e.g. the uninterrupted violet impression. (**ii**) As Hume puts it, the "*uninterrupted passage of the imagination* from one idea to another" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203; emphases added). (**iii**) The uninterrupted violet *idea* of the impression, "which [thanks to the 'uninterrupted passage of the imagination'] subsists without variation or interruption," (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203) and so, admits of perfect identity. We may conclude then, that contrary to most scholarly readings of 1.4.2 (including, for instance, Price 1940, pp. 46–47) that thanks to the imagination, the vulgar may indeed, entertain an idea that is both invariable and uninterrupted, and so, in the end, does admit of a perfect identity. Why else would Hume refer to the vulgar as "viewing [an] object which preserves a perfect identity" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203)?

But is this the *same* kind of perfect identity that we discussed in Part II of this book? No, for although the vulgar *do* come up with an idea that admits of perfect identity, the implication is—for Hume is not entirely explicit in this regard—that this instance of perfect identity proves to be such a limited case, it does not give the vulgar any kind of *comprehensive sense* of objects that are both invariable and uninterrupted. Rather, our impressions seem to be constantly changing in light of the fact that we are persistently moving through the world—we don't "fix our thought" very often. In fact, we don't "fix our thought" at all in those cases of transcendental perfect identity explicated in Part II of this book. Rather, we imagine causes, whereas the vulgar do *not*; they conflate dispositions (see below).

We may conclude then, that according to Hume, the *vulgar* notion of perfect identity provides the vulgar with a standard of identity that only legitimately applies to a very *limited* number of cases, but is, nevertheless, mistakenly applied to the *bulk* of their experience by way of the disposition that it causes.[15] This is the case simply because as noted above, the disposition caused by the idea of perfect identity is very similar to, if not the same as the disposition that

[15] At least initially, for as shown in Sect. 3 of this chapter, the vulgar ultimately abandon this approach and turn to what I characterize as vulgar perspective II.

is caused when we apprehend a set of resembling perceptions. We may now turn to a more detailed explanation of how and why this is the case.

2.2.2 The Conflation

Having established a benchmark case for vulgarly-conceived-of "perfect identity," where, as just noted, *three* kinds of uninterruptedness obtain, Hume immediately claims that sets of successive and resembling perceptions "place" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203) us in dispositions that are (R_d) similar, if not the *same* as, those dispositions that occur in cases of vulgarly-conceived-of perfect identity: "a *succession of related objects places the mind in this disposition*, and is consider'd with the *same* smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination, as attends the view of the same [uninterrupted[16] and] invariable object." (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204; emphasis added) As a result, and as noted above, we are—when in a vulgar state of mind—prompted to "confound" (T 1.4.2.33, 34, SBN 203, 204) ideas that admit of vulgarly-conceived-of perfect identity with sets of resembling, successive and *interrupted* perceptions.

In particular, when we experience a successive, *interrupted* series of similar perceptions (e.g. a series of resembling motorcycle perceptions) while in a vulgar state of mind, we are, Hume claims, naturally placed in a disposition that prompts us to conceive of these perceptions with "the *same* smooth and *uninterrupted* progress of the *imagination*, as attends the view of the same [uninterrupted, and] invariable object" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204; emphasis added). As a result, these collections of resembling and successive perceptions are capable of putting us in a state of mind—a *disposition*—where, as is exactly the case with perfect identity, the imagination, "considers" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203) these ideas in a decisively uninterrupted fashion. As a result, thanks to the imagination, a series of interrupted, resembling perceptions (e.g. our set of motorcycle perceptions) are "consider[ed]" in an uninterrupted way (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204).

And so, the "uninterruptedness" of the disposition (the way in which the imagination conceives of this set of interrupted, resembling perceptions) seems to be *transposed* onto the set, making us conceive of *it* as uninterrupted. This means

[16] Hume uses the word 'same' interchangeably with the word 'uninterrupted' here. We may conclude that this is the case because previous to this passage, he compares dispositions caused by ideas of *perfect identity* with dispositions caused by sets of resembling, successive and interrupted perceptions. Concomitantly, given our definition of "perfect identity," he is comparing dispositions caused by ideas of objects that are *both* uninterrupted and invariable, with dispositions caused by ideas of objects that are merely invariable. In the passage noted above, he is *still* comparing these two kinds of dispositions. As a result, it simply follows that the comparison he makes here must be between an idea that is invariable and uninterrupted (and so, admits of perfect identity) with a set of interrupted, resembling and successive perceptions. Thus, when he refers to the object in the passage cited above as the "same invariable object," he must have meant the "[uninterrupted and] invariable object;" namely, the idea of an object with a perfect identity. Note that for similar reasons, Hume also uses 'same' to mean 'uninterrupted on T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204.

that our "view" of the set of interrupted, successive and resembling motorcycle perceptions is "attended" with the "same smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination" that "attends" our idea of say, the violet, when we "fix" our attention on it. For just as the interruptions that naturally occur between successive impressions seem to be erased by the uninterrupted imagination in the case of vulgarly-conceived-of perfect identity, the interruptions in perceiving the impressions at hand (e.g. looking away from the motorcycle and looking back) are erased by the uninterrupted imagination. As a result, cases where we "fix our thought" and cases where we apprehend a series of similar, but interrupted perceptions put us into very similar, if not the (R_d) same dispositions. We are put into a state of mind where the imagination is prone to "smooth" over any interruptions. So, we might say that experiencing a series of interrupted, resembling perceptions *feels* just like "fix[ing]" our thought on a single seemingly uninterrupted impression.

As a further result, when in a disposition caused by a set of resembling, interrupted perceptions (e.g. the motorcycle perceptions) we mistakenly think that it must have been *caused* by an idea of perfect identity due to its striking (R_e) resemblance to those dispositions caused when we "fix our thought" (recall Fig. 8.1). So, Hume explains, what we ultimately do in such vulgar states of mind is "confound" the two distinct although (R_e) *similar* causes (that is, an idea of perfect identity and a set of resembling perceptions) of the same (R_d) effect (that is, a disposition where the imagination "considers" the ideas at hand in an uninterrupted fashion) *with each other*. Hume writes:

> as the *continuation of the same action* is an *effect* of the continu'd view of the same[17] object, 'tis for this reason we attribute *sameness* to every succession of related objects. The thought slides along the succession with equal facility, as if it consider'd only one object; and therefore confounds the succession with the [perfect] identity. (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204; emphases added)

That is, we mistakenly identity two *sufficient* causes of a given effect with each other. Analogously, I might hastily conclude that because my computer may be turned off by either (a) following the proper shut-down procedure or, alternatively, (b) yanking the plug out of the wall, that therefore, following the proper shut-down procedure and yanking the plug out of the wall are identical procedures.[18]

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[17] As noted in an earlier footnote, here is another instance where Hume uses 'same' (as well as, in this case, 'sameness') interchangeably with 'uninterrupted.'

[18] Or as Hume puts it: "We find by experience, that there is such a *constancy* [namely, a resemblance] in almost all the impressions of the senses, that their interruption produces no alteration on them, and hinders them not from returning the same in appearance and in situation as at their first existence. I survey the furniture in chamber; I shut my eyes, and afterwards open them; and find the new perceptions to resemble perfectly those, which formerly struck my senses. This [R_p] resemblance is observ'd in a thousand instances, and naturally connects together our ideas of these interrupted perceptions by the strongest relation, and conveys the mind with *an easy transition from one to another. An easy transition or passage of the imagination, along with the ideas of these different and interrupted perceptions, is almost the same disposition of mind with that in which we*

However, this vulgar confusion between sufficient causes of similar effects, inspired by the projection of the imagination's "uninterruptedness" onto the set of successive, resembling perceptions does not, according to Hume, provide the vulgar with a lasting sense of perfect identity; the vulgar perspective collapses, but at the hands of the vulgar themselves. For, as we will see in a moment, with just a small amount of reflection, the vulgar realize that such "uninterruptedness" *cannot* be applied to sets of R_p resembling interrupted perceptions. Indeed, they realize that it is a *contradiction* to think of this set as both interrupted and uninterrupted. So, the vulgar tendency to "confound" sets of resembling interrupted perceptions with ideas of perfect identity in virtue of the similar effects they have on the mind is effectively cut short. As a result, the vulgar make a somewhat desperate move to come up with *another*, seemingly more applicable notion of perfect identity; namely, one that does *not* just apply to those rare situations where we "fix our thought." Accordingly, they adopt what I call vulgar perspective II. Meanwhile, we can refer to the vulgar's disposition-inspired attempt to come up with an idea of perfect identity as vulgar perspective I.

However, we should realize that Hume ends his account of vulgar perspective I by reminding the reader that *none* of us is immune to making this kind of mistake. Rather, we are all, at one point or another, compelled to apprehend the world in a decisively "unthinking" manner (T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205). How this fact does or does not square with Hume's claim that we "always," "universally" and transcendentally imagine causes will be explained in the summary of Part III of this book.

3 Vulgar Perspective II

3.1 The Transition from Vulgar Perspective I to Vulgar Perspective II

As noted above, at one point or another we all naturally (albeit mistakenly) "ascribe … a perfect identity" (T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205) to sets of resembling, interrupted perceptions. In particular, thanks to the influence of imagination-inspired dispositions, we tend to "confound" the idea of perfect identity with that of a set of resembling perceptions. Yet if we proceed to reflect just a bit about this identification—while in a vulgar state of mind—we are led to an inevitable

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*consider one constant an uninterrupted perception. '**Tis therefore very natural for us to mistake one for the other***" (T 1.4.2.35; SBN 204; italics and boldness added). Also recall that Hume makes a very similar point just before he launches into his discussion of vulgarly-conceived-of perfect identity: "This circumstance I have observ'd to be of great moment; and we may establish it for a general rule, that whatever ideas place the mind in the same disposition or in similar ones, are very apt to be confounded" (T 1.4.2.32; SBN 203). And still elsewhere: "objects [that place us in the same uninterrupted disposition] are very naturally confounded with [perfectly] identical ones" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 203).

contradiction. For how, despite how our dispositions compel us, could a set of *interrupted* perceptions simultaneously be an *un*interrupted thing, i.e., a "body"? (T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205). Assuming that objects equate to sense impressions leads to a contradiction, and so, vulgar perspective I amounts to a *reductio*.

Note how Hume characterizes this phenomenon, where the following passage comprises his lead-in to part 3 of his four-part system, and so effectively signals, I think, a clear break from his discussion of vulgar perspective I and his transition into vulgar perspective II[19] (a transition that is widely overlooked in Hume scholarship).[20]

> [According to the vulgar] The very image, which is present to the senses, is with us the real body; and 'tis to these interrupted images we ascribe a **perfect identity**. But as the interruption of the appearance seems contrary to the identity, and naturally leads us to regard these resembling perceptions as different from each other, we here find ourselves at a loss how to reconcile such opposite opinions. The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a **perfect identity**. The interrupted manner of their appearance makes us consider them as so many resembling, but still distinct beings, which appear after certain intervals. *The perplexity arising from this* ***contradiction*** **produces** *a propension to unite these broken appearances by the fiction of a continu'd existence,* which is the *third* part of the hypothesis I propos'd to explain. (T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205; italics and boldness added)

In light of this contradiction, Hume explains, the vulgar are driven to try again, but with a *different* approach. This second approach, consisting of what I call vulgar perspective II, does not turn on the ability of the imagination to "smooth" over interruptions, nor relatedly, dispositions and the confusion that inevitably occurs regarding their origins. Rather, as a direct result of vulgar perspective I, a *new* propensity arises, consisting of the construction of "the fiction of a continu'd existence." Hume's discussion of this "propensity" comprises part 3 of his system, to which we now turn.

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[19] To further support my claim that part 2 of Hume's 4-part system is meant to be an explication of vulgar perspective I, while part 3 is an explication of vulgar perspective II, note that Hume initially explains the distinction between parts 2 and 3 as follows: "*Secondly*, Give a reason, why the resemblance of our broken and interrupted perceptions induces us to attribute an identity to them. *Thirdly*, Account for that propensity, which this illusion gives, to unite these broken appearances by a continu'd existence" (T 1.4.2.25; SBN 200). Notice that even according to this very brief summary, it is clear that each part consists of a *separate* attempt to account for identity, where part 2 directly turns on "the resemblance of our broken and interrupted perceptions," and part 3 explains a "propensity" that seems to *fall out* of the illusory content of the first attempt, particularly, the contradiction it generates. In particular, Hume suggests here, part 3 is an explanation of the vulgar "propensity" to add uninterruptedness (i.e. "continuity") a *second* time to their notion of an object. Also, we must ask, if parts 2 and 3 were *not* meant to be separate accounts, why would Hume divide them as such?

[20] It must be noted that to some degree, Price implicitly acknowledges this distinction between vulgar perspective I and vulgar perspective II, loosely identifying them as two "stages" in Hume's account of identity (see Price, 1940, p. 49). However, in the course of doing so, Price does not acknowledge that Hume is speaking for the *vulgar* here, not himself, and so, I must distance myself from Price's reading. In addition, Price does not explicitly acknowledge the role of dispositions, perfect identity, and nor does he think that the unperceived perception that the vulgar are forced to posit in light of the contradiction that falls out of vulgar perspective I is a meant to be a *continuous* "being." See Sect. 3.2 of this chapter for more detail.

Hume begins with still another account of the transition from vulgar perspective I to vulgar perspective II, which proceeds as follows:

> Now there being here an opposition betwixt the notion of the identity of resembling perceptions, and the interruption of their appearance, the mind must be uneasy in that situation, and will naturally seek relief from the uneasiness. Since the uneasiness arises from the opposition of two contrary principles, it must look for relief by sacrificing the one for the other. But as the smooth passage of our thought along our resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, *we can never without reluctance yield up that opinion.* (T 1.4.2.37; SBN 206; emphasis added)

That is: (1) The vulgar have a clear contradiction on their hands, putting them in a very uncomfortable state. (2) This contradiction is a consequence of the vulgar claim that objects equate to what we sense, implying two opposing claims: (a) our impressions are interrupted and (b) our impressions are *not* interrupted. And so, it seems that the vulgar's problem would be over if they simply rejected either (a) or (b), or, of course, the initial assumption that objects *are* impressions. But thanks to the influence of dispositions, Hume explains in the paragraph cited above, (b) is very hard to reject. He immediately continues:

> We [while in this vulgar quandary] must therefore, turn to the other side, and suppose that our perceptions are no longer *interrupted*, but [instead] preserve a *continu'd as well as an invariable existence*, and are by that means entirely the same. But here the interruptions in the appearance of these perceptions are so long and frequent, that 'tis impossible to overlook them; and as the *appearance* of a perception in the mind and its *existence* seem at first sight entirely the same, it may be doubted, whether we can ever assent to so palpable a contradiction, *and suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind.* (T 1.4.2.37; SBN 206; first two and last emphases added)

That is, picking up where we left off above: (3) Although we are extremely reluctant to turn our backs on the seductive influence of dispositions, we can't deny that our perceptions are nevertheless, interrupted. (4) Thus, when faced with a very uncomfortable contradiction, the vulgar are forced to come up with a *new* idea, but *without* abandoning the assumption that objects are what we sense. However, this new idea—i.e. the idea that impressions may exist independently of our sensing them—*does* seem rather absurd. Or, as Hume puts it here: "and as the *appearance* of a perception in the mind and its *existence* seem at first sight entirely the same it may be doubted, whether we can ever assent to so palpable a contradiction, *and suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind*."

However, before we can carefully examine how Hume explains how the vulgar could possibly entertain the idea that a perception (namely, an impression) could exist *without* being perceived on T 1.4.2.37–40; SBN 205–208, we should first note another instance in Book I where Hume gives separate, although brief accounts of the transition from vulgar perspective I to vulgar perspective II.[21] This is given just before he begins to discuss his four-part system in 1.4.2:

> When we [in a vulgar state of mind] have been accustom'd to observe a constancy in certain impressions, and have found, that the perception of the sun or ocean, for instance, returns

[21] Hume gives still another account of this transition in 1.4.6 (1.4.6.6; SBN 254). But we may save our discussion of this passage for Chap. 11.

> upon us after an absence or annihilation with like parts and in a like order, as at its first appearance, we are not apt to regard these interrupted perceptions as different (which they really are) but on the contrary consider them as individually the same upon account of their resemblance. But as this interruption of their existence is contrary to their **perfect identity**, and makes us regard the first impression as annihilated, and the second as newly created, *we find ourselves somewhat at a loss, and are involv'd in a kind of* ***contradiction***. In order to free ourselves from this difficulty, we disguise, as much as possible, the interruption, or rather remove it entirely, by supposing that these interrupted perceptions are connected by a real existence, of which we are insensible. (T 1.4.2.24; SBN 199; boldness and italics added)

Entirely consistent with what we saw to be the case with the summary of the vulgar perspective presented on T 1.4.2.36; SBN 205, T 1.4.2.37; SBN 206, the vulgar are forced to come up with the idea of an *unperceived, continuous sensation*, which Hume clearly states here is "*new*." As a result, it is *not* be confused with the vulgar's first, more impulsive ascription of perfect identity to sets of resembling perceptions, although this *new* perspective certainly seems to *emerge* from vulgar perspective I, if only to alleviate the contradiction it generates.

With these passages in mind, it now becomes clearer, I think, why Hume dedicated part 2 of his system to a discussion of the vulgar perspective derivative of certain dispositions, while he devotes part 3 to a discussion of the vulgar claim that continuous, unperceived impressions exist. Moreover, we need to constantly remind ourselves that although these are two *distinct* approaches, both must be seen as attempts—reflective or not—to grasp objects *qua* sense impressions as *both* invariable and uninterrupted, or in other words, as admitting of perfect identity.

3.2 Unperceived Impressions

With these summaries of the transition from vulgar perspective I to vulgar perspective II in mind, let us now return to our explication of part 3 of Hume's four-part system on T 1.4.2.37–40; SBN 205–208. Immediately after his summary of what I characterize as the transition from vulgar perspective I to vulgar perspective II on T 1.4.2.37; SBN 205–6, Hume proceeds to explain how the vulgar could possibly entertain the following idea: Although our impressions may be interrupted because we are not always *perceiving* them, this "not-perceiving-them" does not necessarily imply that simultaneously, they do not *exist*. On the face of it, this claim seems absurd—what ordinary (i.e. "vulgar") person would think that a sense impression exists without actually sensing it? In fact, this seems like an obvious contradiction in terms. So, in what appears to be a move to obviate the absurdity of this position, Hume momentarily steps out of his explication of the explaining how the *vulgar* might justify their position, presenting instead an account of how and why, according to *his* non-vulgar perspective—particularly, according to his own theory of mind—the vulgar's new supposition is not entirely absurd (T 1.4.2.37; SBN 206).

In particular, here, Hume appears to invoke his *own* non-vulgar position, i.e., the idea that the mind is a "heap or collections of different perceptions" (T 1.4.2.39;

SBN 207), a position that we find discussed at length in 1.4.6 in the context of his account of "personal identity" (see Chap. 11 for more detail). We may conclude as much because (i) Hume explicitly refers to 1.4.6 in regard to his discussion of an unperceived perception (see footnote 1, T 1.4.2.37; SBN 206) and (ii) Hume could not be paraphrasing the vulgar perspective here, if only because according to Hume, the vulgar think that the self/mind is *simple and indivisible* (see 1.4.6, particularly, 1.4.6.6). Yet here, Hume explicitly refers to the mind as a "heap or collection of different perceptions" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 207).[22]

So, in an effort to make his account of this second, more reflective vulgar approach to objects more plausible, Hume proceeds to ask two questions, which he answers by invoking his own theory of mind. These questions may be paraphrased as follows: (a) How is it the case that the vulgar could possibly assume that a sense impression has a continu'd existence? (b) Also, assume that an object *is* a collection of resembling sense-impressions, P_1-P_n: What happens when we stop perceiving an object, then perceive it again, where in the latter case we would generate a *new* resembling sense impression, namely, P_{n+1}? Does doing this cause the object to grow?[23] (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207).

As already suggested above, Hume answers the first question by telling us, in so many words that the "mind" is nothing but a "heap or collection of different perceptions" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 207). As a result, "the mind" has no genuine "simplicity and identity" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 207), although we mistakenly attribute it with both. Rather, each perception exists independently of the heap, although when put together, they compose the heap. Consequently, just as we could, say, take one apple from a "heap or collection of different" apples and say that such an apple continues to exist on its own, we may separate a sense-impression from that "heap or collection of different perceptions" that constitutes the mind. Analogously, this separated sense-impression would, it seems, continue to exist on its own; it does not need to be a part of the heap to exist. Thus, in regard to the vulgar supposition that sense impressions must continue to exist when we are not sensing them, he writes: "there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being" (T 1.4.2.39; SBN 207). In this respect, the vulgar (*qua* Hume's theory of mind) may entertain the idea that a sense impression continues to exist without being perceived, while Hume may avoid being accused of setting up a straw-man.[24]

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[22] I am grateful to Abe Roth for suggesting (i) and (ii) at the *32nd Hume Society Conference* (Roth, 2005).

[23] Or as Hume puts it: "When we are present [in a vulgar state of mind], we say we feel, or see it. Here then may arise two questions; *First,* How we can satisfy ourselves in supposing a perception to be absent from the mind without being annihilated. *Secondly,* After what manner we conceive an object to become present to the mind, without some new creation of a perception or image; and what we mean by this *seeing,* and *feeling,* and *perceiving*" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207).

[24] Or as Roth puts it: "[By invoking his own theory of mind] Hume can feel free to attribute to the vulgar a belief in perceptions unperceived, and not worry that he's violating some principle of charity by attributing to them some obvious contradiction" (Roth, 2005, p. 4).

To answer question (b) regarding how an object can consist of a non-fixed collection of sense impressions, Hume explains that it is not contradictory, thanks to the answer given to question (a) above, to conclude that sense impressions exist independently of being perceived. Thus, if we identify objects with sense impressions, it is not contradictory to claim that objects exist independently of the mind. As a result, when such externally existing perceptions interact with our minds—where our minds are nothing but heaps of perceptions—new sense impressions become present to the mind, but they are, evidently, added to the "heap" and not to the object itself. As a result, the object/impression does not grow with each new impression of it (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 207).

Thus, Hume concludes on the behalf of the vulgar in terms of their *second* position:

> [According to the vulgar,] *The same continu'd and uninterrupted being* [i.e., an *un*perceived impression] *may, therefore, be sometimes present to the mind, and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the being itself.* An interrupted appearance of the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence. [Thus, according to this more advanced vulgar line of thought], The supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction. We may easily indulge our inclination to that supposition. When the exact resemblance of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, we may remove the seeming interruption by feigning a continu'd being, which may fill those intervals, and preserve a perfect and entire identity to our perceptions. (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 208; emphasis added)

Here, Hume clearly explains that the vulgar do not posit—contrary to at least Price's (1940), Bennett's (1971) and Collier's (1999) reading—*particular* impressions in series P_1–P_n, say P_5 and P_7, where P_5 and P_7 were never actually perceived. Rather, according to Hume, the vulgar appear to posit ***one*** continuous and uninterrupted impression in the case of each respective "object" at hand. In other words, they posit "*The same and continu'd* being" (emphases added), that continues to exist even we are not perceiving it, and in *that* respect, it "may fill in those intervals" when we are not perceiving it. For instance, if, in the spirit of vulgar perspective II, I posit the existence of a continuous and uninterrupted impression of say, an apple, because it allegedly exists when I am not perceiving it, it may, as an entity that resembles all my impressions of it, "fill in" any "intervals" (eg. P_5 and P_7) when I am not actually having specific apple-impressions.[25] As a result, it seems that the

[25] C.f. Wright (1983, pp. 65–66) in partial support of the claim that (on behalf of the vulgar) Hume has a single not-necessarily-perceived impression in mind here. However, although Wright initially claims that indeed, such impressions are singular, and thus, constitute the whole object at hand, without explanation he claims that such not-necessarily-perceived impressions are (in the spirit of Price *et al.*), *particular* "gap fillers." Note: "[Hume] claims that the source of our belief in the unperceived and independent existence of our resembling impressions lies in our tendency to *image* (form an idea of) a single temporally continuous perception when what we actually *sense* (have an impression of) are two or more temporally discontinuous resembling perceptions. The natural propensity of the imagination leads us to think of our resembling impressions as one continuous appearance … through a kind of 'confused reasoning' we combine the contradictory perceptions of imagination and sense, and so judge the unperceived existence of our resembling impressions. We are then forced to think of *them* as existing in the gap between their appearances" (p. 66; last emphasis added). See also Noonan (1999, p. 181).

vulgar, by adopting this "new" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254) position, come up with a notion of an object that is (i) a sense impression, and (ii) is not only invariable, but also, is uninterrupted, i.e. is continuous.

Also, the vulgar do not suppose that such a "continu'd and uninterrupted being" *causes* our various perceptions *of* it. Rather, it is alleged to *be* a continuous kind of impression; a continuous sensation that exists not only when our sensing coincides with its existence as a sensation, but even when we are *not* sensing. As a result, it is not to be confused with a transcendentally imagined *cause* (recall Chaps. 5, 6 and 7 where we respectively discussed T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4, T 1.4.2.15–22; SBN 194–8, and 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1). And so, we have still *more* evidence that Hume's account of the vulgar perspective is not to be confused with the three accounts of perfect identity explicated in Part II of this book.

4 Part 4 of Hume's System: How and Why We Believe in an Unperceived Perception

Immediately after the last passage cited above, Hume writes:

> But as we here not only *feign* but *believe* **this** continu'd existence, the question is, *from whence arises such a belief*? and this question leads us to the ***fourth*** member of this system. It has been prov'd already, that belief in general consists in nothing, but the vivacity of an idea; and that an idea may acquire this vivacity by its relation to some present impression. Impressions are naturally the most vivid perceptions of the mind; and this quality is in part convey'd by the relation to every connected idea. The relation causes a smooth passage from the impression to the idea, and even gives a propensity to that passage. (T 1.4.2.41; SBN 208; boldness added)

Here, Hume is specifically referring to our belief in the "continu'd existence" of an unperceived perception, which obtains of *vulgar perspective II*. Thus, it is clear that Hume is preparing to explain why we tend to believe in the unperceived perception posited in *vulgar perspective II*. This explication constitutes the fourth and final part of Hume's system of reality.

On a first read of this passage, it might seem like Hume has some form of *causally-produced* belief in mind here, where the vivacity of a perception is triggered by "its relation to some present impression" (recall Chap. 2). But, Hume continues, the vulgar are actually *not* engaged in the process of acquiring a causally-produced belief. Rather, he explains, vivacity, and thus, belief, may also be conveyed in *another*, albeit *mistaken* manner. Note:

> *But suppose that this propensity arises from some other principle*, besides that of relation; 'tis evident it must still have the same effect, and convey the vivacity from the impression to the idea. Now this is exactly the present case. Our memory presents us with a vast number of instances of perceptions perfectly resembling each other, that return at different distances of time, and after considerable interruptions. This resemblance gives us a propension to consider these interrupted perceptions as the same; and also a propension to connect them by a continu'd existence, in order to justify this identity, and avoid the contradiction, in which the interrupted appearance of these perceptions seems necessarily to involve us. (T 1.4.2.42; SBN 208–9; emphases added)

When the vulgar believe in their unperceived perceptions ("uninterrupted being[s]"), it is not actually a "relation" that causes the transition of the vivacity of the impression to the idea, but rather, "some other principle, *besides* that of relation" (emphasis added). In particular: (1) Thanks to their memory, the vulgar may call to mind certain sets of perceptions that appear to "perfectly resemble each other." (2) As a result of such "perfect resemblances," the vulgar tend to almost reflexively identify these perceptions with each other; i.e., they fall headlong into vulgar perspective I. (3) However, as explained above, to alleviate the contradiction inherent in vulgar perspective I, the vulgar inevitably proceed to imagine that sensations exist independently of their minds. They posit unperceived perceptions; a process that Hume characterizes here as a "propension to connect [interrupted perceptions] by a continu'd existence." He continues immediately after the passage cited above:

> Here then [*qua* the vulgar mindset] we have a propensity to feign a continu'd existence of all sensible objects; and as this propensity arises from some lively impressions of the memory, it bestows a vivacity on that fiction; or in other words, makes us believe in the continu'd existence of body. (T 1.4.2.42; SBN 209)

As a result of positing such a "continu'd existence" of a sensible object (vulgar perspective II) which is, in part, constructed on the basis of recalling a set of resembling impressions which constitute "lively impressions of the memory," we tend to *believe* in such a "continu'd existence." Evidently, the liveliness of the "impressions of the memory" conveys a certain liveliness to our idea of the "continu'd existence," making it believable.

Thus, while ensconced in vulgar perspective II, the vulgar *believe* in an unperceived perception thanks to *just* the relation of resemblance. As a result, it's clear that the vulgar belief in objects is not a function of the relation of cause and effect. And so, when Hume says above that it is not a "relation" that transfers vivacity onto the idea of an unperceived impression, he seems to mean that it is not any *causal* relation that transfers vivacity. This means that the vulgar are *not* employing what I defined in Part II of this book as transcendental causation—making it still clearer that we cannot confuse the vulgar perspective with Hume's three accounts of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity (which *do* rely on transcendental causation; recall Chaps. 5, 6 and 7). For ease of reference, we may refer to this as "vulgar belief."

To further support this conclusion, Hume suggests that certain sets of resembling impressions appear so "constant and coheren[t]"(T 1.4.2.42; SBN 209) when we imagine an "uninterrupted being," that they *appear* to resemble the Level 2 constant and coherent impressions imagined to be caused by the objects that we transcendentally conceive of (T 1.4.2.42; SBN 209; recall Chap. 6). And so, the vulgar mistakenly confuse sets of resembling perceptions *with* imagined causes,[26] giving us still *more* evidence that Hume is distinguishing between the vulgar perspective and his earlier accounts of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity.

[26] This is not the same confusion that occurs with vulgar perspective I. Recall that in vulgar perspective I, resembling dispositions (not constant and coherent impressions) prompt us to mistakenly identify the respective causes of those resembling dispositions with each other. In particular, we confuse sets of resembling perceptions and the vulgar notion of perfect identity.

5 Summary

The following points have been made in this chapter:

1. Contrary to the traditional reading of 1.4.2, the vulgar are engaged in *two* distinct perspectives or phases in thought (where in each case, the vulgar are unable to distinguish between impressions and objects). These perspectives may be summarized as follows:
   (a) *Vulgar Perspective I:* In part 2 of Hume's system of identity, we see that the vulgar think that sets of resembling objects are, when identified with each other, objects that admit of perfect identity. This is because thinking of these resembling sets puts us in the same disposition that thinking of an object with vulgarly-conceived of perfect identity does. However, the *vulgar* conception of perfect identity is not very substantive—it is derivative of "fixing our thought." But we don't seem to "fix our thought" very often.
   (b) *Vulgar Perspective II:* Vulgar perspective I ultimately leads to a contradiction, i.e. the conclusion that our impressions are *both* interrupted and uninterrupted. As a result, the vulgar are forced to come up with what Hume refers to as a "new" idea, which he presents in part 3 of his system. In brief, this idea occurs as a result of the vulgar imagining that an unperceived, continuous impression exists.
2. Contrary to the traditional readings of 1.4.2, the vulgar view of objects must not be confused with transcendentally conceived of perfect identity. This is because:
   (a) The vulgar are unable to distinguish objects from impressions, which leads them to identify objects with sets of resembling perceptions, similar to how we saw certain "steadfast" objects defined in Chap. 7 (T 1.2.37; SBN 35, T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37). However, as we saw in Part II of this book, in order to come up with the idea of perfect identity, we must, *via* transcendental causation, imagine an invariable and uninterrupted *cause* of resembling sets of perceptions, which involves a "marriage" between unity and number (recall Chap. 7). But there is no "marriage" between unity and number in the case of the vulgar perspective I—there is only number, prompting Hume to characterize the vulgar perspective as one that admits of perfect *numerical* identity, but not perfect identity *simpliciter*.
   (b) Hume explicitly *tells us* that he is not explicating *his* position in parts 2–4 of his system. Meanwhile, we saw that he does seem to be explicating his own position when discussing the three accounts of perfect identity explained in Part II of this book.
   (c) Nor should vulgar perspective II be confused with transcendentally conceived of perfect identity. Not only is the notion of an unperceived impression derivative of the assumption that sets of resembling impressions equate to objects, but an unperceived impression is *not* imagined to be a cause.

(d) Hume explains that "vulgar" belief is not a function of the relation of cause and effect, but rather is a function of just the relation of resemblance. However, we saw in Part II of this book that belief in a transcendentally conceived of object is a function of the relation of cause and effect, particularly, transcendental causation.

(e) Finally, Hume explicitly tells us that the constancy and coherence of impressions that seems to be an effect of positing of an unperceived impression leads us to *mistakenly* identify an imagined cause with the idea of an unperceived impression. Thus, imagining a cause of perceptions (i.e. imagining an idea of perfect identity by way of transcendental causation) is not to be confused with imagining the idea of an unperceived impression.

Chapter 9
The Philosopher's Reaction to the Vulgar: Imagined Causes Revisited

1 Introduction

In Part II of this book, we saw that Hume thinks that we *always* imagine ideas of objects that admit of perfect identity—by way of transcendental causation. However, while explaining the "philosopher's" position in 1.4.2, Hume claims that we *only* imagine causes in reaction to the vulgar, where we do *not* employ transcendental causation. In this chapter, we examine the philosophical position in detail. In Sect. 1, I explain why vulgar perspective II falls apart—at the hands of the philosophers. In Sect. 2, I explain why the philosophers think that it is *reasonable* to think that mind-independent objects exist. In Sect. 3, I explain why Hume thought the philosophers were mistaken.

2 The Collapse of Vulgar Perspective II

At T 1.4.2.43; SBN 209, Hume breaks away from his four-part system. Abandoning his vulgar pretenses, he begins speaking from a general "philosophical" point of view. He tells us that the "propension to bestow an identity on our resembling impressions" (T 1.4.2.43; SBN 209) is merely a *fiction* of the vulgar. All "philosophers" realize this. But, Hume explains, the philosophers do not attack vulgar perspective I, but vulgar perspective II. The philosophers specifically take issue with the idea that a perception can exist *unperceived* as an independent and continuous thing.

Hume proceeds to present the second *reductio* that is generated by the vulgar way of thought (recall that the first *reductio* was produced by vulgar perspective I, and is presented at the beginning of Part III of Hume's four-part system; see Chap. 8). To explain this *reductio*, he abruptly drops his discussion of the imagined properties of *invariability* and *uninterruptedness* and, once again, focuses on *continuity* and

S. Rocknak, *Imagined Causes: Hume's Conception of Objects*,
The New Synthese Historical Library 71, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-2187-6_9,

distinctness (recall that in the opening pages of 1.4.2, up until he introduces his system, he discusses just continuity and distinctness).[1] Here, he writes:

> I have already observ'd, that there is an intimate connexion betwixt those two principles, of a *continu'd* and of a *distinct* or *independent* existence, and that we no sooner establish the one than the other follows, as a necessary consequence. 'Tis the opinion of a continu'd existence, which first takes place, and without much study or reflection draws the other along with it, wherever the mind follows its first and most natural tendency. But when we [i.e. we *philosophers*] compare experiments, and reason a little upon them, we quickly perceive, that the doctrine of the independent existence of our sensible perceptions is contrary to the plainest experience. This lead us backwards upon our footsteps to perceive our error in attributing a continu'd existence to our perceptions, and is the origin of many very curious opinions, which we shall here endeavor to account for. (T 1.4.2.44; SBN 210)

Hume's thought may be parsed as follows: (1) As noted earlier in the *Treatise* (T 1.4.2.1–2; SBN 187–8), if we imagine that some object has a "continu'd" existence, then we will also imagine that it has a distinct, independent and external existence and *vice versa* (where throughout 1.4.2, Hume often uses 'distinct' to mean independent and external; recall our discussion of this portion of the *Treatise* in Part II of this book). This means, in terms of simple formal logic, that we are being presented with the following biconditional, where 'C' denotes "continued existence," and 'I' denotes an "independent, distinct and external existence:"

$$(I \supset C) \,\&\, (C \supset I)$$

(2) It just makes no sense to claim that perceptions can exist unperceived—i.e. vulgar perspective II is "contrary to the plainest experience." So, the philosophers conclude ~I. (3) Thus, given (1), the philosophers make a further conclusion (going "backwards" in their reasoning, i.e. using *modus tollens*): Sense impressions cannot be continuous i.e. ~C. As a result, the philosophers are convinced that the vulgar—particularly those behind vulgar perspective II—are simply mistaken when they so quickly assume that perceptions are continuous (i.e. uninterrupted; as usual, Hume uses 'continuity' interchangeably with 'uninterrupted' here).

However, Hume continues, in order for this objection to stick, it must be shown *why* perceptions do not have an independent existence, i.e. ~I must be derived rather than merely stipulated (as it was in (2) above). Relatedly, to be thorough, it must also be shown how and why the philosophers may apply *modus tollens* to the *first* half of the biconditional noted in (1) above, namely, $I \supset C$.

On the philosopher's behalf, Hume explains this latter direction first, asking us to press an eye with a finger, which will effectively double all our current visual sense impressions. As a result of doing so he explains, we do not say that *both* sets of visual impressions have a continued existence. Rather, we conclude that both sets are dependent on our bodies. (T 1.4.2.45; SBN 210–11) So, it may be concluded that perceptions are *not* independent. This thought process may once again be understood

[1] Recall that Hume's entire four-part system concerns the imagined properties of invariability and uninterruptedness. However, why Hume makes the move back to the imagined properties of continuity and distinctness is never explained by Hume.

in term of a simple exercise of *modus tollens*: (i) I⊃C (ii) ~C (iii) Therefore ~I. Thus, in short, the logical contradiction (or as Hume puts it, the "fallacy" (T 1.4.2.44; SBN 210)) is: the vulgar assume I, but must conclude ~I. Thus, we have both I and ~I, and so, a formal *reductio*, where the conclusion is ~I.[2]

Following, Hume proceeds to explain in more detail how we may apply *modus tollens* to the second half of the biconditional (namely C⊃I, having already sketched this approach in general terms, as noted above). In particular, Hume explains that our impressions obviously vary according to which physical position we might view them from, and according to what state of health we are in, etc. (T 1.4.2.45; SBN 211). As a result, Hume concludes on the behalf of the philosophers, not only do we have still more evidence to show that impressions are simply *not* independent—given that they obviously depend on the current physical condition of our bodies—but we may, once again by way of *modus tollens*, conclude that vulgarly-conceived objects are not continuous (and thus, not uninterrupted): (i) C⊃I (ii) ~I (iii) Therefore ~C. Thus, mirroring what we saw above, the logical contradiction (or again, as Hume puts it, the "fallacy") is: the vulgar assume C, but must conclude ~C, so, we have both C and ~C, and thus, a formal *reductio*, where the conclusion is ~C.

3 The Philosopher's Position: A Function of Reason?

In light of all their work with *modus tollens,* the philosophers conclude that reason (and reason alone) shows that the vulgar perspective, particularly, vulgar perspective II, is just plain false. Concomitantly, it seems that reason (and reason alone) shows that there *must* be mind-independent objects; particularly objects that are the uninterrupted and invariable *causes* of our perceptions:

> The natural consequence of this reasoning shou'd be, that our perceptions have no more a continu'd existence than an independent existence; and indeed philosophers have so far run into this opinion, that they change their system and distinguish, (as we shall do for the future) betwixt perceptions and objects, of which the former are suppos'd to be interrupted, and perishing, and different at every return; the latter to be uninterrupted, and to preserve a continu'd existence and identity (T 1.4.2.46; SBN 211; emphasis added)…As we [philosophers] suppose our objects in general to resemble our perceptions, so we take it for granted, that every particular object resembles that perception, which it *causes.* (T 1.4.2.55; SBN 217; emphasis added)

The philosophers are *logically* compelled to conclude that objects must be *distinct* from our perceptions, where these objects are continuous, i.e. uninterrupted. Moreover, these philosophers surely do not think that they are *imagining* objects to be the causes of our various interrupted perceptions. But, Hume tells us, this is precisely what they are doing. They are *imagining* that they have idea*s* that admit of

[2] The formal version of the *reductio* that the philosophers appear to be employing here may be simply understood as: If $p \vdash \sim p$, then $\vdash \sim p$.

perfect identity, in a fashion similar to what we saw to be the case in Part II of this book. But there is one fundamental difference. Here, it seems, Hume insists that we (*via* a "philosophical" way of thinking) may *only* imagine ideas that admit of perfect identity *via* a conscious, *reasoned* rejection of vulgar perspective II.

4 Imagining Ideas That Admit of Perfect Identity

Hume goes on to clarify just how the philosophical position necessarily depends on the vulgar perspective by explaining that (A) The philosopher's position is *not* independently derived from our reason (contrary to what we concluded above), *nor* from our imagination, and (B) *Only* the vulgar perspective could incite the philosophical claim that objects exist distinctly from our perceptions of them. Hume launches into his explanation of (A) as follows (which he refers to as the "first part" of his explanation of how philosophers imagine causes):

> As to the first part of the proposition, *that this philosophical hypothesis has no primary recommendation, either to reason or the imagination,* we may soon satisfy ourselves with regard to *reason* by the following reflections. The 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. The only conclusion we can draw from the existence of one thing to that of another, is by means of the relation of cause and effect, which shews, that there is a connexion betwixt them, and that the existence of one is dependent on that of the other. The idea of this relation is deriv'd from past experience, by which we find, that two beings are constantly conjoin'd together, and are always present at once to the mind. But as no beings are ever present to the mind but perceptions; it follows that we may observe a conjunction or a relation of cause and effect between different perceptions, but can never observe it between perceptions and objects. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that from the existence or any of the qualities of the former, we can ever form any conclusion concerning the existence of the latter, or ever satisfy our reason in this particular. (T 1.4.2.47; SBN 212; second emphasis added)

We may explicate Hume's thought process as follows: (1) Perceptions, which here, seem to mean both impressions and ideas, are the only things that we are certain exist. (2) The only way we can infer that, respectively, impressions A–X and ideas and A'–X' exist based on the existence of a thing Δ, is by way of *cause and effect*. In particular, the existence of A–X and A'–X' are shown to be dependent on the existence of Δ in terms of being *effects* of Δ (3) Yet as we saw in Chap. 2, our ability to conceptualize *ordinary* relations of cause and effect are based on past experience, where we say "that two beings are constantly conjoin'd together, and are always present to the mind." (4) However, as shown in the beginning of 1.4.2 (recall Chaps. 5 and 7), mind independent "objects" are *never* "present to the mind," although impressions and/or ideas *are* present to the mind. For "the only existences, of which we are certain, are our perceptions" (5) Thus, it is impossible to observe a constant conjunction between a mind-independent "object" and a perception. (6) So, philosophers could not use *ordinary* causal reason to conclude that objects exist independently of our senses. How could they, since we *never* have a perception (impression) of a mind-independent object? (7) As a result, we could *never* have

"constantly conjoined" impressions of a mind-independent object Δ and various impressions A–X "of" Δ such we could then conclude that Δ "causes" A–X. (8) Rather, consistent with what we saw to be the case in Part II of this book, we have to (a) *imagine* that Δ exists and then (b) *imagine* that there is a real causal relation between Δ and A–X. (9) So, the philosophers must *imagine* an idea that represents the properties of continuity and distinctness (as well as, it seems, invariability and uninterruptedness). This means that when they allegedly use just *reason* to conclude that objects exist distinctly and continuously from our impressions, philosophers are actually imagining that they have an *idea* that admits of perfect identity. Moreover, this imagined object is alleged to cause our interrupted and variable impressions of it.

With this explanation in place, Hume must now show why the philosophers' hypothesis does not present itself independently to the *imagination*. Curiously though, Hume does not go on to make explicit the role that *transcendental causal reasoning* plays in regard to imagining causes. This is not the kind of reasoning he focuses on here. Rather, he focuses on the role that reason plays when it comes to showing that vulgar perspective II is false, i.e. the *modus tollens* maneuvering we discussed earlier. Thus, according to this section of the *Treatise*, imagined ideas of objects that admit of perfect identity are part of an inevitable, but not "immediate" transcendental psychological process, where the former would appear to take hold of human minds only intermittently, and the latter, as we saw in Part II of this book, is "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) a part of our thinking:

> Let it be taken for granted, that our perceptions are broken, and interrupted, and however like, are still different from each other; and let any one upon this supposition shew why the fancy, *directly and immediately* proceeds to the belief of another existence, resembling these perceptions in their nature, but yet continu'd, and uninterrupted, and identical; and after he has done this to my satisfaction, I promise to renounce my present opinion. Meanwhile, I cannot forbear concluding, from the very abstractedness and difficulty of the first supposition, that 'tis an improper subject for the fancy to work upon. (T 1.4.2.48; SBN 212–13; emphases added)

Assume that our perceptions are (a) broken (b) interrupted and (c) different from each other. It must be shown how and why, based on just (1) a–c, that the imagination *independently* and *"immediately"* produces the belief in the independent existence of a "real" object that causes such perceptions, *without* appealing to reason (i.e. the reason used to reject vulgar perspective II). Hume concludes that no one can effectively show that this happens, but if they could, he would then, and only then, retract his claim that the philosopher's position may independently arise from the imagination.

Having shifted the burden of proof for "immediacy" onto the reader, Hume tackles the second part he promised to prove, i.e. (B), which is the claim that the philosopher's position is influenced by *just* the vulgar's perspective:

> As to the second part of the proposition, *that the philosophical system acquires all its influence on the imagination from the vulgar one;* we may observe, that this is a natural and unavoidable consequence of the foregoing conclusion, *that it has no primary recommendation to reason or the imagination.* For as the philosophical system is found by experience to

> take hold of many minds, and in particular of all those, who reflect ever so little on this subject, it must derive all its authority from the vulgar system; since it has no original authority of its own. The manner, in which these two systems, tho' directly contrary, are connected together, may be explain'd as follows. (T 1.4.2.49; SBN 213)

The philosophical position does not independently present itself to either the imagination or reason. Thus, we must reason *and* imagine our way to it, based on some other system of thought. The philosophical position is also somewhat rampant among humans: "it take[s] hold of many minds.") But it does not have any "original authority on its own." Rather, it comes about only after rejecting the vulgar system. In this respect, the philosophical system is based on the vulgar system, particularly, vulgar perspective II.

To further establish how and why the vulgar and philosophical systems are so intimately "connected together," Hume reminds us on T 1.4.2.48; SBN 213 that "Our perceptions are our only objects." So, when in a vulgar state of mind, the imagination is seduced into *identifying* perceptions that merely *resemble* each other. But as explained in Chap. 8, it is a contradiction to think that perceptions have a continuous identity, *and* are interrupted, i.e. vulgar perspective I falls prey to a *reductio* at the hands of the vulgar themselves: "This appearing interruption is contrary to the identity" (T 1.4.2.50; SBN 213). So, as explained in Chap. 8, the vulgar conclude that "the perceptions or object really continues to exist, even when absent from us" (T 1.4.2.50; SBN 213), which leads them to conclude that "Our sensible perceptions have therefore, a continu'd and uninterrupted existence" (T 1.4.2.50; SBN 213–14). Yet with an appeal to reason, the philosophers conclude that sensible perceptions are *neither* continued nor uninterrupted. As a result, we are naturally *forced* into the "philosophical" position, which is, in essence, a "monstrous offspring" (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215). The philosophical position is born of the union between reason and the natural tendency of the imagination to posit a continuous and distinct perception (i.e. an idea that admits of perfect identity):

> But tho' our natural and obvious principles here prevail above our study'd reflections, 'tis certain there must be some struggle and opposition in the case; at least so long as these reflections retain any force or vivacity. In order to set ourselves at ease in this particular, we contrive a new hypothesis, which seems to comprehend both these principles of reason and imagination. This hypothesis is the philosophical one of the double existence of perceptions and objects; which pleases our reason, in allowing, that our dependent perceptions are interrupted and different; and at the same time is agreeable to the imagination, in attributing a continu'd existence to something else, which we call *objects*. This philosophical system, therefore, is the *monstrous offspring* of two principles, which are contrary to each other, which are both at once embrac'd by the mind, and which are unable mutually to destroy each other. (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215; second emphasis added)

It is on a decisively skeptical note that Hume refers to an imagined cause as "monstrous" here. He strikes this tone, we might surmise, because *this the best humans can do.* We can *never* apprehend real, mind-independent objects—a world independent of our perceptions. Instead, consistent with what we saw to be the case in Parts I–II of this book, we must *construct* a picture of the world.

Moreover, this offspring is a manifestation of a psychological tension that does not, and cannot, dissipate. The conflicting principles of reason and imagination are "unable mutually to destroy each other." Ironically though, shortly after admitting this, Hume suggests that although the philosophical position is an inevitable reaction to the equally inevitable vulgar perspective, it is just as certain that the philosophers will ultimately *return* to the vulgar perspective—if only because it seems to be easier to get along in the world if we identify perceptions with objects (although Hume does not specify *which* vulgar perspective the philosophers return to, I or II; T 1.4.2.53; SBN 216).

According to this picture, human beings are trapped in a hopeless, and somewhat tragic process of apprehending the word. First, because we are unable to distinguish perceptions from objects, we mistakenly identify perceptions with objects. Then, after realizing the various difficulties with this perspective (constituted by vulgar perspective I and vulgar perspective II), we "philosophically" conclude that objects are mind-independent things (i.e. we imagine ideas that admit of a perfect identity). But then, out of what appears to be laziness ("negligence or inattention" (T 1.4.2.53; SBN 216)), if not just a desire to get along with the other half of the world, the "philosophers" simply return, or at least, *pretend* to return to the perspective that objects are, indeed, identical to perceptions. Philosophers leave "their closets [and] mingle with the rest of mankind" (T 1.4.2.53; SBN 216). But in no case do human beings actually reach beyond their *perceptions* of the world to apprehend the actual world.

Some scholars, including Kemp Smith (1941) and Stroud (1977), overstate the ramifications of the philosopher's retreat to the vulgar position. For instance, Stroud writes:

> If we remain with the traditional philosophical theory we will inevitably regard ourselves as worse off in ordinary life than we would have originally supposed. But if the real discovery comes not with the philosophical conviction itself, but in an appreciation of the source of the instability and transience of that philosophical conviction, then we might no longer regard ourselves as so badly off. If we see that we simply do not, and cannot, operate according to the traditional philosophical conception of reasonable belief and action, it is just possible that our dissatisfactions will then be directed onto that conception itself, and not onto our ordinary life which is seen not to live up to it. (p. 117)

Stroud suggests that the philosophers are somehow aware of the "instability and transience" of their position. In particular, the philosophers are sure that "reason, as traditionally understood, is not the dominant force in human life. If it were, all belief, discourse and action would disappear, and nature would soon put an end to man's miserable existence" (1977, p. 117). This is a position that is also reflected by Kemp Smith (1941, pp. 450–458). However, at no point does Hume suggest that the philosophers think that their position admits of "instability and intransience." Rather, as noted above, they return to the vulgar position due to the "negligence and inattention" that they pay to their own position; simply put, they are lazy.

5 Summary

1. With a two-pronged *reductio*, the philosophers reject vulgar perspective II.
2. As a result, the philosophers conclude that objects are distinct from perceptions and they are continuous. Thus the philosophers are effectively claiming that their posited objects admit of some kind of perfect identity. For ease of reference, we may refer to this as the philosopher's account of perfect identity (however, why he switches back from a discussion of invariability and uninterruptedness to a discussion of continuity and distinctness is never explained by Hume).
3. Yet unbeknownst to them, the philosophers are imagining things. They are imagining ideas of *causes* (T 1.4.2.47; SBN 212) that admit of perfect identity, thanks to a process similar to the one explicated in Part II of this book, with one striking difference. Hume explicitly claims here that the philosophers could *not* imagine such secret causes if it were not for their reasoned rejection of vulgar perspective II.
4. This means that we have run up against an inextricable tension in Hume's thought. On the one hand, as shown in Part II of this book, he indicates that we *always* imagine causes. In fact, this seems to be a transcendental process funded by the imagination; it is a condition of possibility *for* experience. But on the other hand, he argues that the philosophical position (and thus, the phenomenon of imagining causes) *only* occurs as a result of explicitly rejecting vulgar perspective II. Thus according to this section of the *Treatise,* we come up with ideas of perfect identity only relatively *late* in our experience of the world, i.e. when we reach a reasoned "philosophical" state of mind.
5. As will be shown in Part IV of this book, although some instances of imagining causes (and thus, instances of being a "philosopher") are justified, in the end, we can never apprehend mind-independent objects. Objects are imagined ideas. This fact incites Hume's skeptical state of mind at the end of 1.4.2

Chapter 10
Personal Identity

1 Introduction

In Chap. 9, we saw that we imagine that we have ideas of objects that admit of perfect identity only *after* we have rejected vulgar perspective II. Hume repeats this claim in 1.4.6—at least in part. This occurs during his admittedly "labyrinth[ine]" (T App. 10; SBN 633) explanation of *how* we imagine the notion of the self, an explanation that he famously attacks just 2 years after the publication of the *Treatise* in the *Appendix* (T App. 10–22; SBN 633–6). Here, I show that it is very likely that this attack comprises Hume's acknowledgement of the rift between the transcendental account of perfect identity and the philosopher's account of perfect identity. In the *Appendix*, Hume suggests that the philosophical account of perfect identity is *mistaken*, while his account of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity is correct—at least in regard to the "self." However, this is not a definitive solution to the conflict. In fact, this conflict is never resolved in the *Treatise*, nor elsewhere.

I have organized this chapter as follows: In Sect. 2, I canvas some of the recent scholarship on 1.4.6. In Sect. 3, we begin our line by line analysis of 1.4.6, which opens with an overview of the problem concerning the "self." In Sect. 4, we carefully examine Hume's 1.4.6 summary of his four-part system and the philosophical position (where, recall, both are initially presented in 1.4.2, and to some degree, in 1.3.2). This summary comprises his *first* account of the transition between the vulgar and philosophical position in 1.4.6. In Sect. 5, we examine Hume's *second* account of the transition between the vulgar perspective and the philosophical position in 1.4.6. In Sect. 6, we examine Hume's *third* account of this transition. In Sect. 7, we take a brief look at Hume's summary of 1.4.6. In Sect. 8, we examine the *Appendix*, where I explain why it should be understood as Hume's recognition of the rift in his position regarding objects.

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2 Recent Scholarship

Before we begin, it will be helpful to cite what is generally understood as Hume's "problem" with his account of personal identity. At first glance, this seems to equate to what he refers to as a certain inconsistency between two principles:

> There are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them viz., that *all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences*, and *that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences*. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case. (T App. 21; SBN 636)

However, almost all scholars agree that these two principles are *not* inconsistent with each other. Rather, the general consensus is that Hume must have thought that they were inconsistent with another unnamed principle or principles. We examine a number of the more prominent attempts to identify and explain just what that principle or principles are below.

Kemp Smith was one of the first to argue that the two principles noted above are not inconsistent with each other (1941, p. 558). Rather, Kemp Smith claims, the latter is a corollary to the former. Thus, "Hume must have meant that the two principles cannot be rendered consistent with what has yet to be allowed as actually occurring, namely, the *awareness of personal identity*" (p. 558; emphasis added). That is, the fact that "all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences" and the fact that "the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences" are not consistent with the way in which we are *aware* of personal identity.

To illustrate what this means, Kemp Smith explains (very briefly) that Hume must, to his own regret, conclude that *reason* is a key ingredient in our awareness of personal identity, and *this* fact is not consistent with the two principles cited above. "Hume's confession of failure is, indeed, in large part simply the belated admission that it is in a supplement [of reflection] and not in sheer feeling, that the key to an understanding of the awareness of personal identity, as of so much else in experience, is alone to be found" (p. 556). Kemp Smith writes a bit further on: "That feeling, as thus *reflectively conditioned*, is the source of the awareness of self is, Hume remarks, a conclusion which need not surprise us" (p. 557; emphasis added). And herein lies the problem: "But this, Hume proceeds to point out, is precisely where he now finds his argument to have broken down: it is the possibility of reflective thinking for which he is unable to account" (p. 557). However, curiously enough, Kemp Smith does not explain exactly *how* the fact that reflection is invoked in our awareness of personal identity conflicts with the two principles noted above.

Stroud (1977) argues that Hume's problem amounts to the following: Our perceptions naturally create the idea of the self, much in the same way that the regularity of our perceptions guides us into thinking in terms of causal relations (p. 140). However, this places an undue emphasis on the scope and nature of our perceptions: "to take it for granted is to assume that the scope of one's experience does not extend to all the perceptions there are, and this is the inexplicable fact upon which Hume's explanation depends" (p. 140). For the question is, why

does only a certain set of perceptions naturally generate the idea of the self (i.e. the set of *my* perceptions), as opposed to *all* perceptions? For "it is only because one's gaze is … restricted to a certain subset of all the perceptions there are that it is possible for a person to get an idea of himself" (p. 138). This inexplicability is Hume's problem, although, Stroud adds, Kant had the equipment to solve it, by arguing that "there must be something about perceptions or representations—whether it is noticed or not—which constitutes their belonging to a particular self or subject" (p. 140).

Waxman (1992) also recognizes Hume's problem as one that Kant could solve. In particular, Waxman argues that Hume's two principles are inconsistent with the principle that we remember series of successive perceptions as *being* successive:

> For if, for whatever reason, Hume came to the realization that he could furnish no warrant for the principle that we retain our successive perceptions consistent with these two principles, then quite clearly it would have obliged him to admit that the intellectual world is not in fact 'free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the natural world.' (p. 236)

In order for the imagination to associate perceptions in terms of resemblance and causation, Waxman argues, it must be the case that we are conscious of *real* succession. However, Hume's second principle clearly precludes this; according to it, we do *not* perceive any real connections between perceptions, even those as simple as successiveness. Here then, is Hume's problem. However, Waxman adds, Kant could have solved it with his notion of inner intuition; it allows us to grasp perceptions in a successive way, and thus, we do not apprehend "real" connexions among perceptions, but we really do grasp successiveness: "while we are indeed (according to Kant) *really* conscious of our perceptions as a succession, this consciousness is conditioned by time, our form of intuition…representations are not *intrinsically* successive (successive "in themselves") and so, do not, in any absolute sense, really change" (p. 245).

Robison (1974) argues as follows: (1) According to Hume, there is no impression, *nor* an idea of the self: "we cannot [according to Hume] form an idea of an invariable and uninterrupted self … we can [according to Hume] have no idea of a self that continues the same through the whole course of our lives" (pp. 184–5). And a bit further on he writes:

> Kemp Smith's reading appears to depend upon what Hume denies, viz. that we have an impression of personal identity. I say "appears" because it is not clear what Kemp Smith means by an '*awareness* of personal identity.' It cannot mean anything for Hume, so far as I can see, but an '*impression* of the self.' But Hume cannot think his principles inconsistent with an 'awareness of personal identity' we actually have because he thinks we have no such awareness. (pp. 188–9)

(2) Rather, at best, we *think* we have idea of the self, and Hume's job in 1.4.6 is not to justify this fact, but to explain why we *think* we have such an idea (1974, p. 186). (3) But (anticipating Stroud) Robison thinks that according to Hume, it cannot be the nature of our impressions that tricks us into thinking that we have an idea of the self—there is nothing in our impressions that would be capable of doing as

much (p. 190). (4) Moreover, this ruse of thinking that we have an idea of the self cannot be a trick that is 'imposed on the mind' (p. 190)—i.e. the *self*—because this would presuppose that there is a mind, i.e. a self (190) that is being tricked. (5) This brings us to the crux of Robison's argument: "[Hume's] explanation of why we think we have an idea of the self depends on their being a self which does the associating and mistaking. But he has argued that we can have no idea of such a self so that we cannot ever conceive of it as existing, let along guarantee its existence" (p. 190). (6) This means that the "inconsistency" that Hume talks about in the *Appendix* concerns Hume's theory of ideas, not the two principles cited above. The theory of ideas as Robison puts it, is: "(i) all ideas [must] be derived from experience, and that (ii) what we experience [must] be impressions (which have an interrupted and distinct existence)" (p. 191). However, (i) and (ii) are inconsistent with "having to have the idea of the self" (p. 192). This is the case because as noted above, one must, according to Hume, presuppose a self that mistakenly thinks that it has an idea of the self, where Hume presupposes "the existence of an active self *distinct* from any bundle of perceptions and propensities" (p. 192). Thus, unless Hume wants to violate (i) and (ii), he must "guarantee the existence of such a self without showing that we have an idea of it" (p. 192; emphasis added). For (a) All ideas must be based on impressions. (b) The "active self" is not based on an impression (it is "distinct from any bundle of perceptions") (c) Thus, although it exists, we could not have an *idea* of it. *This* is Hume's problem.

Garrett (1981, 1997) argues that Hume's account of personal identity cannot effectively account for the status of certain qualitatively identical perceptions. For instance, assume that a friend and I simultaneously smell a rose. Given (1) Hume's claim that certain perceptions (e.g. smells) have no spatial location (T 1.4.5.9; SBN 235), and (2) "Any two qualitatively identical perceptions must share exactly the same resemblance relations with other objects" (1981, p. 352) and (3) "[perceptions] can be assigned different causal relations only in virtue of their different spatial or temporal locations [given Hume's two principles]" (p. 352), it follows that the smell of the rose should belong to *both* our bundles, and thus, we would "literally share the same perception" (p. 354). In a nutshell, *this* is Hume's problem.

Ainslie (2001) argues that Hume "is unable to explain why we believe that the perceptions by means of which we observe our minds while philosophizing are themselves part of our minds" (p. 558). Similar to Kemp Smith, Ainslie characterizes this as a problem of "reflection," where the question is: How can we *reflect* on, or be *aware* of ourselves, according to Hume? For "we cannot reflect on all our perceptions at one time" (p. 578), particularly, we can't simultaneously reflect on the thought that we are using *to* reflect; *this* is Hume's problem. Moreover, like Stroud and Waxman, Ainslie thought that Kant could have solved the problem. In this case, transcendental apperception would do the work:

> According to Kant, we are subjects of thought only if our various ideas, perceptions, representations, call them what you will, are united in such a way for a person to be able to make judgments. This is a condition of possibility of thought. And thus, even though Hume is right that the mind as simple and identical only arises *as a topic* for those who reflect on their minds, it nonetheless plays a role in our everyday lives, because, even without thinking of it, we presuppose it all the time. (p. 578)

Roth (2000) argues that Hume's problem consists of a certain tension between two psychological tendencies. According to Hume, when I think of a certain object, I only run *some* of my perceptions together (i.e. those relevant to the object in question). But this is problematic. For how could I distinguish objects (e.g. tables and chairs) from myself if, when thinking of myself, I run *all* my perceptions together, including table and chair perceptions? On this account, it would seem that tables and chairs are a part of me, rather than being independent objects. Thus, Roth concludes:

> Hume's psychological project, properly understood, ends up positing mutually incompatible psychological tendencies. Either our tendency will be to group the succession into diverse persisting objects, or the tendency will be to run the whole succession into a single persisting individual. The former yields the idea of identities over time as a plurality of objects, the latter yields the idea of perfect identity over time. (p. 106)

Some however, think that Hume was *not* attacking his own account of identity in the *Appendix*. For instance, Swain (1991) argues that Hume's problem in the *Appendix* concerns the ancient and modern accounts of perfect identity, which he found incoherent: "What the *Appendix* adds to Hume's positive account of personal identity is a clear statement of the destructive argument against metaphysical systems that try to have it both ways. Thus, the *Appendix* should be read not as a renunciation but as a defense" (Swain, p. 108).[1] Very basically, this the case, Swain argues, because Hume never says, nor intimates in Book I, that we can correctly ascribe perfect identity to ourselves (Swain, p. 110). Thus, when he laments over the fact that he cannot find a proper "connecting principle" in regard to personal identity, he could not be criticizing his own account: "In book I Hume claimed that it was a mistake to attribute strict and proper identity and simplicity to the self, a mistake that led to contradictions and obscurity" (p. 110).

The interpretations of the *Appendix* are many, varied and ingenious (and there are many others that are not mentioned here, primarily because they are not relevant to our discussion). However, rather than separately addressing each interpretation discussed, I mention them, when relevant, as I proceed through my own analysis of 1.4.6 and the *Appendix*.

3 An Overview of the Notion of "Self"

Hume opens 1.4.6 by claiming, *contra* Locke,[2] that we are not "conscious" of the self; we have no impression of a self that is invariable and uninterrupted, i.e. admits of a perfect identity:

> There are some philosophers, who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration both of its *perfect identity* and its simplicity… Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience, which is pleaded for them. (T 1.4.6.1–2; SBN 251; emphases added)

[1] Also see Beauchamp (1979) and Biro (1976, 1979).

[2] ECHU II.xxvii. 9.

We have no "idea of *self*, after the manner it is here explain'd" (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251). In fact, we have *no* impressions that are invariable and uninterrupted, "there is *no* impression constant and invariable" (T 1.4.6; SBN 251; emphasis added). Rather, as explained in Chap. 7, "Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other and never exist at the same time" (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 251–2). Perceptions are successive, and thus, by their very nature, cannot seem uninterrupted, or perfectly (Level 2) constant (i.e. continuous and thus distinct), without the help of the imagination (recall Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 8), *contra* Baxter (2008); "They are the *successive perceptions only*, that constitute the mind." (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 253; emphases added). Thus, it cannot "be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently, there is no such idea." (T 1.4.6.2; SBN 252) As a result, Hume continues: "I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement." (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252). And thus, "The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 253). This is a position that, on the face of it, seems to square with Robison's reading (1974). According to Robison, we have *no idea* of the self whatsoever, imagined or otherwise. Rather, the self is merely a "bundle" of perceptions, and when we observe our "selves" all we are *really* doing is apprehending one of these many interrupted and varied perceptions.

However, this is different from what we *think* that the self is. We think that the self is invariable and uninterrupted over the course of time, and it is "simple" in the respect that it seems to have a certain unity. This means that although what we really do when we apprehend the self is perceive an interrupted and varied perception, we also *imagine* an idea of a self, which, we see below, seems to be an abstract idea. And so, we will see, we do, indeed have an *idea* of ourselves (*contra* Robison 1974).

3.1 A Return to 1.3.2 and 1.4.2

Not surprisingly, Hume tells us that we imagine these ideas of ourselves, just as we imagine every *other* object in the world, including "plants and vegetables." (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253, T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254–5, T 1.4.6.15; SBN 259). Thus, it is reasonable to view 1.4.6 as a return to 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and 1.4.2, where, recall, Hume explains how we imagine an idea of an object that, thanks to transcendental machinery, admits of a perfect identity—which, he explains in 1.4.2, is not to be confused with the vulgar conception of objects, nor with the philosophical conception of objects. Note the first passage that indicates as much:

> What then gives us so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possest of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro' the whole course of our lives? In order to answer this question, we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject; and to explain it perfectly we must take the matter pretty deep, and account for that identity, which we attribute to plants and animals; *there being a great analogy betwixt it, and the identity of a self or person*. (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253; emphases added)

The question is: Why are we compelled to attribute an identity to our "successive perceptions" such that we respectively think that we are invariable and uninterrupted "sel[ves]," i.e. things that admit of perfect identities? To answer this question, we need to distinguish between personal identity as it pertains to the imagination and personal identity as it pertains to the "passions and concern" that we have for our "selves." Here, Hume is concerned with personal identity as it pertains to the *imagination*. To explain this aspect of personal identity, Hume tells us that it—namely, the process by which we imagine an idea of a self that admits of a perfect identity—is "great[ly] analog[ous]" to the process used to imagine the identity of "plants and animals."

Accordingly, Hume immediately launches into a discussion of the imaginative process that enables us to ascribe an identity to plants and animals. However, nowhere does he distinguish *this* process from the process that enables us to imagine the perfect identity that we ascribe to objects in general (i.e. the process explained in 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9 and 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1). If Hume did have any distinction in mind here, it seems it would amount to saying that the identity that we ascribe to plants and animals (and analogously) the self—which are all what we might characterize as organic objects—is somehow distinct from the identity that we ascribe to what we might characterize as *in*organic things, e.g. tables and chairs. However, as we saw in Chaps. 5, 6, and 7 regarding respectively, 1.3.2.2; SBN 74 and 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9 and 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1, Hume never limits his discussion of perfect identity to inorganic objects, and, as we will see shortly, the discussion of the perfect identity that we ascribe to plants and animals immediately becomes a discussion of the perfect identity that we ascribe to "objects" *simpliciter.* It would follow then, that the identity that we ascribe to the self would be "great[ly] analog[ous]" to the identity that we as ascribe to "objects" in general, including inorganic objects like tables and chairs. Thus, I think that is reasonable to conclude that Hume does not think that any kind of substantive distinction obtains between the perfect identity that we ascribe to inorganic objects v. the perfect identity that we ascribe to organic objects; at least not one that is explicitly substantiated by the text. Rather, as we see below, 1.4.6 seems to rely heavily on what Hume has already established in 1.3.2.2; SBN 74 and in 1.4.2, both in regard to properly formed notions of transcendental perfect identity, and the vulgar and philosophical attempts to understand perfect identity.

4 The Four-Part System and the Philosophical Perspective: Revisitation #1 of the Vulgar v. the Philosophical Perspective

Immediately after the passage cited above, Hume writes:

> We have a distinct idea of an object, that remains invariable and uninterrupted thro' a suppos'd variation of time; and this idea we call that of *identity* or *sameness.* We have also a distinct idea of several different objects existing in succession, and connected together by a close relation; and this to an accurate view affords as perfect a notion of *diversity,* as if there was no manner of relation among the objects. (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253)

At a certain point in our grasp of the world, we have an idea of an object—i.e. what seems to be an "object" in general—that exists "invariabl[y] and uninterrupted" throughout "a suppos'd variation of time." As has already been established, we know that this gives us an idea of *perfect identity*. However, we "also" have an idea of a "succession" of objects, which gives us a notion of "diversity." Immediately, Hume's account of the principle of individuation, presented in part 1 of 1.4.2's four part system, should come to mind. There, as explained at length in Chap. 7, objects are conceived of both as "unified" as "time" changes, and as "num[erous]" as "time" remains constant (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201). Accordingly, Hume concludes in 1.4.2 that: "Here then is an [imagined] idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly, is either of them, according to the view in which we take it: And this is the idea we call that of identity" (T 1.4.2.29; SBN 201).

Thus, given the conceptual similarities, I think that we must conclude that he has 1.4.2's principle of individuation in mind in the passage cited above from 1.4.6. At least in part, for Hume does not seem to be thinking of *just* the principle of individuation here. He continues immediately after the passage cited above: "But tho' these two ideas of identity and a succession of related objects be in themselves perfectly distinct, and ever contrary, yet 'tis certain, that in our common way of thinking *they are generally confounded with each other*" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253; emphases added). Hume's thought process here may be parsed as follows: (1) There are "two" ideas of identity, i.e. an imagined idea of an invariable and uninterrupted object—which may be thought of as "two" because it is an idea that is a "medium" between two ideas: unity and number. (2) We also have a succession of "related objects." (3) Although these things—i.e. an idea of perfect identity and a succession of related objects—are "distinct" and "ever contrary," in our "*common way*" (emphasis added) of thinking, we "confound" them with each other.

Once again, these remarks bear a striking resemblance to certain passages in 1.4.2, but now we see that Hume seems to be referencing his discussion of the vulgar, who, recall, employ a "common way" of thinking. In particular, recall that we (*qua* vulgar mindset I) confuse (a vulgar notion)[3] of perfect identity with a succession of resembling perceptions. This occurs as a result confusing the respective *causes* (i.e. ideas that admit of perfect identity and sets of resembling and successive perceptions) of similar effects (i.e. similar dispositions) with each other. In particular, we saw that when the vulgar experience a successive, interrupted series of similar perceptions they are placed in a *disposition* that prompts them to conceive of these perceptions with "the *same* smooth and *uninterrupted* progress of the *imagination*, as attends the view of the same [uninterrupted, and] invariable object" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204; emphasis added). This disposition is so (R_d) similar to the disposition that

[3] Recall Chap. 8 for our discussion of a *vulgar* notion of perfect identity, which Hume does not refer to here. Instead, as explained above, he seems to be thinking of the notion of perfect identity given in Part I of 1.4.2's system, i.e. the principle of individuation. Thus, in this part of 1.4.6, Hume seems to be confusing the vulgar notion of perfect identity with the principle of individuation. Why this is the case is a mystery, however, given the convoluted nature of 1.4.6, this should not come as a surprise.

we are placed in when we imagine ideas of perfect identity, that we mistakenly believe that the former disposition is caused by the same thing that the latter disposition is caused by, i.e. an idea that we imagine to have a perfect identity (recall Chap. 8, Fig. 8.1).

On a strikingly similar note, immediately following the passage cited above from 1.4.6, Hume explains that two "actions of the imagination" that are "almost the same" "*feelings*" (emphasis added) are responsible for the confusion between an idea of perfect identity and an idea of a succession of objects: "That action of the imagination, by which we consider the uninterrupted and invariable object [i.e. the idea that we imagine to admit of perfect identity], and that by which we reflect on the succession of related objects, are *almost the same to the feeling*" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254). Here, in 1.4.6, similar "feelings" play exactly the same role that similar "dispositions" played in 1.4.2 in regard to vulgar position I. For Hume immediately continues: "The relation facilitates the transition of the mind from one object to another, and renders its passage as *smooth* as if it contemplated one object. This *resemblance* is the cause of the confusion and mistake, and makes us substitute the notion of [perfect] identity, instead of that of related objects" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254; emphasis added). Here, Hume explicitly attributes the confusion between ideas that we imagine to admit of perfect identity and sets of resembling perceptions to the resemblance between the two "feelings" that the imagination respectively places us in. For, as was the case in 1.4.2, the imagination is able to "smooth" out the interruptions that naturally occur in a succession of perceptions, and thus, the feeling that arises from this "smooth[ing]" is the same feeling that we get from the imagined idea of perfect identity. In turn, as explained above, we "confound" the two causes of these similar feelings, i.e. we "confound" an idea of perfect identity with successions of resembling perceptions. Thus, I think that it is reasonable to conclude that here in 1.4.6, the resemblance that Hume blames for our "common" (i.e. vulgar) confusion between ideas that we imagine to have a perfect identity and ideas of successions is nothing other than the R_d resemblance that we discussed at length in Chap. 8 (again, recall Fig. 8.1).

Moreover, exactly as was the case in 1.4.2, Hume reminds us in 1.4.6 that after a small amount of "reflexion" we—while still in a "common," i.e. vulgar frame of mind—see that we have made a "mistake." In particular, we see that our propensity to confuse ideas that we imagine to have a perfect identity with successions of resembling perceptions inevitably leads us to the conclusion that objects are both interrupted and *not* interrupted[4]:

> [For] at one instant we may consider the related succession [of resembling perceptions] as variable or interrupted [but] we are sure the next to ascribe to it a *perfect identity*, and regard it as invariable and uninterrupted. Our propensity to this mistake is so great from the resemblance above-mention'd, that we fall into it before we are aware; and tho' we incessantly correct ourselves by reflection, and return to a more accurate method of thinking, yet we cannot long sustain our philosophy, or take off this bias from the imagination. (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254; emphasis added)

[4] And, Hume adds here, invariable and variable, a contradiction that he does not focus on in 1.4.2.

In 1.4.2, we saw that while still being unable to distinguish objects from impressions, we (i.e. the vulgar) realize that we contradict ourselves when we confuse an idea of perfect identity with a succession of resembling perceptions. In turn, we imagine an unperceived impression, or what Hume refers to in 1.4.2 as a "continu'd and uninterrupted being" (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 208), and a "continu'd existence" (T 1.4.2.41; SBN 208) and, "the same continu'd being" (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 208) and "the supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects" (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 208). Doing so constitutes the second phase of vulgar thought, or what I characterize as vulgar perspective II. In the portion of 1.4.6 that we are currently examining, Hume tells exactly the same story. Here, he characterizes an unperceived impression as a "continu'd existence of the perception of our senses:"

> Our last resource is to yield to it, and boldly assert that these different related objects are in effect the same, however interrupted and variable. In order to justify to ourselves this absurdity, we often feign some new and unintelligible principle, that connects the objects together, and prevents their interruption or variation. Thus we feign *the continu'd existence of the perceptions of the senses*, to remove the interruption. (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254; emphases added)

Although we (the vulgar) realize that we are mistaken in regard to confusing an idea of perfect identity with a succession of resembling perceptions, we ultimately "yield" to the "bias from the imagination" to come up with an idea of an object that is invariable and uninterrupted. But "to justify to ourselves this absurdity," we don't make the same mistake. Rather, just as was the case in 1.4.2, we (the vulgar) "often feign some *new* and unintelligible principle" (emphasis added). We take a *new* approach. We "feign the *continu'd existence of the perceptions of our senses*, to remove the interruption; and run into the notion of a *soul,* and *self,* and *substance,* to disguise the variation" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254; emphases added). In 1.4.6, we see that the vulgar, while entertaining vulgar perspective II, posit the continued existence of the senses which causes us to "run into" an idea of not just a "substance" and a "soul," but the "*self*."

Immediately following, and also entirely consistent with the account given in 1.4.2, Hume reminds us that vulgar perspective II does not always satisfy our urge to think of an object (including an idea of a "self") as an invariable and uninterrupted object. However, in 1.4.6, Hume does not mention any of the philosophical maneuvering with *modus tollens* that, as was explained in Chap. 9, is used to repudiate vulgar perspective II in 1.4.2. Rather, he seems to suggest that after moving beyond vulgar perspective I, we have two choices: *return* to vulgar perspective I, or, somehow, reject vulgar perspective II (*evidently*, by way of the philosopher's *modus tollens* maneuvering, or something like it; Hume never tells us) and adopt what seems to be the *philosophical* perspective:

> But we may farther observe, that where we do not give rise to such a fiction, our propension to confound identity with relation is so great, that *we are apt to imagine something unknown and mysterious,* connecting the parts, beside their relation; and this I take to be the case with regard to the identity that we ascribe to plants and vegetables. And even where this does not take place, we still feel a propensity to confound these ideas, tho' we are not able fully to satisfy ourselves in that particular, nor find any thing invariable and uninterrupted to justify our notion of identity. (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254–5; emphases added)

When we don't slip into what appears to be vulgar perspective II, we do something else. In particular, we "imagine something unknown and mysterious," which "connect[s] the parts." This further option may occur in regard to plants and vegetables, as well as in regard to the "soul, self and substance." However, instead of taking this option, we might continue to "confound these ideas," i.e. might just *return* to the what seems to be vulgar perspective I—when we confound an idea of perfect identity with successive perceptions—even if we can never justify such a move. Nor can we "find any thing" that is "invariable and uninterrupted," which seems to mean—consistent with what we have seen throughout this book—we can't "find," or experience, any impression of an invariable and uninterrupted object.

Thus, what began as an account of the process used to ascribe identity to "plants and animals," quickly became an account of how we ascribe identity to objects in general. However, it culminates in an account of how we ascribe identity to a "soul," a "self," a "substance" and "plants and vegetables," where, given Hume's earlier remarks, all of these processes are "great[ly] analog[ous]" (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253). To make his case, we saw that Hume revisits much of the ground he covered in 1.4.2, particularly parts 1–3 of his four-part system.

5 Proper v. Improper Ideas of the Self: Revisitation #2 of the Vulgar v. the Philosophical Perspective

Immediately after revisiting the bulk of 1.4.2's four-part system, Hume offers the following evaluation of this system, particularly the process involved in ascribing identity to objects:

> Thus the controversy concerning identity is not merely a dispute of words. For when we attribute identity, in an *improper* sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confin'd to the expression, but is commonly attended with a fiction, *either* of something invariable and uninterrupted, *or* of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least with a propensity to such fictions. (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255; emphases added)

The dispute concerning identity is not just a verbal dispute. This is the case because the "*improper*" (emphasis added) attribution of identity is not just a verbal mistake, but is "commonly attended with a *fiction*" (emphasis added), which can manifest itself in two ways: (a) as "something invariable and uninterrupted" or (b) as "something mysterious and inexplicable." Thus, some versions of perfect identity, i.e. some fictions that are (a) invariable and uninterrupted, are *improper,* which could be a reference to vulgarly conceived of perfect identity; for as we saw in Chap. 8, this approach to perfect identity is misguided. Meanwhile, at least some cases where we imagine (b) "something mysterious and inexplicable" are *improper* as well.

But if there's an *im*proper account of identity, it would seem that there is also a *proper* one. One where, we might surmise, we can *effectively* imagine an idea that we think of as admitting of a perfect identity. Here, Hume implies that such a proper account is explained by the principle of individuation, i.e. the account given in part

1 of Hume's 1.4.2 system, as well as the accounts given on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and T 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9. We may conclude this because, as we saw in Sect. 4 of this Chapter, he respectively characterizes vulgar perspectives I and II as a "mistake" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254) and as an "absurdity" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254). Meanwhile, he characterizes what seems to be a version of the philosophical perspective (where we imagine something that is "mysterious and inexplicable") as *improper*. For keep in mind that this paragraph occurs immediately after the passages explicated in Sect. 4 of this chapter, where, it was shown, Hume ended with a discussion of vulgar perspective II and two potential reactions to vulgar perspective II, i.e. a return to vulgar perspective I (which is a "mistake"), or, a willingness to imagine "something unknown and mysterious" (which, as noted in the passage cited above, is "improper"). In Chap. 9, we saw that this latter reaction to vulgar perspective II was nothing other than the philosophical conception of objects. Thus, as far as we know at this point in the text, the only remaining option for a *proper* account would be the principle of individuation (i.e. T 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1), and similarly, the accounts of identity given in 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9.

This shouldn't be surprising, because in 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9 and T 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1 and 1.4.6.6; SBN 253, Hume *does* seem to suggest that we may *effectively* come up with an idea of perfect identity. However, as was shown in Part II of this book, this imaginative process seems to be a condition of possibility *for* ordinary experience—i.e. it is a transcendental process that is presupposed by our ability to think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relations (recall Part II of this book).[5] But does Hume proceed to elaborate on how we may "properly" imagine an idea of the self by way of the principle of individuation in 1.4.6? Does he also clarify how and why *properly* imagining an idea of the self is a condition of possibility for ordinary experience?

Yes and no. Yes, because he does go on to talk about imagining an idea that amalgamates unity and number, and so, to some degree, he seems to clarify the role of the principle of individuation in regard to his discussion of objects in general and "analog[ously]" (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253), the self. But in 1.4.6, this process does *not* seem to be a condition of possibility for experience. Rather, curiously enough, Hume revisits what looks to be vulgar perspective I, and then explains that by going a "step further" than this perspective, i.e. by *rejecting* it, we may *then* imagine an idea of an object. We do this by imagining a "common end" (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257). And so, we can only conclude that he has something *like* the *philosophical* perspective in mind in regard to "common ends" (despite the fact that he just intimated that the philosophical perspective is "improper;" recall our discussion above) This means that he seems to be entertaining a perspective that is necessarily *derivative* of a *reasoned* rejection of the vulgar perspective (in this case, vulgar perspective I). And even if we don't call this perspective "philosophical" we could *not* conclude

[5] As noted in previous chapters, we will see in Chap. 12 that our ability to think in terms of natural causation does not necessarily presuppose our ability to imagine ideas of objects that admit of a perfect identity.

that it is a condition of possibility *for* experience (particularly, our ability to think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relations) because it only emerges *after* rejecting a version of vulgar perspective I, a rejection that certainly does seem to presuppose at least an ability think in terms of philosophical causal relations. We see how all of this unfolds, in detail, in the next section.

5.1 A Revised Version of Vulgar Perspective I

We return now, to the point in the text where Hume claims that there are both "improper" and "proper" accounts of objects. Having made this distinction, Hume attempts to prove that this is the case. He begins as follows:

> What will suffice to prove this hypothesis to the satisfaction of every fair enquirer, is to show from daily experience and observation, that the objects, which are variable and interrupted, and yet are suppos'd to continue the same, are such only as consist of a succession of parts, connected together by resemblance, contiguity or causation. (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255)

Recall that there are two results that occur when we ascribe identity in an "improper" sense, i.e. we either come up with a "fiction" of (a) "something invariable and uninterrupted" (i.e. what may very well be a reference to vulgarly conceived of perfect identity) or we come up with a "fiction" of (b) "something mysterious and inexplicable" (i.e. what seems to be a reference to a philosophical conception of identity). To prove this "hypothesis," we may appeal to "daily experience and observation." This shows us that those objects that we "suppos[e]" (i.e. imagine) to "continue the same" (which seems to mean "have an identity"; see below), are really only a "succession of parts" and are "variable and uninterrupted." However, they are "suppos'd" (i.e. imagined) to have an identity by appealing to either "resemblance, contiguity or causation." Hume immediately continues:

> For as such a succession [of parts] answers evidently to our notion of diversity, it can only be by *mistake* that we ascribe it identity; and as the relation of parts, which leads us into this *mistake*, is really nothing but a quality, which produces an association of ideas, and an easy transition of the imagination from one to another, it can only be from resemblance, which this act of the mind bears to that, by which we contemplate one continu'd object, that the error arises. (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255; emphases added)

When we ascribe an "identity" to a succession of parts, which is "diverse" we make a "mistake." For, the assumption is, a thing with an identity would be uninterrupted, yet a diverse succession of parts is interrupted. What "leads us into this mistake" is a "quality" of the imagination that "eas[ily]" associates each part of the succession at hand with the other. This "act of the mind" "*resemb[les]*" (emphasis added) the way in which we "contemplate one continu'd object."

Two things are clear here: One, Hume is discussing a case of "improper" identity that occurs as a result of the relation of *resemblance*; recall that in the passage cited just before this one, Hume makes it clear that we can appeal to three relations to come up with an idea of identity: resemblance, contiguity or causation. Two, Hume

is clearly thinking of something like resembling *dispositions* here. On the one hand, we have the state of mind where the imagination "associates" each diverse part of a succession, and on the other hand, we have an "act of mind" that "contemplates one continu'd object." Both of these states, or as Hume puts it here, "acts of mind," *resemble* each other; in fact, it is this very resemblance that leads us to "mistake[nly]" ascribe identity to a succession of perceptions.

As a result, we are once again reminded of vulgar perspective I, where, recall, upon consideration of what *seems* to be an uninterrupted perception, we "fix our thought on any object" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203), or as Hume puts it here, we "contemplate one continu'd object." In turn, thanks to the imagination, we come up with the vulgar version of perfect identity (recall Chap. 8).[6] Following, as explained above, the vulgar confuse the disposition that this idea of perfect identity puts them in with the disposition that a succession of resembling perceptions puts them in. In turn, the vulgar confuse the respective *causes* of these dispositions with each other, i.e. an idea of object that is imagined to have a perfect identity and a succession of resembling perceptions. Given the textual similarities explained above, Hume seems to have just this kind of "mistake" in mind in the passage cited above from 1.4.6; i.e. once again, he seems to clearly have vulgar perspective I in mind.

Immediately following this passage, Hume writes: "Our chief business, then, must be to prove, that all objects to which we ascribe identity, without observing their invariableness and uninterrupteness are such as consist of a succession of related objects" (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255). At this point, Hume thinks that he must "prove" that we do indeed ascribe identity to objects that are actually *not* observed to be invariable and uninterrupted, but instead, are successions of resembling ("like") "objects" (i.e. perceptions, particularly, proto-objects).[7] That is, he seems to feel that he must "prove" that vulgar perspective I is a very real psychological phenomenon.

But unlike what he says in 1.4.2, in this section of 1.4.6, Hume goes on to emphasize the role of *change* in the vulgar's first attempt to come up with an idea of identity. In particular, he tells us that any abrupt change in a "body" will cause a

[6] Here, unlike what we saw earlier (i.e. T 1.4.6.6; SBN 253), Hume is careful enough to refer to what seems to be the *vulgar* conception of perfect identity, rather than the principle of individuation. Some might object that Hume does not have a vulgar conception of perfect identity in mind here, i.e. a situation where, thanks to "fix[ing] our thought" (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203) we imagine that we are perceiving an uninterrupted and invariable object. Rather, the objection might continue, Hume is referring to a case where we actually have a "continu'd" or uninterrupted perception. However, if we read this passage in context, we see that this cannot be the case. As explained at length above, it is clear that Hume has vulgar perspective I in mind, where we do *not* have an uninterrupted perception, although, thanks to the imagination, we think we do. Moreover, as explained throughout this book (recall Part II), Hume explicitly claims that we never have continuous, i.e. uninterrupted perceptions, e.g. "We may, therefore, conclude with certainty, that the opinion of a continu'd and of a distinct existence never arises from the senses" (T 1.4.2.7; SBN 192).

[7] Because we *ascribe* a perfect identity to these "objects," they could not already be imagined to have a perfect identity. Thus, Hume must be thinking of proto-objects here (recall Chap. 4).

break in its perceived identity, while gradual changes do not. This is simply because in the case of gradual change, our thought process (our disposition towards the object) *gradually* changes as well, and so, *appears* to be continuous, and thus, is uninterrupted. However, when a change in what we take to be a body or object strikes us as being *abrupt*, our thought process regarding the alleged object is no longer smooth, and thus it no longer appears to be uninterrupted. It is at this point, Hume claims, that this way of thinking (i.e. vulgar perspective I) fails us; it leads us to conclude that objects are both interrupted and not interrupted.

To explain why this is the case, Hume writes immediately after the passage cited above:

> In order to this, suppose any mass of matter of which the parts are contiguous and connected, to be plac'd before us; 'tis plain w must attribute perfect identity to this mass, provided all the parts continue uninterruptedly and invariably the same, whatever motion or change of place we may observe in any of the parts. (T 1.4.6.8; SBN 255)

To show that we do indeed ascribe an identity to a succession of resembling perceptions without "observing their invariableness and uninterruptedness," Hume asks us to think of a "mass of matter." Suppose that this "mass of matter" has parts that are "contiguous and connected." Moreover, we must "attribute a perfect identity" to this mass if all the parts "continue uninterruptedly and invariably the same" regardless if the parts move or change places. However, this does not mean that in this case, Hume is acknowledging the existence of an uninterrupted and invariable perception (*contra* Baxter 2008, p. 30). For here again, Hume seems to be referring to a case of vulgarly conceived of perfect identity, i.e. a case where, thanks to "fix[ing] our thought," (T 1.4.2.33; SBN 203) we *imagine* that an object is invariable and uninterrupted. It is reasonable for us to conclude as much, because, as explained above, Hume is in the midst of explaining vulgar perspective I. It is essential then, that we understand this passage in terms of its broader context, and realize that in it, Hume is setting up a case of vulgarly conceived of perfect identity which puts us in a state of mind (a disposition) that is subsequently confused with a state of mind (a disposition) caused by a succession of resembling perceptions. Hume introduces this latter state of mind in the immediately following passage:

> But supposing some very *small* or *inconsiderable* part to be added to the mass, or substracted from it; tho' this absolutely destroys the identity of the whole, strictly speaking; yet as we seldom think so accurately, we scruple not to pronounce a mass of matter the same, where we find so trivial an alteration. The passage of thought from the object before the change to the object after it, is so smooth and easy, that we scarce perceive the transition, and are apt to imagine, that 'tis nothing but a continu'd survey of the same object. (T 1.4.6.8; SBN 255–6)

Suppose that some "very small or considerable part" be either "added" or "subtracted" to the mass. Strictly speaking, this should "destroy" the perfect identity. For regardless if we are "fix[ing]" our thought, we should observe a variation and interruption, i.e. our perceptions should appear successive to us in this case, while in the case where we appear to be apprehending an uninterrupted and invariable mass, they do not appear successive (thanks to the imagination; c.f. Chap. 8). However, Hume explains, "we seldom think so accurately," and thus, do *not* think that the

mass has changed. This is due to the fact that "the passage of thought before the change to the object after it, is so smooth and easy, that we scarce perceive the transition." The "thought" or thought process involved in contemplating what we take to be the invariable and uninterrupted "mass" is so similar to the thought process involved in contemplating the succession of changed perceptions that we "scarce perceive the transition" from the former to the latter. That is, these states of minds, i.e. dispositions, *resemble* each other, bringing to mind, once again, the R_d resemblance discussed in Chap. 8 (recall Fig. 8.1).

Thus, once again we see that we confuse our idea of an object that we imagine to have a perfect identity with our idea of a succession of changing (however slightly) perceptions thanks to the resemblance that obtains between the states of mind (dispositions) that they respectively cause. Accordingly, Hume concludes: "And therefore, since this interruption makes an object cease to appear the same, it must be the uninterrupted progress of thought, which constitutes the *imperfect* identity" (T 1.4.6.9; SBN 256; emphasis added). Exactly as was the case in 1.4.2, where we conceive of successive perceptions with the same "smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination, as it attends the view of the same [uninterrupted and] invariable object" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204), we conceive of a succession of (slightly) changing perceptions in an uninterrupted way; doing so is responsible for what Hume explicitly characterizes here as "*imperfect* identity" (emphasis added). Hume repeats this point in following paragraph:

> the mind, in following the successive changes of the body, feels an easy passage from the surveying its condition in one moment to the viewing of it in another, and at no particular time perceives any interruption in its actions. From which continu'd perception, it ascribes a continu'd existence and identity to the object. (T 1.4.6.10; SBN 256)

However, exactly as we saw to be the case in 1.4.2, vulgar perspective I, where we entertain a notion of "imperfect identity," is easily overturned: "'Tis certain that where the changes are at last observ'd to become considerable, we make a scruple of ascribing identity to such difference objects" (T 1.4.6.11; SBN 257). Hume immediately continues:

> There is, however, another artifice, by which we may induce the imagination to advance a *step farther*; and that is, by producing a reference of the parts to each other, and a combination to some *common end* or purpose. A ship, of which a considerable part has been chang'd by frequent reparations, is till consider'd as the same; nor does the difference of the material hinder us from ascribing an identity to it. (T 1.4.6.11; SBN 257)

This "step further" taken by the imagination seems to be taken in *reaction* to the version of vulgar perspective I presented here. In fact, we have to "induce" the imagination to take this step beyond "imperfect identity." Moreover, this process does not resemble the typical step that follows vulgar perspective I, i.e. vulgar perspective II. Rather, it seems to be very similar to the *philosophical* position. We, after rejecting vulgar perspective I, seem to abandon the idea that objects (for Hume still seems to be speaking of objects in general here) *are* perceptions. Instead, we imagine what seems to be a common, mind-independent "purpose;" "The common end, *in which the parts conspire*, is the *same under all their variations*, and affords

an easy transition of the imagination from one situation of the body to another" (T 1.4.6.11; SBN 257; emphases added). The "common end" does not change, and thus, it seems to be conceived of as invariable and uninterrupted; it is "the same under all their variations" such that it seemingly transcends "one situation of the body to another."

We also imagine that there may be a reciprocal causal relation *between* the parts; a "sympathy:"

> But this is still more remarkable, when we add a *sympathy* of parts to their *common end*, and suppose that they bear to each other, the reciprocal relation of cause and effect in all their actions and operations. This is the case with all animals and vegetables; where not only the several parts have a reference to some *general purpose*, but also a mutual dependence on, and connexion with each other. (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257)

But these parts are not only bound in relation each other, they all have a "reference to some general purpose," i.e. the "common end." In this respect, Hume seems to be implicitly presenting an idea of some kind of Aristotelian final *cause*, which, generally speaking, is the "purpose" or "end" of the object at hand. As such, the "parts" seem to have a "reference" to this "general purpose," or "common end" in the respect that they are imagined to be *caused* by it. Put still another way: these parts exist in relation to each other, i.e. have a "sympathy" with each other in virtue of the fact that they have the same purpose. In this rather Aristotelian sense, they are imagined to be "caused" by this purpose. Thus, once again, we see that Hume seems to have some kind of imagined cause in mind, which is entirely consistent with Hume's accounts of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity and philosophical perfect identity. However, one might object that Hume's earlier accounts of imagined causes, given in T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4 and T 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9 and T 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1 seem to reference efficient causes, not final causes. I would agree, but Hume never explains this discrepancy, nor does it undermine the fact that in all cases, Hume is concerned with giving an account of how and why we imagine objects as causes, regardless if some of these causes seem to be efficient, while others seem to be final.

Hume immediately continues:

> The effect of so strong a relation is, that 'tho' every one must allow, that in a very few years both vegetables and animals endure a *total* change, yet we still attribute identity to them, while their form, size and substance are entirely alter'd. An oak, that grows from a small plant to a large tree, is still the same oak; tho' there be not one particle of matter, figure of its parts the same. An infant becomes a man, and is sometimes fact, sometimes lean, without any change in his identity. (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257)

Imagining a "common end" or "general purpose" seems to accommodate perceived changes in "both vegetables and animals" unlike the version of vulgar perspective I presented above. The imagined idea of the "end" or "purpose" of an object transcends any changes that we might perceive as obtaining of this idea. However, imagining such an idea—as explained above—only occurs when we *reject* vulgar perspective I, and thus, it seems to constitute some kind of reasoned philosophical conception of perfect identity (recall Chap. 9).

5.2 Time and the Principle of Individuation Revisited?

However, instead of elaborating on the reason-driven philosophical aspect of imagining common ends, Hume immediately discusses what seems to be the *principle of individuation*, which, recall, represents a transcendental process. Just as was the case in 1.4.2 in regard to his explanation of the principle of individuation, a marriage between the notion of unity and number seems to occur when imagining "common ends." In 1.4.6, he refers to this marriage as a "confounding" of "numerical" identity with "specific identity." However, here, he only mentions this marriage in passing, and does not explicitly discuss its relationship to the idea of time, as he did in 1.4.2:

> We may also consider the two following phaenomena, which are remarkable in their kind. The first is, that tho' we commonly be able to distinguish pretty exactly betwixt *numerical* and *specific* identity, yet it sometimes happens, that we confound them, and in our thinking and reasoning employ the one for the other. (T 1.4.6.13; SBN 257–8; emphases added)

Although we can and do distinguish between "numerical" and "specific" identity, we often confuse the two. Hume elaborates as follows:

> Thus a man, who hears a noise, that is frequently interrupted and renew'd, says, it is still the same noise; tho' tis evident the sounds have only a specific identity or resemblance, and there is nothing numerically the same, but the cause, which produc'd them. In like manner, it may be said without breach of the propriety of language, that such a church, which was formerly of brick, fell to ruin, and that the parish rebuilt the same church of free-stone, and according to modern architecture. Here neither the form nor materials are the same, nor is there any thing common to the two objects, but their relation to the inhabitants of the parish; and yet this alone is sufficient to make us denominate them the same. (T 1.4.6.13; SBN 258)

One might think of a noise that is constantly being interrupted as both *one* noise (i.e. has a "specific identity") and as *many* noises (i.e. has a "numerical identity"). However, these interrupted noises have nothing in common, "but the *cause*, which produc'd them" (emphasis added). Similarly, we might conclude that two churches—where one is built in a traditional manner out of brick, and the other is built in a "modern manner" out of "free-stone"—are indeed, two different churches. However, although these churches are numerically and stylistically different, because they are built by the same parish, i.e. are *caused* by the same parish, "this alone is sufficient to make us denominate them the same" (T 1.4.6.13; SBN 258). In both cases, Hume makes it clear that we amalgamate—where here, Hume characterizes this as an instance of "confounding"—unity with number in virtue of conceptualizing a *cause* (i.e. the unity) of the many (numerical) perceptions we experience; essentially we "confound" what we take to be the cause with what we take to be the various and interrupted effects.

Hume immediately continues:

> *Secondly*, We may remark, that tho' in a succession of related objects, it be in a manner requisite, that the change of parts be not sudden nor entire, in order to preserve their identity, yet where the objects are in their nature changeable and inconstant, we admit of a more sudden transition, than wou'd otherwise be consistent with that relation. Thus as the nature of a river consists in the motion and change of parts; tho' in less than four and twenty hours these be totally alter'd; this hinders not the river from continuing the same during several ages. What is natural and essential to anything is, in a manner, expected; and what is

> expected makes less impression, and appears of less moment, than what is unusual and extraordinary. A considerable change of the former kind seems really less to the imagination, than the most trivial alteration of the latter; and by breaking less the continuity of the thought, has less influence in destroying the identity. (T 1.4.6.14; SBN 258)

Although in some cases, in order to think of something as having an identity, the succession of perceptions that we imagine it to cause, e.g. the noise impressions noted above, should not radically change. However, Hume explains here, we do indeed imagine that some objects may cause perceptions that radically change. Consider for instance, a river, which completely changes in less than a day. However, if we "expect" such changes in our impressions, then we are less likely to have problems with imagining an invariable and uninterrupted cause of them.

All of these examples, i.e. the sounds, the parish's church and the river, seem to reflect Hume's earlier discussion of the "medium betwixt unity and number" discussed in part 1 of 1.4.2's system, for they certainly do not reflect the vulgar conception of objects—perspective I or II; in neither of these cases do we imagine causes. However, this doesn't mean that Hume necessarily has some kind of transcendental process in mind here, as was shown to be the case with the principle of individuation. Rather, he *could* merely be elaborating on a more reactionary quasi-philosophical perspective, particularly, one that, in virtue of employing reason, goes a "step further" than vulgar perspective I.

6 Apprehension of Our Own "Self" v. Other "Selves:" Revisitation #3 of the Vulgar v. the Philosophical Perspective

After briefly discussing a version of what appears to be the principle of individuation, Hume specifically introduces the term "personal identity" (T 1.4.6.15; SBN 259). Personal identity, he tells us, is imagined in a manner decisively "like" the way in which we imagine other objects. Thus, this passage reinforces a conclusion that we reached earlier in this chapter: Hume's account of personal identity must be understood in relation to his general accounts of identity, particularly, the accounts given in 1.3.2 and 1.4.2, and, the preceding accounts given in 1.4.6, including the notion of a "common end":

> This identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a *like kind* with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animals bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin, but must proceed from a *like operation* of the imagination. (T 1.4.6.15; SBN 259; emphases added)

As shown earlier, there seems to be no substantive difference between Hume's account of "vegetable and animal bodies" (i.e. organic things) and any of the inorganic objects that Hume may have had in mind in 1.3.2 and 1.4.2. Having underlined this connection between identity in general and personal identity, Hume immediately continues:

> But lest this argument shou'd not convince the reader; tho' in my opinion perfectly decisive; let him weigh the following reasoning, which is still closer and more immediate.

> 'Tis evident, that the identity, which we attribute to the human mind, however perfect we may imagine it to be, is not able to run the several different perceptions into one, and make them lose their characters of distinction and difference, which are essential to them. (T 1.4.6.16; SBN 259)

Although, as noted above, the way in which we imagine the identity of an object in general is similar to the way in which we imagine personal identity, it cannot be denied that our perceptions remain distinct and different; this is the very nature of our perceptions. This is the case despite the fact that we seem to be able to imagine a "perfect" (i.e. invariable and uninterrupted) identity as obtaining of the human mind.

Thus, Hume immediately continues:

> 'Tis still true, that every distinct perception, which enters into the composition of the mind, is a distinct existence, and is different, and distinguishable, and separable from every other perceptions, either contemporary or successive. But as notwithstanding this distinction and separability, we suppose the whole train of perceptions to be united by identity, a question naturally arises concerning this relation of identity; whether it be something that really binds our several perceptions together, or only associates their ideas in the imagination? (T 1.4.6.16; SBN 259)

Although all our perceptions (which "enter" into the mind, and thus, "compose" the mind) are distinct, different and distinquishable, we nevertheless imagine, i.e. "suppose," that they are "united" by something, i.e. by an "identity." The question is, once again, is there "something" that "really binds" these perceptions, i.e. a self, or do we just imagine such a thing? Hume rephrases the problem as follows:

> That is, in other words, whether in pronouncing concerning the identity of a person, we observe some real bond among his perceptions, or only feel one among the ideas we form of them? This question we might easily decide, if we wou'd recollect what has already been prov'd at large, that the understanding never observes any real connexion among objects, and that even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examin'd, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas. (T 1.4.6.16; SBN 259–260)

When we think of a person, say, Jim, do we really see "Jim," i.e. "some real bond among his perceptions," or do we merely take one of our Jim-like perceptions and attribute an identity to it? We can answer this question if we take into account what has already been established: we do *not* observe "any real connexion among objects," and thus, we could not be observing some "real bond" that constitutes a real invariable and uninterrupted thing, "Jim." Hume immediately continues:

> For from thence it evidently follows, that identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; but is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, which we reflect upon them. Now the only qualities, which can give ideas an union in the imagination are these three relations above-mention'd [contiguity, resemblance and cause and effect]. These are the uniting principles in the ideal world, and without them every distinct object is separable by the mind, and may be separately consider'd, and appears not to have any more connexion with any other object, than if disjoin'd by the greatest difference and remoteness. (T 1.4.6.16; SBN 260).

Indeed, just as has been shown to be the case with objects in general, we do not observe someone else's identity. Rather, we somehow imagine such a thing. There are three relations that could be responsible for such a fiction, as noted

above (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255; recall Sect. 5.1 of this chapter): contiguity, resemblance and cause and effect. Hume immediately rules out contiguity and considers whether it is resemblance or cause and effect that enables us to imagine ideas of personal identity.

6.1 *Vulgar Perspective I Revisited (Again)*

First, Hume considers resemblance. He writes:

> To begin with *resemblance*, suppose we cou'd see clearly into the breast of another, and observe that succession of perceptions, which constitutes his mind or thinking principle, and suppose that he always preserves the memory of a considerable part of past perceptions; 'tis evident that nothing cou'd more contribute to the bestowing a relation on this succession amidst all its variations. For what is the memory but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of past perceptions? And as an image necessarily resembles its object, must not the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object? In this particular, then, the memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among its perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves our others. (T 1.4.6.18; SBN 260–1)

Assume that we could "look into" the mind of another and apprehend his "succession of perceptions" where that succession "constitutes his mind or thinking principle." Also assume that the memory of the person is good. Thanks to the good memory of the person being observed, we—the observers—may see that certain successions of remembered perceptions belonging to the mind that we are observing *resemble* each other. And so, the imagination of the person under hypothetical observation is seduced—as is its natural tendency—by certain "dispositions," or what Hume refers to here as "a chain of thought," into conflating these resembling perceptions into one object. Moreover, "The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others." Thus, according to this account, it seems that at least *initially*, we think of our *own* selves as well as *other* selves in terms of vulgar perspective I; i.e. we conflate a succession of resembling perceptions with what we take to be "one object." However, as shown in Sect. 4 of this chapter, Hume is quite certain that this approach is "mistake[n]" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254).

6.2 *The Principle of Individuation qua the Philosophical Perspective Revisited (Again)*

If the process described above is the *mistaken* imaginative process of imagining identity (of both ourselves and of others) then what is the *correct* process? Hume refers to it here as the "*true* idea of the human mind." (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261):

> As to *causation*; we may observe, that the true idea of the human mind, is to consider it as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which are link'd together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence and modify each

> other. Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; and these ideas in their turn produce other impressions. One thought chaces another, and draws after it a third, by which it is expell'd in its turn. (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261)

Here, Hume describes our "true idea of the human mind" as a kind of "system" of perceptions which are connected to each other with the relation of cause and effect, where impressions give rise to ideas and these ideas produce other impressions and so on. He immediately continues:

> In this respect, I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or *commonwealth*, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261; emphasis added)

The parts of one's "commonwealth" may change (such as "character and disperspective"), yet the overall collection of relations maintains its identity as a *collection*, as a "commonwealth." As a result, one's identity remains the "same" throughout all changes, which we may assume, means invariable and uninterrupted (after all, this is an account of how we "truly," and so, it seems, *perfectly* imagine the self). This manner of looking at ourselves obtains because over the course of time, we relate our present system of causal relations with a system of causal relations that occurred *earlier*. As a result, Hume explains, our memory is absolute crucial; without it, we would have no "self" in the respect that the "self" is actually a "commonwealth" (T 1.4.6.20; SBN 261–2):

> But having once acquir'd this notion of causation from memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. For how few of our past actions are there, of which we have any memory? (T 1.4.6.20; SBN 262)

Here, Hume seems to be thinking of philosophical causation, i.e. a reflective notion of causation (recall Chap. 2) such that we can conceptualize "times," "circumstances" and "acts" that we have forgotten. In turn, the connection that obtains between these causal relations gives "rise to some fiction or imagining principle of union" (T 1.4.6.21; SBN 262).

Consistent with Hume's accounts of perfect identity given in 1.3.2 and 1.4.2[8] (regardless if it is transcendentally conceived or not), this suggests that this imagined union is the alleged unchanging and uninterrupted source (*cause*) of *all* of these causal relations, i.e. it is similar to the "common end" or "purpose" discussed earlier (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257). What is imagined is the "union," i.e. the "self" that seems to abide over time; this is what we believe to "unite" (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261) our collection of causally related perceptions, and thus, it seems that we would

[8] Not including vulgarly-conceived of perfect identity; recall that this notion has no alleged causal properties (see Chap. 8).

naturally think of this unity as the *cause* of this collection. As a result, as explained earlier, Hume seems to have some kind of final or perhaps formal[9] cause in mind here, although Hume's emphasis is clearly focused on the causal interrelation of the perceptions that compose the "commonwealth."

But Hume could not possibly have had a transcendental notion of the self in mind here—at least in the respect that our ability to think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relations presupposes the imagined idea of the self. Rather, it seems clear enough that something is imagined to unify this complicated set of causal relations, which, as shown above, seem to include philosophical causal relations, i.e. causal relations that are a products of reflection. And so, on this account, it seems that we must first become conditioned to think in terms of philosophical causal relationships, and *then* imagine a "uni[fied]" self as their cause. Thus, the "true" picture of the mind given at this juncture of 1.4.6, is *itself* a product of philosophical reflection, and so, it could not be a transcendental conception of a self (as explained throughout this book, such a conception could not occur as a result of philosophical reflection; recall Part II of this book).

7 Conclusion of 1.4.6

By the end of 1.4.6, Hume is certain that he has sidestepped "all the nice and subtle questions concerning personal identity" (T 1.4.6.21; SBN 262), relegating them to "grammatical [rather] than [to] philosophical difficulties" (T 1.4.6.21; SBN 262). Identity can only be a *name* that we ascribe to a person or to ourselves. It is an imagined grammatical construction of a "subject" in the first-person perspective, and in the second-person perspective, an "object." Hume makes it perfectly clear that he is certain that a "self"—in the respect that a self is a unified "thing" (namely, an alleged unity of congested and complicated causal relations that obtain between perceptions), is *imagined.* In particular, it appears to be some kind of imagined final or formal cause.

The fact that Hume seems to think—at least implicitly—that the idea of a the self is imagined as a cause is reinforced with his remarks in 1.4.6 on the "simplicity" of the idea of personal identity, given in the second to last paragraph of 1.4.6, Here, Hume refers back to the opening passages of 1.4.6, where he announced that "there is properly no *simplicity* in [the mind] at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propensity we have to imagine that simplicity and identity" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 253). He writes:

> What I have said concerning the first origin and uncertainty of our notion of identity, as apply'd to the human mind, may be extended with little or no variation to that of *simplicity.* An object, whose different co-existent parts are bound together by a close relation, operates

[9] Recall that generally speaking, an Aristotelian final cause is the purpose, or end of the thing at hand, while a formal cause is the plan or "essence" of the thing at hand.

> upon the imagination after much the same manner as one perfectly simple and indivisible, and requires not a much greater stretch of thought in order to its conception. From this similarity of operation we attribute a simplicity to it, and feign a *principle of union* as the support of this simplicity, and the *center* of all the different parts and qualities of the object. (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263; emphases added)

Although the mind is a complicated "commonwealth" of causal relations, the fact that the parts are so closely related (by causal relations) enables this idea to "operate upon the imagination" much in the same way that an object that is conceived of to be "perfect simply and indivisible" does. Thus, we are compelled to "attribute a simplicity" to the commonwealth, and accordingly, "*feign a principle of union* as the support of this simplicity, and the center of all the different parts and qualities of the object." This imagined "principle of union" provides a "center" of the commonwealth, similar to the "purpose" explained above in regard to a "common end." As a result, this aspect of the idea of the self, i.e. its "simplicity," seems to capture its alleged (formal) causal powers—it seems to be thought of as the source, or origin of all the interrelated causal relations that comprise the commonwealth.

8 The Self as an Abstract Idea

As we have observed first hand, Hume's account of the self is very convoluted. Regardless, he seems to have had *some* kind of abstract idea in mind in those cases where we "tru[ly]" imagine the idea of the self. Just as was the case with ideas of objects in general, it seems likely that according to Hume, when we bring to mind a member of our "bundle of perceptions" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 253) i.e. of the "commonwealth" (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261), we naturally recall the majority of the bundle or commonwealth, where these perceptions are proto-objects. It would follow that we do so because each perception belonging to the "bundle" or "commonwealth," is, as explained above, causally related to other perceptions belonging to it. Nor do we initially think of any of these perceptions as having a perfect identity, i.e. they are not imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted (recall that we do not have an impression of the "self"). Thus, thinking of one perception (proto-object) that belongs to the bundle should, according to Hume, naturally call to mind a number of other perceptions that belong to the bundle, either through reflection, or through natural causal association (recall Chap. 2).

However, in the course of doing so (just as was the case with ideas of objects in general), it seems that we must imagine that the perception that we initially bring to mind is both invariable and uninterrupted, *and* is imagined to be the "purpose" (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257), or the "end" (T 1.4.6.12; SBN 257), or the "simplicity" (T 1.4.6.22: SBN 263), or the "center" (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263) or the "principle of union" (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263) of the bundle, i.e. the commonwealth. For instance, one might imagine that a perception of her face, or perhaps her entire body, is her invariable and uninterrupted "self," and it, by being some kind of final cause, causes

the rest of her perceptions of her "self." This allegedly invariable and uninterrupted perception would literally be her "self-image." This is the "true" (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261) idea of the self. As such, our ideas of an invariable and uninterrupted self appear to be based on actual impressions (drawn from the bundle, i.e. the commonwealth) but do not exactly represent any impression, precisely because they are imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted. Thus, contrary to Robison (1974), we do in fact, have an idea of the self, but it seems likely that Hume thought of it as some kind of abstract idea.

9 The Retraction: The Tension Revealed

But this isn't the end of the story. In the *Appendix* to the *Treatise*, Hume writes: "upon a more strict review of the section concerning personal identity, I find myself involv'd in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent" (T App. 10; SBN 633). Labyrinth indeed—that might even be an understatement. We've just seen Hume give no less than *three* versions of the transition from the vulgar perspective to the philosophical perspective, where all of them are slightly different. For instance, the first account includes vulgar perspective II and the second two do not. Moreover, initially, he suggests that the transcendental process behind the principle of individuation yields the *proper*, or *perfect* account of identity, while the vulgar perspective is "mistaken," (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254), "absurd" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254) and "imperfect" (T 1.4.6.9; SBN 256) and the philosophical perspective is "improper" (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255). But further on, he makes an implicit retraction and claims that what seems to be a reactionary philosophical (reflective) perspective does, after all, yield perfect identity; first, in the form of "common ends" (a notion that pertains to objects in general) and second, in the form of a "commonwealth" (a notion that specifically pertains to the "mind," or self).

Knowing this, and given what we have learned in Chaps. 1–9 of this book, we can anticipate the problem with 1.4.6: it is a convoluted instantiation of the two opposing views of objects that run throughout Book I. For on the one hand, Hume seems to think that we imagine objects that admit of perfect identity via a *transcendental* process. In turn, with our ideas of invariable and uninterrupted objects in hand, we may think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relationships. But on the other hand, Hume thinks that we *only* imagine objects that admit of perfect identity after a *reasoned* rejection of the vulgar perspective, a rejection that presupposes our ability to think in terms of at least, philosophical causal relationships (how else could we come up with an idea of *modus tollens*?)

Not surprisingly, an implicit recognition of this rather egregious problem is, I think, the source of Hume's uneasiness with 1.4.6. To see this, first recall that on T App. 10; SBN 633 in the Appendix, Hume reminds us that we never have an impression of the self. Moreover, the self is a state of perceiving, which is what is destroyed when we die.

So far, so good. This is what he claimed at the beginning of 1.4.6. But, Hume tells us, problems occur when it comes to explaining how all of these perceptions are bound, such that we can imagine them to be "real[ly] simpl[e]" and have an "identity:"

> When I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds [these perceptions] together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is *very defective* and that nothing by the seeming evidence of the preceding reasonings cou'd have induc'd me to receive it. (T App. 20; SBN 635; emphases added)

Here, Hume is clearly attacking his notion of "common ends," or, as he characterizes it specifically in terms of the mind at the end of 1.4.6, the unity that binds "commonwealths." For as we saw, these imagined abstract ideas are alleged to bind, or unify our distinct perceptions in the respect that they are the respective invariable and uninterrupted "centers" (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263) or "purposes," (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 257), i.e. final causes of such perceptions, both in terms of the self and in terms of objects in general.

But what, exactly, is the problem? Hume reminds us that perceptions are "distinct existences;" every perception may be thought of as distinct and independent of the other. However, he also reminds us, "no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding" (T App. 20; SBN 635). For instance, recall 1.4.2. where Hume argues that we don't *sense* an uninterrupted and invariable (or continuous and distinct) unifying cause of all our variable and interrupted perceptions (i.e. "distinct existences"), where this cause "*connects*" all these perceptions in virtue of being their cause (e.g. T 1.4.2.4 SBN 189; recall Chap. 8). Nor do we *reason* our way to an understanding of such "connexions" in virtue of concluding that some mind-independent thing *causes* all of our perceptions (distinct existences), *as the philosophers mistakenly do* (e.g. T 1.4.2.52; SBN 214–15; recall Chap. 9). Thus, we do not apprehend invariable and uninterrupted causes of (and so any connections between) our distinct (i.e. interrupted) perceptions via either the senses or reason. This is consistent with the principle that "No connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding" (T App. 20; SBN 635).

But, Hume tells us here, "Most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing but a *reflected* thought or perception" (T App. 20; SBN 635; emphasis added). Most philosophers think that the idea of personal identity *does* arise from *reflection,* i.e. consciousness. This means that most philosophers are *wrong*—any philosophical account that is funded by the notion that our understanding of personal identity arises from reflection, i.e. reasoning from *principles*, is surely mistaken. For try as he might, Hume just can't "discover" (T App. 20; SBN 636) any such "principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness" (T App. 20; SBN 636).

At this point, Hume throws up his hands and writes: "I must plead the privilege of a skeptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding" (T App. 21; SBN 636). He thinks himself defeated because he commits the *very*

mistake in 1.4.6 that he just called our attention to: On three separate occasions he suggests (implicitly or not) that our idea of a self emerges from *reflecting* on the contradiction forced from the vulgar perspective. This contradiction is, recall: objects (in the case the self) are both interrupted and uninterrupted (a contradiction that plagues both vulgar perspective I and II; recall Chaps. 8 and 9). In this respect, the "true," (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261) idea of the self seems to be imagined in order to satisfy, at least, the principle of non-contradiction. But Hume tells us in the *Appendix* that *there are no such principles* (including, we must assume, the principle of non-contradiction) that we may appeal to, using *reason*, to acquire our idea of an invariable and uninterrupted self. In short, any philosophical conception of the self must be *fundamentally mistaken.*

And thus, although I think that Ainslie (2001) *does* present a legitimate problem in Hume's thought (recall Sect. 2 of this chapter, where I discuss Ainslie's work), it is not the problem that Hume is addressing here. By "reflection" Hume is not referring to how we reflect about ourselves. Rather, he means how we reason our way *to* the idea of ourselves by means of a philosophical (reflective) rejection of the vulgar position. Thus, Hume's problem is simply this: The philosophical idea of a unified self, particularly, the idea of a "common end" and analogously, the idea of a "commonwealth" seem to be obtained through *reason*. But this stands in direct violation to the principle that "No connexions amoung distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding." Thus, in this respect, I agree with Kemp Smith's (1941) interpretation of Hume's problem. Recall that Kemp Smith claimed that: "Hume's confession of failure is, indeed, in large part simply the belated admission that it is in a supplement [of reflection] and not in sheer feeling, that the key to an understanding of the awareness of personal identity, as of so much else in experience, is alone to be found" (p. 556). However, I have, I think, filled in the gaps in Kemp Smith's very general explanation of the problem by carefully explaining how Hume's account of common ends, and analogously, commonwealths and its "principle of union" (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263), are products of what appear to be reasoned rejections of various versions of the vulgar perspective. Moreover, I agree with Swain (1991) in the respect that Hume is, indeed, attacking a "philosophical" position in the Appendix (recall Sect. 2 of this chapter where I discuss Swain's work), but only in regard to his *own* appropriation of it. And thus, contrary to Swain's further conclusion, Hume is, in fact, attacking himself.

So, should Hume have rejected all of 1.4.6? Should he have abandoned all attempts to give an account of the self, if not objects in general? Not necessarily. Hume *could* have given an account of personal identity that would satisfy his objections. We saw three of these accounts given in Part II of this book, where he suggests that identity is *not* a product of philosophical reflection. Rather, these accounts explain, as he puts it in the *Appendix*, a "determination of thought" that is *presupposed* by our ability to think in terms of philosophical and indirect causal relations, and so, generally speaking, our ability to reflect or reason. We saw how this determination proceeds in the most detail in Chap. 6, where, recall: The initial regularity (Level 1 constancy and coherence) of our impressions "determines us" to imagine (via transcendental causation) their respective unsensed invariable and

uninterrupted causes. As a result of doing so, our impressions seem still more regular (Level 2 constant and coherent). These unsensed causes unify our perceptions, but this process does *not* occur thanks to a set of principles. Instead, it seems to be a reflexive reaction to the regularity that naturally obtains of the world. Moreover, this process is perfectly consistent with the two principles that Hume tells us we must abide by in *Appendix*: (i) "All our distinct perceptions are distinct existences" (p. 636) (ii) "the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences."

However, the question is, which is raised by both Robison (1974) and Stroud (1977): Is there something about our impressions that may give rise to the idea of the *self*—without appealing to either an idea of a "self" or to reasoning, to organize these impressions? Hume does not indicate that there is. As a result, this does, on the face of it, seem to be a real problem for Hume, but I do not think that it is the problem that Hume calls attention to in the *Appendix*. Moreover, there seem to be still further difficulties associated with Hume's conception of a self, e.g. those raised by Garrett (1981, 1997), Waxman (1992), and to some degree, Roth (2000). But these are problems that Hume never addresses, much less solves in the *Treatise.*

10 Summary

In this chapter we saw that:

1. Although Hume discusses variations of 1.4.2's principle of individuation, the bulk of 1.4.6 consists of giving three separate accounts of the transition from the vulgar perspective to the philosophical perspective.
   (a) In the first, Hume summarizes the principle of individuation, vulgar perspective I, vulgar perspective II and the philosophical perspective (T 1.4.6.5–6; SBN 253–255).
   (b) In the second, Hume summarizes vulgar perspective I and the philosophical perspective (T 1.4.6.6–14; SBN 255–258).
   (c) In the third, Hume focuses, once again, on just vulgar perspective I and the philosophical perspective (T 1.4.6.15–20; SBN 259–262).
2. In all three cases, proper, or perfect identity is a "fiction," i.e. an imagined idea that is alleged to unify all our perceptions in virtue of being their source, i.e. their invariable and uninterrupted cause—where these causes seem to be more like final causes than efficient causes. As such, "common ends" and the "principle of union" applied to "commonwealths" seem to be abstract ideas that admit of perfect identity.
3. In the *Appendix*, Hume balks at the idea that the idea of personal identity is the product of *reasoning*. There are no *principles* that give rise to the idea of perfect identity. Thus the appeals to reason in accounts (1) a–c mentioned above

contradict his claim that "no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding." *This* is Hume's problem in 1.4.6.

4. As a result, Hume should *retract* just about all of 1.4.6, where he argues (three times) that coming up with an idea of perfect identity (particularly as it pertains to the self) involves a reasoned (philosophical) rejection of the vulgar perspective.
5. However, to some degree, Hume *could* have retreated to some of his earlier accounts of identity, particular the three accounts that we canvassed in part II of this book. For in all three of these accounts, Hume did not argue that we need to "reflect" (and so, appeal to principles) to come up with ideas of perfect identity. Rather, this is an imaginative process that reflexively occurs in light of the regularity (the constancy and coherence) that naturally obtains of the world. However, just how, exactly, this regularity would enable us to come up with an idea of the "self" remains a problem for Hume.

Summary of Part III

In Chap. 8, we saw that the vulgar position on objects is divided into two parts. We also saw how and why Hume distinguishes the vulgar position from his own position, i.e. the transcendental position explicated in Part II of this book. In Chap. 9, we saw how the philosophical position evolves from the vulgar perspective. We also saw that philosophical perfect identity bears a certain resemblance to Hume's concept of transcendental perfect identity. In both cases we imagine an invariable and uninterrupted (or continuous and distinct) cause of our interrupted perceptions (i.e. proto objects). However, in the case of philosophical perfect identity, we must appeal to reason, while we do *not* do so in the case of transcendental perfect identity. As result, there seems to be a rift in Hume's thought.

In Chap. 10, we saw Hume claim (three times) in 1.4.6 that we may only acquire an idea of the self after we work through a *reasoned* rejection of the vulgar perspective. Thus, in 1.4.6, Hume seems to endorse a philosophical conception of perfect identity, and thus, a concept of perfect identity that is obtained *via* reasoned reflection, contrary to transcendentally conceived of perfect identity. However, in the *Appendix* to the *Treatise*, Hume seems to be aware of this rift between his account of transcendentally conceived of perfect identity and "philosophically" conceived of perfect identity. But rather than attempting to eradicate this problem, he gives up, imploring the advice of "more mature" reflection.

Part IV
Justification

Introduction to Part IV

In Part I of this book I argued, in agreement with at least Garrett (1997), Owen (1999) and Millican (2002c), that Hume does not think that any causal relation may be justified by demonstrative or probable reasoning. However, in Part IV of this book, I show that some causal relations are, indeed, *justified*, as are some ideas of objects.

In particular, in Chap. 11, we see that in the three sections leading up to 1.4.6, Hume focuses on those imagined causes that come about as a result of an inevitable "philosophical" approach to the world. By taking a careful look at these sections, while bringing Hume's thoughts on abstract ideas to bear, we reveal Hume's thoughts on *justified* v. *unjustified* belief in objects. In the process of doing so, we highlight still another kind of belief at work in Book I of the *Treatise:* "fantastic belief." In brief, fantastic belief occurs when we attempt to imagine an object that admits of a perfect identity that does *not* indirectly represent a proto-object (i.e. an impression, or an idea that exactly represents an impression). Examples of fantastic belief include the Ancient's belief in "substance" and the Modern's belief in "primary qualities."

In Chap. 12, I begin by briefly summarizing all the major terms and distinctions presented throughout this book. We canvas elementary beliefs, causally-produced beliefs, philosophical beliefs, indirect beliefs, transcendental beliefs, vulgar beliefs and fantastic beliefs. We also review the distinction between natural probable "reasoning," philosophical probable reasoning, indirect probable reasoning, transcendental probable reasoning and demonstrative reasoning. Following, we review the distinctions between ordinary causation, indirect causation and transcendental causation. Next I remind the reader of Hume's two systems of reality and of the distinction between proto-objects and objects that are imagined to admit of a perfect identity.

With these terms and distinctions fresh in our minds, we revisit the notion of justification, where we bring the results of Chap. 11 to bear. First, I remind the reader that certain ideas of objects are "real," i.e. are justified, while others are not. This turns on the fact that ideas that are *properly* imagined to have a perfect identity

are abstract ideas. As such, they call to mind a set of resembling proto-objects, i.e. impressions, or memories of impressions. This means that a set of *elementary beliefs* is brought to mind, where, recall, elementary beliefs are "real." Ideas that are *not* properly imagined to admit of a perfect identity do not call to mind such a set, and so, are not grounded in "reality," and so, are not justified. They are "fantastic."

Second, in the context of a rejection of Husserl's attack on Humean inferences (which anticipates later attacks, e.g. Stove 1973), I show that Hume thought that certain causal inferences were, indeed, justified. This justification is a function of the constancy and coherence of our elementary beliefs, which, recall, belong to Hume's first system of "reality." In the course of doing so, we revisit Hume's distinction between the philosophical and natural relations of causality. To properly explain this distinction, I present a purely extensional definition of Hume's principle of uniformity (the principle that events that happen in the future will resemble those that happened in the past). Doing so shows how this principle may be justified merely in virtue of the regularity that obtains of our experience, i.e. of our elementary beliefs.

Next, to distinguish my position from the "skeptical realist" position, I show that at least two of the most influential skeptical-realist readings of Hume (i.e. Strawson 2007; Wright 2007) turn on a misunderstanding of Hume's distinction between "supposing" v. "conceiving." I show that according to Hume, "supposing" pertains to imagining *un*justified ideas of objects, while "conceiving" pertains to *justified* ideas (although, ironically, only in regard to those passages that Strawson and Wright cite to support their interpretation). Thus, we cannot say that according to Hume, we may justifiably "suppose" that there are mind-independent objects, nor may we justifiably "suppose" that there are mind-independent causal relations. Following, I show that Kail's (2007a) skeptical realist interpretation of Hume must also be distinguished from my position. In particular, I show that Kail cannot assume that because, according to Hume, we may justifiably conceive of mind-independent objects, that he is a realist in regard to objects. Moreover, I do not think that Kail's interpretation of the *Appendix* justifies his claim that Hume is a realist in regard to causality.

Finally, I show that even if Hume thinks that objects are imagined ideas, he is not Berkelian, at least in two fundamental respects. First, Hume is a skeptic, while Berkeley is not. Second, according to Hume, God does not regulate the way in which we conceive of objects. Rather, experience does, particularly, the "real" constancy and coherence of our elementary beliefs.

Chapter 11
Three Unjustified Instances of Imagined Causes: Substances, Primary Qualities and the Soul as an Immaterial Object

1 Introduction

In Part III of this book, we saw Hume claim that we may *only* imagine causes when we are in a "philosophical" state of mind. Yet in Part II, we saw that we must *always* imagine causes. Which will it be? In the *Appendix* to 1.4.6, we saw what looks to be a response to this question, where Hume seems to gesture towards the necessity of transcendentally conceived of objects, particularly in regard to the object, the "self." But in the three sections leading up to 1.4.6, Hume focuses on those imagined causes that come about as a result of an inevitable "philosophical" approach to the world. By taking a careful look as these sections, while bringing Hume's thoughts on abstract ideas to bear, we may examine Hume's thoughts on justified v. unjustified belief in objects in much more detail than we did in Chap. 3.

We proceed as follows: In Sect. 2, we examine Hume's critique of ancient philosophy. In the course of doing so, we review Hume's thoughts on abstract ideas. In Sect. 3, we examine his account of modern philosophy. And finally, in Sect. 4, we highlight certain aspects of his criticism of the idea of an immaterial soul.

2 Ancient Philosophy

Hume remarks at the outset of his discussion of ancient philosophy (1.4.3) that:

> 'Tis evident, that as the ideas of the several distinct *successive* qualities of objects are united together by a very close relation, the mind, in looking along the succession, must be carry'd from one part of it to another by an easy transition, and will no more perceive the change, than if it contemplated the same unchangeable object. This easy transition is the effect, or rather essence of relation; and as the imagination readily takes one idea for another, where their influence is similar; hence it proceeds, that any such succession of related qualities is readily consider'd as one continu'd object, existing without any variation. (T 1.4.3.3; SBN 220)

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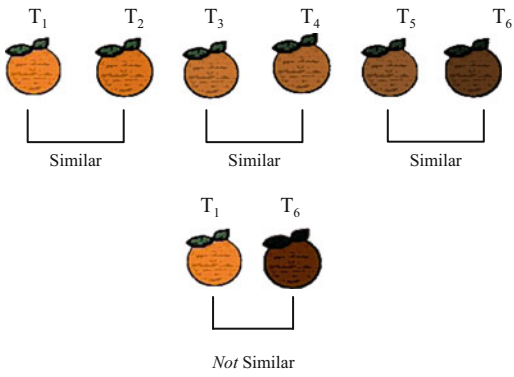

Fig. 11.1 Indiscernible v. discernible changes

As we saw in Chap. 8, the vulgar mind, while working under the somewhat seductive influence of the relation of resemblance,[1] tends to conflate a given set of resembling and successive proto-objects into, as Hume puts it here in 1.4.3, "one continu'd object, existing without variation." This is a natural move, but it is fundamentally flawed, resulting from our tendency to conflate the causes of two resembling dispositions with each other. Hume writes here: "The smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought, being alike in both cases, readily *deceives* the mind, and makes us ascribe an identity to the changeable succession of connected qualities" (T 1.4.3.3; SBN 220; emphasis added). At this juncture in 1.4.3, Hume refers to dispositions as "smooth and uninterrupted progress[es] of thought," which is almost identical to the way in which he referred to them in 1.4.2: "the same smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination" (T 1.4.2.34; SBN 204). Recall that this mistaken way of looking at the world constitutes vulgar perspective I.

But in 1.4.3, Hume does not proceed to discuss vulgar perspective II, and does not provide any explanation for his omission. Rather, he sketches what seems to be a philosophical rejection of vulgar position I. Hume explains that we eventually see that the members of the set of resembling proto-objects are, in fact, *not* identical to each other, particularly when any two given proto-objects are compared in terms of their place in distinct moments in "time" (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220). What initially appeared to be indiscernible changes over a successive period of time are not so indiscernible when two perceptions that are not *immediately* successive are compared. For instance, if the perceptions of a rotting orange at time T_1 and time T_2 are compared, the changes may seem minute, if not imperceptible. However, if the perceptions of a rotting orange at time T_1 and time T_6 are compared, the perceptions are likely to appear quite different. (see Fig. 11.1).

[1] Particularly: (1) resembling dispositions, i.e. R_d resemblance (2) resembling perceptions, i.e. R_p resemblance and (3) the resemblance that obtains between sets of resembling ideas and ideas that we think admit of perfect identity, i.e. R_e resemblance (recall Chap. 8, particularly, Fig. 8.1).

As a result of this problem, Hume explains that we are naturally compelled to imagine an "unknown" (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220) thing:

> When we gradually follow an object in its successive changes, the smooth progress of the thought makes us ascribe an identity to the succession; because 'tis by a similar act of the mind that we consider an unchangeable object. When we compare its situation after a considerable change the progress of the thought is broke; and consequently we are presented with the idea of diversity: In order to reconcile which contradictions the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a *substance, or original and first matter.* (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220)

Upon reflection, we realize that our perceptions are in fact "diverse," although we initially thought we were perceiving an "unchangeable object." In this passage, Hume explains (once again) that this happens as a result of resembling dispositions ("smooth progress[es] of thought"). "To reconcile" this "contradiction," we imagine something "unknown and invisible," which we imagine to "continue the same under all these variations;" we imagine what seems to be an invariable and uninterrupted object, which we call a "substance," or "original and first in matter."

With this in mind, recall Chap. 9, where we saw that is precisely what the philosophers do upon rejecting vulgar perspective II, or as Hume puts it in 1.4.2: "Thus, tho' we [philosophers] clearly perceive the dependence and interruption of our perceptions, we stop short in our career, and never upon that account reject the notion of an independent and continu'd existence" (T 1.4.2.51; SBN 214). In particular, recall that in 1.4.2, Hume characterizes the philosophical position as the "monstrous offspring" (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215) of the imagination and reflection. On the one hand (in both the case of vulgar perspective I and II) the imagination makes us think that our perceptions are "continued and uninterrupted" (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215) and on the other hand, reflection tells us that they are not. As a result, philosophers are compelled to an "opinion of a double existence" (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215), where perceptions are thought of as being interrupted and variable, and objects are imagined to be the uninterrupted and invariable *causes* of our perceptions; recall T 1.4.2.47; SBN 212. Also recall T 1.4.2.55; SBN 217, where Hume writes in no uncertain terms: "As we suppose our objects in general to resemble our perceptions, so we take it for granted, that every particular object resembles that perception, which it *causes*."

Given what we have seen above, it seems clear that in 1.4.3, Hume is simply giving a more specific account, i.e. the "antient" version, of the philosophical position. Granted, in the course of doing so, Hume does not specifically mention that the ancients, like philosophers in general, imagined that "substances" are the *causes* of our perceptions, but it seems very likely that this is what he had in mind. Whether or not there is textual evidence to support this reading may only be determined by proceeding further into Hume's account of the ancients.

2.1 Why Substances Could Not Be "Real"

Hume begins his more in-depth account of the ancient position with an explanation of how "we" (when, evidently, in an ancient frame of mind), attribute "simplicity" to a complex "object." The way in which we do so is very similar to the way in which we ascribe simplicity to a "commonwealth" (recall Chap. 10 and our explication of 1.4.6, particularly 1.4.6.22; SBN 263):

> We entertain a like notion with regard to the *simplicity* of substances, and from like causes. Suppose an object perfectly simply and indivisible to be presented, along with another object, whose *co-existent* parts are connected together by a strong relation, 'tis evident the actions of the mind, considering those two objects, are not very different. The imagination conceives the simple object at once, with facility, by a single effort of thought, without change or variation. The connexion of parts in the compound object has almost the same effect, and so unites the object within itself, that the fancy feels not the transition in passing from one part to another. (T 1.4.3.5; SBN 221)

Suppose that we have in mind both a "simple" and "indivisible" "object" and a complex "object." The parts of the complex object are "connected together by a strong relation." As a result of this "strong relation['s]" ability to connect the complex object's parts, the way in which the imagination comprehends the simple object is "not very different" from the way in which it comprehends the complex object. As a result, the complex object appears as simple to us as a genuinely simple object does.

"Hence," Hume immediately continues:

> the colour, taste, figure, solidty, and other qualities, combin'd in a peach or melon, are conceiv'd to form *one thing*; and that on account of their close relation, which makes them affect the thought in the same manner, as if perfectly compounded. But the mind rests not here. Whenever it views the object in another light, it finds that all these qualities are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other; which view of things being destructive of its primary and more natural notions, obliges the imagination to feign an *unknown something*, or *original substance and matter*, as a *principle of union or cohesion* among these qualities, and as what may give the compound object a title to be call'd one thing, notwithstanding its diversity and composition. (T 1.4.3.5; SBN 221; emphases added)

Instead of appealing to an orange (the example we have used throughout this book), Hume introduces a "peach or melon," explaining, once again, that the mind (*qua* the imagination) unifies all of its various properties into *one* thing, thanks to the "close relation" that binds these properties together. However, this is not all the mind does; upon recognizing that all of these properties, are in fact, "different," "distinguishable," and "separable from each other" (despite being bound together by a "close relation"), the imagination posits an "*unknown something*, or *original substance* and matter, [and as such, is] … *a principle of union or cohesion* among these qualities" (emphases added).

In fact, the "peripatetic[s]," i.e. the ancients, even went so far as to imagine that there is an "original" and "homogenous" matter that pervades and underlies *all* things. This is the unknown and *unperceivable* "source" of all things:

> The peripatetic philosophy asserts the original matter to be perfectly homogeneous in all bodies, and considers fire, water, earth, and air, as of the very same substance; on account

> of their gradual revolutions and changes into each other. At the same time it assigns to each of these species of objects a distinct *substantial form*, which it supposes to be the source of all those different qualities they possess, and to be a new foundation of simplicity and identity in each particular species. (T 1.4.3.6; SBN 221)

According to the ancients, all "objects," or "things" belong to the same, overarching "substance." Yet at the same time, each particular object is endowed with a "distinct substantial form," which is the "source," or what seems to be the *cause*, "of those different qualities they possess." This source, or cause, is also responsible for the "simplicity" and "identity" of each particular object.

Thus, at this juncture in the text, I think that it is reasonable to conclude that once again, Hume has an imagined cause in mind, although in this case—as was the case in regard to much of his discussion regarding personal identity (recall Chap. 10)—he may very well have had a final or formal cause in mind, i.e. generally and respectively speaking, a cause that is imagined to serve as the purpose or end of the object at hand, or as the "plan" or the "essence" of the object at hand.

Regardless if it is unclear exactly what kind of "cause" Hume had in mind here, it is certain that Hume thought that the ancients imagined, by definition, an unperceivable *universal* substance, which exists in addition to, and underlies unperceivable *particular* substances. According to the ancients, there is a universal unperceivable substance Δ, that also seems to be the cause, or is the "source" of *everything*, where each member of the set of "everything" would consist of unperceivable or "invisible" (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220) *particular* substances ($\alpha - \zeta$), simple or complex. In turn, every unperceivable particular substance ($\alpha - \zeta$) is understood to be the "source" of particular sets of sensible qualities. For example, a particular unperceivable complex substance might be our orange, or similarly, Hume's peach or melon, which is simultaneously alleged to be caused by an unperceivable universal substance. According to the ancients, we never have an impression of substances or substantial forms, nor do any of our impressions indirectly or directly represent substances or substantial forms.

Whether or not we recognize the universal or particular substance, depends on our point of view:

> All depends on our manner of viewing objects. When we look along the insensible changes of bodies, we suppose all of them to be of the same substance or essence. When we consider their sensible differences, we attribute to each of them a substantial and essential difference. And in order to indulge ourselves in both these ways of considering objects, we suppose all bodies to have at once a substance and a substantial form. (T 1.4.3.6; SBN 221–2)

As far as "insensible changes" go, all bodies belong to one universal substance; these insensible changes occur at a level of "universal substance," which, by definition, cannot be *sensed*. However, the ancients realized that despite this universal similarity between objects (thanks to an unperceivable universal substance), our senses do suggest that most objects *are* different from each other. For instance, a horse certainly appears to be distinct from, say, a wagon. But rather than attributing this difference to different ways that we apprehend objects through our *senses*, the ancients attributed *unperceivable* or "invisible" (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220) "substantial forms" to particular objects to account for their differences.

In the course of accounting for the ancient's notion of "accidental properties," Hume reiterates the fact that the ancients imagined that both substances and substantial forms have certain causal powers:

> For having never discover'd any of these sensible [accidental] qualities, where, for the reasons above-mentioned, we did not likewise fancy a substance to exist; the same habit, which makes us infer a connexion betwixt cause and effect, makes us here infer a dependence of every quality on the unknown substance. The custom of imagining a dependence has the same effect as the custom of observing it wou'd have. This conceit, however, is no more reasonable than any of the foregoing. Every quality being a distinct thing from another, may be conceiv'd to exist apart, and may exist apart, not only from every other quality, but from that unintelligible chimera of a substance. (T 1.4.3.7; SBN 222)

"Sensible," or "accidental" (T 1.4.3.7; SBN 222) properties cannot exist apart from a substantial form, nor it seems, from a substance. We imagine this "dependence" on substantial forms and substances similar to how we reflexively, i.e. "habit[ually]" "infer" a "connexion" between cause and effect. However, in the former case, we do not "observe" any kind of constant conjunction, while in the latter case we do. Regardless, similar to how we habitually infer causes and effects based on custom, in the case of substances, we imagine that every sensible quality is an *effect* of a given substantial form, and thus, ultimately is an effect of a substance. Concomitantly, we view substantial forms and substances as *causes*. However, what kind of cause Hume had in mind here is not entirely clear; we might conclude that he was thinking of final or formal causes, since, generally speaking, this is what the ancients had in mind in regard to substances and substantial forms. However, the specifics of this matter are not relevant to our discussion.

Regardless of this ambiguity, Hume is clear that the ancient's position is plagued with difficulties:

> But these philosophers carry their fictions still farther in their sentiments concerning *occult qualities,* and both suppose a substance supporting, which they do not understand, and an accident supported, of which they have as imperfect an idea. *The whole system, therefore, is entirely incomprehensible, and yet is deriv'd from principles as natural as any of these above-explained.* (T 1.4.3.8; SBN 222; emphases added)

Not only did the ancients, upon rejecting the vulgar position, imagine substances and substantial forms as the "sources," or causes of, respectively, substantial forms and sets of sensible properties, they also imagined that a substance "support[ed]," i.e. caused, certain "occult qualities," and "accident[al]" properties. However, the ancients had only an "imperfect … idea" of such accidental qualities. Given what we have seen in Part I of this book regarding representation, this seems to mean that they had no impressions of such things, nor did they have impressions of "occult qualities;" this is precisely why they are "occult."

We may now summarize what makes the ancient position particularly "incomprehensible" to Hume: (i) There *are no* "substances" or "substantial forms" (they are merely imagined causes) and (ii) Thus, there *are no* actual relations between "them" and any property (accidental or essential) that are alleged to "depend" on them.

(iii) Moreover, although the entire population (or just the generic philosophers—depending on which part of the *Treatise* we focus on) *also* imagine causes and mistakenly take them to be real, mind-independent things, *they seem to imagine causes based on a set of resembling proto-objects* (recall Part II of this book and Chap. 9). These proto-objects either are sense impressions, or exactly represent sense impressions and so, these proto-objects belong to Hume's first system of reality (recall Part I of this book). In fact we are now in a position in this book to say that it is in this very fundamental and simple respect that we seem to be, in part, *justified* in imagined these ideas; we *should* believe in ideas that are based on experience (i.e. proto-objects) and we should *not* believe in those that are not.

In particular, upon experiencing a set of resembling proto-objects, we imagine a cause of that set that admits of perfect identity. As a result, our sense impressions are not only alleged to be *caused* by the imagined object at hand, but, are *representative* of the alleged object at hand. For instance, the idea of a particular imagined cause, e.g. my childhood house, would be comprised of an idea that represents an impression that I have actually had of this house. However, because this idea is imagined to be invariable and uninterrupted (i.e. it is thought to admit of a perfect identity) it does not *exactly* represent any impression that I have had of my childhood house (recall Part II of this book).

But does Hume ever *say* that a justified imagined cause is actually an idea that indirectly represents one of the resembling perceptions it is alleged to cause? No—but he certainly infers this when he characterizes ancient substances and substantial forms as "incomprehensible," and as smacking of the "occult," while he does *not* do so when discussing any of the instances of imagined causes canvassed in Part II of this book, nor when discussing the generic philosophical position at the end of 1.4.2 (although he certainly does attack all philosophical positions on objects in 1.4.2, see Sect. 2.2 below and recall Chap. 9). Clearly then, there are *some* cases of imagining causes that smack of the "occult," and others that *don't*. And so far, the only difference is that the ancients' breed of imagined causes (substances and substantial forms) are, by definition, never sensed (and nor are some of the accidental properties they are alleged to cause). Thus, substances and substantial forms could not possibly represent anything we have sensed—indirectly or not. Moreover, if we, recall Hume's theory of abstract ideas—in a bit more detail than we have in previous chapters—we see a striking similarity between it and my outline of how we may, it seems, justifiably imagine ideas of particular objects.

2.1.1 Abstract Ideas and Representation

Hume discusses abstract ideas very early on in the *Treatise* (1.1.7). Here, in staunch agreement with Berkeley, he claims that "all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them" (T 1.1.7.1; SBN 17). A general idea is actually a *particular* idea with a "certain term" attached.

As explained in Part II of this book, coming up with an abstract idea proceeds as follows: Upon experiencing a set of resembling ideas of "objects" (say, of cats), we generally call them by the same name, regardless of any small variations (T 1.1.7.7; SBN 20). Afterwards, whenever we hear the name "cat," we call to mind *one* of the particular ideas of the set which "revives the idea of one of these objects, and makes the imagination conceive it with all its particular circumstances and properties" (T 1.1.7.7; SBN 20). This means that a particular idea not only represents a particular impression, but the entire revival set (c.f. Garrett 1997). But it does not *exactly* represent the entire revival set since "the word not being able to revive the idea of all these individuals, only touches the soul, if I may be allow'd so to speak, and revives that custom, which we have acquir'd by surveying them" (T 1.1.7.7; SBN 20). Thus, our idea of a cat (in general) brings to mind a great deal of what we have experienced upon perceiving cats, but not everything. Regardless, when we think of a cat, in general, we bring to mind the idea of a *particular* cat that we *have* had an impression of, but now augmented with an imagined compilation of other cat perceptions.

I suggest that Hume has a very similar process in mind when it comes to *justifiably* imagining an invariable and uninterrupted cause of a set of resembling proto-objects. We bring to mind a *particular* idea of a particular object, say Hercules the cat, as being invariable and uninterrupted—it is this "thing" that allegedly causes our set of resembling Hercules proto-objects that, in virtue of being conceived of as the "effects" of the object Hercules, are brought to mind. But we *can't* do this when it comes to substances. We can't call to mind *any* perception of a substance and in turn imagine it to be the invariable and uninterrupted cause of all our substance impressions. According to the ancients, we, by definition, *never* have substance impressions. And so, there is no substance "revival set." But according to Hume, all ideas are necessarily derivative of impressions. All of our ideas must, ultimately, either indirectly represent an impression or, must exactly represent an impression (recall Chap. 1). Thus, the ancient's version of imagined causes is "incomprehensible." It is, as some commentators have put it, without *content* (e.g. Strawson 2007). Or as Hume would put it, substances are not *real* because they are not based on experience (recall Chap. 3). And so, belief in them seems to be *unjustified.*[2]

2.2 Vulgar Philosophy v. False Philosophy v. True Philosophy

However, paradoxically, this is not to say that Hume openly endorses, or even celebrates the generic philosophical position (where objects seem to indirectly

[2] In Chap. 3 of this book, when discussing Hume's two systems of reality and indirect causation, we discussed cases where we could, conceivably, have ideas of objects that do not represent (indirectly or not) impressions. However, in such cases we believe in an object Δ based on *other* people's experiences (e.g. a traveler's experience of Rome).

represent impressions). Rather, at the end of his discussion of the ancients, Hume speaks rather disparagingly of *all* philosophical systems that posit mind-independent causes. In their stead, we should pay credence to what he calls "true philosophy," which is closer to the vulgar position, but at the same time, is a manifestation of what he calls "moderate skepticism."

But this should not come as much of a surprise. Recall that at the end of 1.4.2, while discussing the philosophical position, Hume writes:

> upon [reason's] least negligence or inattention, [philosophers] can easily return to our vulgar and natural notions. Accordingly we find, that philosopher's neglect not this advantage; but immediately upon leaving their closets, mingle with the rest of mankind in those exploded opinions, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue identically and uninterruptedly the same in all their interrupted appearances. (T 1.4.2.53; SBN 216)

Thanks to a certain laziness, the philosophers often return to the vulgar position, where they identify perceptions with objects. However, recall that at the end of 1.4.2, Hume does not suggest that philosophers *should* return to the vulgar position; it's just that they naturally do. Meanwhile, as we know, he characterizes the philosophical position as the "monstrous offspring" (T 1.4.2.52; SBN 215) of the imagination and reason. It is a fundamentally mistaken position—a "false philosophy" (T 1.4.3.9; SBN 222)—because the philosophers think that by way of a reasoned rejection of the vulgar, they can apprehend mind-independent objects. Similarly in 1.4.3, Hume writes:

> But these philosophers, instead of drawing a just inference from this observation, and concluding, that we have no idea of *power or agency*, separate from the mind, and belonging to *causes*; I say, instead of drawing this conclusion, they frequently search for the qualities, in which this agency consists, and are dispeas'd with every system, which their reason suggests to them, in order to explain it. They have sufficient force of genius to free them from the vulgar error, that there is a natural and perceivable connexion betwixt the several sensible qualities and actions of matter; but not sufficient to keep them from every seeking for this connexion in matter, or causes. (T 1.4.3.9; SBN 223; emphases added)

Philosophers have enough acumen to reject the vulgar position, but they are not capable of realizing that we have no mind-independent idea of an object; particularly, we have no idea of an object with causal powers, or "agency." Rather, they desperately work through a number of "systems" (e.g. the ancient system) in an attempt to effectively explain this mysterious "agency." However, if the philosophers' reasoning had been "just" or "true," they would have, at least in part, *retreated* to the vulgar position: "Had they fallen upon the just conclusion, they wou'd have return'd back to the situation of the vulgar, and wou'd have regarded all these disquisitions with indolence and indifference" (T 1.4.3.9: SBN 223). For as explained above, the philosophers are in pursuit of what could not possibly exist; they are looking for mind-independent objects using their minds; they "seek for it in a place, where 'tis *impossible* it can ever exist" (emphasis added). At least while pretending to be engaged in the "indolent" vulgar position, one is not engaged in such false pretenses. This is what Hume characterizes as "moderate skepticism," which he discusses in more depth in 1.4.7, the conclusion of Book I.

However, although Hume suggests that we should embrace the "moderate skepticism" of "true philosophy," which is a reflective return to the unreflective vulgar perspective, or the "common" "way of thinking" (T 1.4.3.9: SBN 223, also see T 1.4.7; SBN 263-74), this does not belie the fact that, on the one hand, Hume claims that we "always" (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74) transcendentally imagine causes, where these causes indirectly represent impressions, i.e. T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73–4, T 1.4.2.15–25; SBN 194–9, and T 1.4.2.27–9; SBN 200–1. Nor does it belie the fact that on the other hand, and paradoxically, we *only* imagine causes when, using reason, we reject the vulgar position. *Nor* does it belie the fact that although the philosophical position is fraught with difficulties (it is "impossible" (T 1.4.3.9; SBN 223)), some philosophical positions, do nevertheless, seem to be better than others, i.e. those that posit objects that indirectly represent impressions seem to be more comprehensible, and so, seem to be more justified than those that do not. Hume's implicit (and convoluted) message seems to be: if we are going to make a mistake, we should make the least egregious one possible.[3]

3 Modern Philosophy

According to Hume, the modern notion of an object, replete with "primary" qualities, is just as perverted as the ancient's "substance." Like substances, "primary qualities" may not, in principle, be represented by sense impressions. However, Hume does not explain how the modern position is derivative of the vulgar perspective (as he did with the ancients). However, because the modern position on objects is a product of reflection, it too is an instance of a "philosophical" perspective, and so, is not a transcendental perspective.

[3] C.f Kail (2007a, p. 66) and Hume's letter to Elliot: "I cou'd wish that Cleanthes' Argument [for theism] could be so analys'd, as to render'd quite formal and regular. The Propensity of the Mind towards it, unless that propensity were as strong & universal as that to believe in our Senses & Experience, will still, I am afraid, be esteem'd a suspicious Foundation. 'Tis here I wish for your Assistance. We must endeavour to prove that this Propensity is somewhat different from our Inclination to find our own Figures in the Clouds, our Face in the Moon, our Passions & Sentiments even in inanimate Matter. Such an Inclination may, & ought to be controul'd & can never be a legitimate Ground of Assent." (pp. 26–8; QTD Kail 2007a, p. 66). Here, Hume emphasizes the "legitimacy" of "Senses & Experience," to be contrasted with our "inclination" to illegitimately anthropomorphize our experience into religious beliefs. Although an extensive discussion of Hume's understanding of religious beliefs takes us far beyond the scope of this book, Hume's endorsement of the "legitimacy" of the senses is clearly highlighted in this passage. We might assume that such "legitimacy" also applies to those philosophical systems whose objects *do* indirectly represent impressions.

3.1 Two Kinds of Imaginative Power: Justified and Unjustified

Hume begins his salvo against the Moderns by making a distinction between principles and ideas that, in order to function properly, humans *necessarily* imagine, versus those principles and ideas that humans *tend* to imagine, but need not:

> But here it may be objected, that the imagination, according to my own confession, being the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy, I am unjust in blaming antient philosophers for making use of that faculty, and allowing themselves to be entirely guided by it in their reasonings. In order to justify myself, I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are *permanent, irresistible, and universal*; such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes: And the principles, which are *changeable, weak and irregular*; such as those I have just now taken notice of. (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225; emphases added)

Imagining the relation of cause and effect is *necessary* to human life. However, imagining certain other principles that are "changeable, weak and irregular," are *not* necessary. As a result, Hume's critique of the ancients' misuse of the imagination (in terms of imagining substances), is *not* to be understood as a critique of the fact that we necessarily imagine causal relationships.

Hume elaborates:

> The former [namely, the "permanent, irresistible and universal" principles of the imagination] are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin. The latter [namely, the "changeable, weak and irregular" principles of the imagination] are neither unavoidable to mankind, nor necessary, or so much as useful in the conduct of life; but on the contrary are observ'd only to take place in weak minds, and being opposite to the other principles of custom and reasoning, may easily be subverted by a due contrast and opposition. (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225)

Those principles that are built on the "principles of custom and reasoning" are necessarily "permanent and irresistible" while those that are *not* based on custom and reasoning are the products of "weak minds." Any idea that is not a product of custom, and so, is not based on *sense impressions*, is unjustified. It is the product of a "weak mind" (c.f. Loeb 2002; Kail 2007a).

To clarify this distinction between *necessarily* imagined principles v. somewhat *arbitrarily* imagined principles, Hume presents an example. Although there is no *actual* causal relation between "articulate voices in the dark" and concluding that someone is nearby, one is *justified* in coming to such a conclusion; one "reasons *justly* and naturally" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225; emphasis added). Why? Because the person in question is *accustomed* to this being the case, thanks to constantly conjoined sense impressions, e.g. "if there are voices, then people are around who they belong to" (what Hume refers to here as the "usual conjunction" experienced by the individual (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225)). So, when a present impression, such as a voice in the dark, plugs into this conditioned conjecture (causal hypothesis), his belief that people must be nearby is naturally triggered. This is an example of what I characterized earlier in this book as *causally-produced* belief, where such beliefs comprise a

portion of Hume's second system of reality (recall Chaps. 2 and 3). Thus, in this case, believing that people are nearby is a belief in *reality.*

However, if upon hearing a voice in the dark, one concludes that a *ghost* is lurking nearby, he is suffering from a certain kind of malady, or *abnormality* (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 226). These are the psychological illnesses that are present in what Hume referred to earlier as "weak minds" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225). Most of us do not "naturally" believe in the causal relation of "if there are voices in the dark, then *ghosts* lurk nearby." The majority of us have never *seen, heard, taste, felt* or *smelled* ghosts, much less experienced them constantly conjoined with voices. As a result, it is only "natural" to imagine ghosts in the respect that certain egregious illnesses, such as cancer, naturally occur (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 226). Thus, people who believe in ghosts have lost touch with *reality*, as Hume defines it (recall Chap. 3).

Having established this distinction between the two kinds of imagined principles, Hume explains that the ancients' "substance" is imagined in much the same way that our somewhat paranoid individual imagines ghosts. In both cases it is neither absolutely necessary nor healthy to imagine such things. Nor is either case representative of a universal way of looking at the world. In fact, in both cases the imagination is abused; appealed to in order to create principles that are "changeable, weak and irregular" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225). These weak principles include the principle that there are *substances*, and the principle that *ghosts exist*. These are *unjustified* imagined principles in the respect that they are not rooted in actual experiences. Hume's implication is clear; we should *not* believe in them.

4 Modern Philosophy: Continued

Although it might appear to some that modern philosophers appeal to the "permanent and the universal" (and so, the justified principles of the imagination), this is not, in fact, the case. Rather, Hume explains, modern philosophy is nothing more than another instance of philosophical "pretension" (T 1.4.4.2; SBN 226). In particular, the modern distinction between primary and secondary qualities must be called into question.

Hume explains that according to the moderns, the sensible qualities of an object (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell), vary depending on the condition of the viewer and/or on the context in which the object is apprehended (T 1.4.4.3; SBN 226). Thus, according to the moderns, secondary qualities have no "real" (T 1.4.4.5; SBN 227) existence apart from being "impressions in the mind" (T 1.4.4.3; SBN 226). Having eliminated sensible, or "secondary" qualities as "real," the moderns conclude that objects *are* however, "real" in the respect that they are composed of "primary qualities:" "Upon the removal of sounds, colours, heat, cold, and other sensible qualities, from the rank of continu'd independent existences, we [i.e. the moderns], are reduc'd to merely what are called primary qualities, as the only *real* ones"

(T 1.4.4.5; SBN 227). These primary qualities consist of "extension and solidity, with their different mixtures and modifications; figure, motion, gravity and cohesion" (T 1.4.4.5; SBN 227).[4]

But, Hume complains, primary qualities should be viewed in the same skeptical light as secondary qualities, in particular, they do not have a "real" *perfect identity*. He writes:

> I assert, that instead of explaining the operations of external objects by its means, we utterly annihilate all these objects, and reduce ourselves to the opinions of the most extravagant skepticism concerning them. If colours, sounds, tastes and smells be merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive is possest of a *real, continu'd, and independent existence*; not even motion, extension and solidity, which are the primary qualities chiefly insisted on. (T 1.4.4.6; SBN 228; emphases added)

Hume's argument here may be understood as follows, where some of the following premises are rather implicit: (1) All ideas are based on impressions (recall Chap. 1). (2) Thus, whatever we conceive of must be based on impressions. (3) Impressions, i.e. "secondary qualities," are not "real" according to the moderns, because they do not exist independently of the mind. (4) However, given (1) and (2) above, we know that ideas do not exist independently of the mind either. (4) Thus, "nothing we conceive of," i.e. no idea, "is possest of a real, continu'd, and independent existence," including ideas of primary qualities; ideas of primary qualities could not exist independently of the mind. Thus they could not entertain an existence that continues when we are not thinking of them. Ideas, as we have seen throughout this

[4] Hume's use of the word 'real' here means mind-independent. This is not to be confused with Hume's use of the word 'real' that means: is an impression, or represents an impression or pertains to certain causal judgements (recall Chap. 3 and T 1.3.9.3–6; SBN 107–10). Moreover, Hume's analysis here seems to be directed at Locke, who makes a rather well-known distinction between primary and secondary qualities. According to Locke, primary qualities consist of "*Solidity, Extension, Figure* and *Mobility*" (ECHU, II. viii section 9), while secondary qualities consist of sensations. Locke explains that there are qualities in an object that are "nothing … but Powers [which] produce various Sensations in us by their *primary qualities*." (ECHU, II. viii section 9). Primary qualities are mind independent, and so, according to Locke, are "real" in the respect that Hume uses this word here. Meanwhile, Locke claims, "What I have said concerning *Colours* and *Smells,* may be understood also of *Tastes* and *Sounds*, *and other the like sensible Qualities*; which whatever reality we, by mistake, attribute to them, are in truth nothing in the Objects themselves, but Powers to produce various Sensations in us, and *depend on those primary Qualities*, viz. Bulk, Figure, Texture, and Motion of parts; as I have said" (ECHU, II. viii section 14). Sensible, or secondary qualities, are not, according to Locke, "real" in the respect that they are mind-independent, which squares with Hume's account. However, Locke claims that secondary qualities are caused by "powers" that reside in primary qualities. Hume does not explicitly discuss these powers here, and he only implicitly gestures towards the alleged causal power that primary qualities have. Moreover, Hume limits his list of primary qualities to just solidity and extension, which are modifiable by "figure, motion, gravity and cohesion," while Locke claims that figure and mobility, along with texture, are actually primary qualities, not modifications of primary qualities.

book, do not actually admit of a perfect identity; they are not *actually* mind-independent (i.e. exist "distinctly" from our thoughts) and continuous, although we often imagine them as such.

Hume presents two more arguments to substantiate his case that primary qualities do not exist independently of the mind. In the first, he argues that the notions of "solidity" and "extension" (i.e. the primary qualities) are circularly defined, thus, they are not "just" (T 1.4.4.10; SBN 229) ideas. In the second, he suggests that some (particularly, those who might entertain a more "popular" version of the modern approach to objects) think that the sensation of feeling gives us an idea of solidity. However, this approach is mistaken.

4.1 The Circular Definition

The concepts of motion, solidity and extension are, Hume argues, circularly dependent on each other. The "real" perfect identity of each one depends on the "real" perfect identity of the others. As a result, the allegedly "real" perfect identity of all of these qualities is not independently established. And so, these ideas are—not surprisingly—merely *imagined* to have a real perfect identity (i.e. they are imagined to be continuous and distinct), but not in a "just" (T 1.4.4.10; SBN 229) manner.

Hume begins his argument by writing: "Now what is our idea of the moving body, without which motion is incomprehensible? It must resolve itself into the idea of extension or of solidity; and consequently the reality of motion depends upon that of these other qualities" (T 1.4.4.7; SBN 228). In order for there to be motion, Hume contends, there must be some *thing* that moves. But what is a "thing?" It must be, Hume claims, some thing that admits of either extension or solidity. As a result, the notion of "motion," and concomitantly, its "reality," is dependent on the notions of extension and solidity, and concomitantly, their respective states of "reality." However, Hume continues, the notion of extension is incomprehensible without appealing to the notion of solidity;[5] "The reality, therefore, of our idea of extension depends on the reality of that of solidity, nor can the former be just while the latter is chimerical" (T 1.4.4.8; SBN 228). As a result, if it turns out that solidity is not "real," i.e. is not really mind-independent (i.e. does not have a real perfect identity), then extension could not be counted as "real" or really mind-independent either.

Consequently, Hume must proceed to evaluate the "reality" of solidity, where he claims that the notion of solidity is dependent on the notion of a "body" (T 1.4.4.9;

[5] Hume explains that an idea of extension must be either thought of as "coloured or solid" (T 1.4.4.8; SBN 228). However, he immediately goes on to claim that "colour is excluded from any real existence" (T 1.4.4.8; SBN 228), i.e. there is no possibility that colors admit of perfect identities. Thus, he focuses on just solidity.

SBN 228–229), particularly, at least two bodies, such that these bodies may be distinguished from each other. Bodies may be ascertained as "solid" relative to their respective inabilities to "penetrate each other" (T 1.4.4.9; SBN 228–9). Thus, the question is, what, then, is a "body," i.e., this "thing" that the notion (and "reality" of) solidity depends on; "Now what idea do we have of these bodies"? (T 1.4.4.9; SBN 228–9)

The notion of motion is dependent on the notion of extension, and the notion of extension is dependent on the notion of solidity, yet the notion of solidity is dependent on the notion of "body." However, lest the moderns be circular, the notion of a body cannot be defined in terms of motion, extension or solidity; "the idea of motion depends on that of extension, and the idea of extension on that of solidity. 'Tis impossible, therefore that the idea of solidity can depend on either of them. For that wou'd be to run in a circle" (T 1.4.4.9; SBN 229). But the moderns have no other recourse, and thus, they have no "satisfactory idea of solidity" (T 1.4.4.9; SBN 229). And thus, Hume concludes after giving a second, more concise version of this argument, that: "upon the whole [we] must conclude, that after the exclusion of colours, sounds, heat and cold from the rank of external existences, there remains nothing, which can afford us a *just* and consistent idea of body" (T 1.4.4.10; SBN 229; emphasis added). If we exclude all the secondary qualities from our conception of "external existences"—i.e. what Hume seems to be mean by objects that imagine to have a perfect identity—then we do not have a just idea of a body. Rather, we are forced to appeal to a circular definition of extended, or solid bodies, which is not "satisfactory" (T 1.4.4.9; SBN 229).

4.2 A Focus on Solidity

Hume begins his second argument by reminding us that earlier in Book I (1.2.4), he argued that our idea of solidity is "nothing but an impossibility of annihilation" (T 1.4.4.11; SBN 229). Thus, he tells us here, we must have some idea "of that object, whose annihilation we suppose impossible" (T 1.4.4.11; SBN 230). He continues: "An impossibility of being annihilated cannot exist, and can never be conceived to exist by itself; but necessarily requires some *object* or *real existence* to which it may belong" (T 1.4.4.11; SBN 230; emphases added). Something cannot be said to be impossible to annihilate—i.e. cannot be said to be solid, unless it exists independently of the mind, i.e. has a "real" perfect identity. The question is, how do we "form an idea of this [mind independent] object or existence without having recourse to the secondary and sensible qualities"? (T 1.4.4.11; SBN 230) For according to the moderns, "The impressions, which enter by sight and hearing, the smell and taste, are affirm'd by modern philosophy to be without resembling objects; and consequently the idea of solidity, which is suppos'd to be *real*, can never be deriv'd from any of these senses" (1.4.4.12; SBN 230; emphasis added). The moderns claim that the four senses of sight, hearing, smell, and taste do not have a real perfect identity,

and thus, the idea of a mind-independent object could not be derived from them.[6] Thus, according to the moderns: "There remains, therefore, the *feeling* as the only sense, that can convey the impression, which is original to the idea of solidity; and we naturally imagine, that we feel the solidity of bodies, and need but touch any object in order to perceive this quality" (T 1.4.4.12; SBN 230; emphasis added). According to this way of looking at things, the sensation of touching an object gives us the idea of solidity.

But, Hume argues, the sensation of feeling, or touch, could not give us the idea of solidity. He gives two arguments to show why this is the case. First, he claims, the *sensation* of solidity could not be the same thing as the idea of solidity. Consider a man with palsy in one hand. To that hand, a table would *not* feel solid, but to his other hand, it would. Thus, in the latter case, a sensation would convey the idea that something is solid and in the former case it would not, although in both cases, the table is alleged to be solid. Thus, because our sensations of touch are not always "resembling" (T 1.4.4.13; SBN 230), the idea that they convey to us would not always be resembling either.

Second, Hume claims, the impressions that we get from feeling are simple (except "when consider'd with regard to their extension" (T 1.4.4.14; SBN 231)). Because of this simplicity, we could not have a touch-impression of solidity. This the case because there are instances where we have a notion of solidity *without* feeling it, e.g. observing two rocks pressing against each other (T 1.4.4.14; SBN 231). This means that when we feel solidity, something *extra* would have to admit of that impression such that we can subtract the actual feeling and still notice solidity in cases where we are not feeling solidity (as in the case of two rocks pressing against each other). But because touch (except in the case of extension) is simple, we can't do this; nothing can be added or subtracted from this impression. Moreover, he explains, "solidity necessarily supposes two bodies, along with contiguity and impulse; which being a compound object, can never be represented by a simple impression" (T 1.4.4.14; SBN 231), And finally, the idea of solidity is constant, while the impressions of touch and feeling "change every moment upon us" (T 1.4.4.14; SBN 231), and thus, "the latter are not representations of the former" (T 1.4.4.14; SBN 231).

As a result, Hume is led to conclude in regard to the modern distinction between primary and secondary qualities:

> Thus there is a direct and total opposition betwixt our reason and our senses; or more properly speaking, betwixt those conclusions we form from cause and effect, and those that persuade us of the continu'd and independent existence of body. When we reason from cause and effect, we conclude, that neither colour, sound, taste nor smell have a continu'd and independent existence. When we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such an existence. (T 1.4.4.15; SBN 231)

[6] It's odd that Hume initially characterizes the moderns as ruling out *all* secondary senses as admitting of a "real" mind-independent existence, and then here, he claims that they think that feeling is an exception. However, he does add that "this method is more popular than philosophical" (T 1.4.4.12; SBN 230). Thus, he seems to be addressing more of a quasi-vulgar/modern position here.

Reason tells us that none of the senses have a mind-independent existence, because, by definition, they are mind-dependent. However, if we try to imagine a mind-independent object (i.e. an object that we think admits of a perfect identity), that is devoid of any of these properties (e.g. objects that are composed of just primary qualities), then our idea is incoherent; we have no "just" idea of a body that is not, somehow, grounded in experience. In fact, "when we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such an existence."

The question is, do the moderns, like other philosophers, think that primary qualities are some kind of causes? Hume does not explicitly indicate that they do, however, it is reasonable for us to conclude that in some respect, he must have thought that this is the case. As we just saw, according to the moderns, mind-independent bodies, i.e. objects, are solid and extended things. In turn, these things, i.e. these objects, *cause* us to experience secondary qualities, e.g. we see, touch, taste, feel and hear them; in fact, this is just what Locke had in mind in regard to his distinction between primary and secondary qualities (ECHU, II. viii section 14, c.f. fn 4 of this chapter). In this respect, the moderns' idea of an object *qua* primary qualities is another incomprehensible imagined cause, consistent with his general account of philosophers, who, taken *en masse*, imagine objects that have a certain "agency" (T 1.4.3.9; SBN 223), i.e. causal power.

5 The Immateriality of the Soul

In 1.4.5, Hume turns to a discussion of the mind, determining that it is neither a "material" nor "immaterial substance." Rather, it too must, on Hume's account, be an imagined cause. Moreover, like the ancients' substance and the moderns' object *qua* primary qualities, it is an *unjustified* imagined cause. In fact, according to Hume, theories concerning a "material" or "immaterial soul" are quite incoherent. Also, as was the case with the modern position, Hume does not explain how ideas concerning material and immaterial substances come about as a result of rejecting the vulgar perspective. However, ideas of material and immaterial substances are the products of reasoned reflection, and so, may be classified as philosophical conceptions of objects, as opposed to being transcendental conceptions of objects.

Hume begins by tackling the notion of substance in general,[7] regardless of whether it is alleged to be material or immaterial, demanding that: "those philosophers, who pretend that they have an idea of the substance of our minds, to point out

[7] Recall that Hume discussed the notion of "substance" at length in regard to the ancients. However, throughout that discussion, Hume had the notion of an "external" substance in mind. Here, he is focusing on an allegedly "internal" substance, that is, a substance that allegedly comprises the "mind," and as such, would not typically be included in the category of external bodies (although in the case of Spinoza, "mind substance" is alleged to comprise the entire universe; a notion that Hume takes issue with here as well).

the **impression** that produces it, and tell distinctly after what manner that impression operates, and from what object it is derived" (T 1.4.5.4; SBN 233; emphasis added). In particular, "Is it an impression of sensation or of reflection? Is it pleasant, or painful, or indifferent? Does it attend us at all times, or does it only return at intervals? If at intervals, at what times principally does it return, and by what causes is it produc'd?" (T 1.4.5.4; SBN 233) But perhaps these questions are too difficult to answer, Hume remarks. To avoid them, one might claim instead that "substance is *something which may exist by itself*" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233). But on this account, the only "substance" that Hume can come up with that satisfies *this* definition is "all our perceptions" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233). To show this, he reminds us of two principles (recall Chaps. 3 and 1 respectively): (1) "Whatever is clearly conceiv'd may exist; and whatever is clearly conceiv'd after any manner, may exist after the same manner" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233), i.e. what is generally referred to as the Conceivability Criterion of Possibility (e.g. Garrett 1997). And (2) "everything, which is different, is distinguishable, and everything which is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233), i.e. the Separability Principle. With these two principles in mind, Hume concludes that since: "All perceptions are different from each other, and everything else in the universe" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233), it follows that "[all perceptions] are also distinct and separable, and may be consider'd as separately existent, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything else to support their existence" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233). In other words, perceptions are different. Thus according to the second principle given above, they are not only separable, but, according to the first principle given above, they must *exist* as separable as well. Thus, Hume immediately concludes, "[perceptions] are, therefore, substances, as far as this definition explains a substance" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233), where, recall, "this definition" is as follows: "substance is something which may exist by itself" (T 1.4.5.5; SBN 233).

Having concluded that we "have no perfect idea of anything but of a perception" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234), Hume concludes that we ought to jettison the question of whether the mind/soul is an immaterial or material substance, simply because he concludes that (A) A perception is the *only* thing that "may exist by itself." But (B) "A substance is *entirely different* from a perception" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234; emphases added). And thus, since by definition, a substance is supposed to be "something which may exist by itself," it follows from (A) and (B) that (C): "we have therefore, no idea of a substance" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234). Nor, Hume claims, is the notion of "inhesion" any more coherent. For perceptions, according to Hume, need not inhere in anything; they lead a completely independent existence; "We have therefore, no idea of inhesion" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234). As a result, Hume immediately concludes: "What possibility then, of answering that question, *whether perceptions inhere in a material or immaterial substance,* when we do not so much as understand the meaning of the question?" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234)

In short, substances are not *real*; they are incoherent, unjustified instances of imagined causes because they cannot, by definition, represent an impression, indirectly or not. They lack content. Again, the implication is clear; we should *not* believe in them.

6 Fantastic Belief

At this point, we may identify a *seventh* kind of belief in Book I of the *Treatise*: fantastic belief.[8] In the case of fantastic belief, we imagine a cause of certain phenomena that does not only *not* exactly represent an impression or impressions, it does not *indirectly* do so either. As a result, we may also refer to such beliefs as being content-less; where the "content" that is lacking is the representation (indirect or not) of an impression or impressions. Examples of fantastic belief include belief in the idea of a substance or substances, belief in primary qualities and belief in an immaterial soul (c.f. Falkenstein 1997b, p. 39).

7 Summary: Justified v. Unjustified Imagined Causes

In this chapter we saw that:

1. The ancient's notion of a substance that admits of a perfect identity is "unintelligible" (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220). For although the ancients are imagining causes in reaction to the vulgar (specifically, vulgar perspective I), these causes do not represent anything we actually have impressions of, indirectly or not.
2. This unintelligibility, this lack of content, equates to being unjustified, or equivalently, to not being "real" in virtue of the fact that no impression is represented (recall Chap. 3).[9] Just as we may not intelligibly come up with a "general" idea, that does not represent a *particular* impression, we may not intelligibly come up with an imagined cause (i.e. the idea of a *particular* object) that does not represent a particular impression.
3. Hume reiterates this point when he distinguishes between principles of the imagination that are "weak" v. those that are "necessary." The former are *not* based on experience and the latter *are* based on experience; thus the former do not apply to "reality," i.e. impressions and ideas that represent impressions, while the latter do.
4. Not only are the modern notions of motion, solidity and extension circularly defined, the notion of solidity cannot be imagined based on experience. Thus, any attempt to imagine objects *qua* "primary" qualities as the continuous and distinct causes of "secondary" qualities is incoherent, is unjustified.
5. The idea of an immaterial soul is incoherent; it lacks content. This is the case because, by definition, this idea cannot, indirectly or exactly, represent an impression. Thus it is yet another instance of an unjustified imagined cause.

[8] Where the other six that we have identified are: elementary belief, causally-produced belief, philosophical belief, indirect belief, transcendental belief and vulgar belief.

[9] It is important that we do not confuse this sense of the word 'real' with sense of 'real' that means "mind-independent." Recall that Hume uses the latter sense of the word 'real' in the course of discussing the modern distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

6. We may refer to beliefs in unjustified imagined causes (e.g. beliefs in substances, primary qualities and immaterial souls) as *fantastic* beliefs; these are beliefs that lack content.
7. In sum, because ancient substances, modern primary qualities, certain "weak" principles of the imagination, and material and immaterial substances do not, by definition, represent impressions (indirectly or not), they are not, according to Hume, "real" (recall Chap. 3). Thus, they could not possibly admit of a "positive epistemic evaluation" (Garrett 1997, p. 228). Rather, the implication is, we should *not* believe in such things. In this very simple respect, we may characterize belief in such things as *not* being justified. Meanwhile, other imagined causes, such as say, wagons, oranges, and horses *are* grounded in empirical experience, and so, are "real" (recall Chap. 3). Thus, contrary to Garrett (1997), they do admit of a positive epistemic evaluation; the implication is that we *should* believe in such things. In this respect, our belief in such things *is* justified.
8. However, this conclusion is admittedly at odds with Hume's overt rejection of all philosophical conceptions of objects, on the grounds that all such objects are imagined to be mind-independent, which, in principle, is impossible. However, this does not belie the fact that Hume clearly seems to think that some imagined causes (mistakes) are better than others.

Chapter 12
Conclusion

1 Introduction

This chapter is organized as follows. In Sect. 2, I summarize the terms and concepts we have covered. In Sect. 3, we revisit the notion of justification, in regard to objects, causal relations and the principle of uniformity. In Sect. 4, we discuss the viability of skeptical realism. Finally, in Sect. 5, we discuss Hume's skepticism in light of his conception of objects, where we briefly touch on Berkelian idealism.

2 Summary of Terms and Concepts

2.1 Seven Kinds of Belief

We have covered seven kinds of belief in this book: *elementary* beliefs, *causally-produced* beliefs, *philosophical* beliefs, *indirect* beliefs, *transcendental* beliefs, *vulgar* beliefs and *fantastic* beliefs.[1] We may thumbnail them as follows.

Elementary Belief: The vivacity that accompanies our impressions and our memories of our impressions (where those memories are ideas, not impressions; recall Chap. 1). This vivacity occurs immediately upon experiencing impressions and/or having memories of them. We may refer to this as elementary vivacity. This belief is *not* a function of, or in any way derivative of, our ability to think in a causal manner. Rather, it *enables* us to think in a causal manner. Generally speaking, this kind of belief is overlooked in the scholarship (recall Chap. 2).

[1] This is not an exhaustive list of the different kinds of belief at work in Book I of the *Treatise* (see Falkenstein 1997b, p. 40 for more kinds of belief). However, for our purposes, we need not discuss them all.

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Causally-Produced Belief: This kind of belief is a product of a "present impression" p which triggers us to "bestow vivacity" on the imagined idea q'_{n+1} that resembles q_{1-n}, where we have been naturally conditioned to causally associate q_{1-n} with p_{1-n}. We may refer to this bestowed vivacity as causally-produced vivacity. This kind of belief *is* derivative of our ability to think in a natural causal manner (recall Chap. 2).

Philosophical Belief: This kind of belief manifests itself as a belief in causal principles. It is based on the *reflective* comparison of two ideas, where, thanks to natural, associative conditioning, one idea is conceived of as a cause, and the other idea conceived of as an effect. Such reflective comparison consists of philosophical probable *reasoning*. This is opposed to being a merely reflexive tendency to think the effect q'_{n+1} when we are presented with the impression p_{1-n} (recall Chap. 2).

Indirect Belief: As explained in Chap. 3, indirect belief occurs as follows:

(a) We are conditioned (through the constant conjunction of impressions) to think in terms of a causal inference, e.g. "If I come across a trustworthy source that tells me that α exists, then α exists."
(b) Through the process reviewed above pertaining to philosophical belief, we come to believe the causal principle "If I come across a trustworthy source that tells me that α exists, then α exists."
(c) Our belief in (b) is *justified* by checking it against general rules (which are outlined in detail in 1.3.15).
(d) We *reflexively* conclude that some thing that we have never had an impression of, e.g. Rome, exists when presented with a trustworthy source claiming that Rome exists, thanks to (a).
(e) We *justify* our belief that Rome exists thanks to (b). That is, we *reflectively* compare the idea of our trustworthy source telling us that α exists, with the idea that α actually exists. This squares with Hume's claim that the second system of reality is comprised of causal "*judgment[s]*" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 107–8; emphasis added), i.e. not reflexive associations. Accordingly, in the course of making these judgments, we "proceed … to the consideration of … [the] ideas" (T 1.3.9.3; SBN 107–8) that comprise the causal relation at hand.

Transcendental Belief: This is belief that obtains of an idea that is imagined to admit of perfect identity. In this case, the idea indirectly represents an impression (a proto-object) that belongs to a set of similar perceptions (proto-objects). This occurs much in the same way that a particular idea brings to mind a revival set of similar perceptions in the case of an abstract, i.e. general idea. However, in the case of transcendental belief, we (a) imagine that this idea is the cause of the set of similar proto-objects and (b) we imagine that this idea is invariable and uninterrupted. Thus, it does not *exactly* represent any proto-object in the revival set (recall Chaps. 6 and 7); in both case (a) and (b), we imagine properties that are not based on experience, particularly, impressions. Rather, aspects of our experience presuppose our ability to imagine such properties (cf. Price 1940; Kemp Smith 1941; Wilbanks 1968; Waxman 1994). Moreover, this process pertains to *particular* objects, e.g. a particular orange, as opposed to abstract, or general ideas. We must also be reminded that

although we may imagine that an object is invariable and uninterrupted, this does not mean, as explained throughout this book, that our perception is actually invariable and uninterrupted. According to Hume, there are no invariable and uninterrupted perceptions, *contra*, at least, Baxter 2008 (recall, in particular, Chaps. 5, 8, and 10).

Vulgar Belief: As we saw in Chap. 8, vulgar belief in objects is a function of the relation of resemblance, where this relation "bestows a vivacity" (T 1.4.2.42; SBN 209) on the vulgar idea of an unperceived perception. As such, this kind of belief seems to pertain to just vulgar perspective II; recall Chap. 8.

Fantastic Belief: This kind of belief may occur in a number of different ways (where we only cover one of them here; see Falkenstein (1997b, p. 39) for more on fantastic beliefs). We are concerned with cases where we imagine a cause of certain phenomena, where that cause does not, in any way (indirectly or not) represent an impression. Examples include belief in substances, primary qualities and an immaterial soul (recall Chap. 11). This belief is not to be confused with indirect belief, where our belief in an object Δ is a function of other people's experience of the proto-objects that they believe are caused by Δ. In cases of fantastic belief, *no one*, in principle, may experience proto-objects that Δ is alleged to cause.

2.2 Five Kinds of Reasoning

We have covered five kinds of reasoning processes. Although we inadvertently cover these processes in the course of summarizing the different kinds of belief and causality discussed in this book, it will be helpful to explicitly list them here:

1. *Natural Probable "Reasoning*." In this case, an impression, or a memory of an impression (and so, an idea) reflexively leads us to think of an idea. Although Hume occasionally refers to this as a "reasoning" process, it is nothing more than a reflexive propensity that, as such, does not involve any kind of reflection (recall Chap. 2, Sect. 2.1 above and see Sect. 2.3 below).
2. *Philosophical Probable Reasoning*. In this case we reflectively compare two ideas, where we think of one as a "cause" and the other as an "effect." (recall Chap. 2, Sect. 2.1 above, and see Sect. 2.3 below).
3. *Indirect Probable Reasoning*. In this case, upon being presented with an claim that q′ exists by a trustworthy source, we eventually reflectively conclude that q′ exists. However, we have never had an impression q, nor any impression that resembles q (recall Chap. 3 and see Sect. 2.3 below).
4. *Transcendental Probable Reasoning*. In this case, upon being presented with a set of resembling perceptions, we imagine an idea that neither we, nor anyone else, has had an impression of (recall Chaps. 2, 5 and see Sect. 2.3 below).
5. *Demonstrative and Intuitive Reasoning* (recall Chap. 2). In the case of demonstrative reasoning, we compare two ideas, and move from one idea to another by way of a reflective comparing process. We cannot imagine a demonstrative claim to be

otherwise without creating a contradiction. In the case of intuitive reasoning, we do not reflect, but instead, immediately intuit the give relation between the ideas at hand. We cannot imagine an intuitive claim to be otherwise without creating a contradiction.

2.3 Three Kinds of Causation

We have covered three kinds of causation, which may be canvassed as follows:

Ordinary Causation: There are two kinds of ordinary causation, natural causation and philosophical causation, where the latter is a function of the former (and each respectively comprises the natural and philosophical reasoning process summarized above). In particular, our ability to think in terms of the natural relation of causality is the result of a conditioning process; i.e. our tendency to think the idea q'_{n+1} upon being presented with the impression p or a memory of p is merely a reflex. However, the philosophical relation of causality emerges as a result of reflecting about natural relations of causality, where we have already been conditioned to think of p_{1-n} as a cause and q_{1-n} as an effect (recall Chap. 2).

Indirect Causation: In the case of indirect causation, we may, upon being presented with an impression p or a memory of p, reflexively think an idea q′, where q′ does *not* necessarily resemble any impression q_{1-n} that we have experienced (e.g. Hume's idea of Rome). Ultimately we reflectively justify our belief in the existence of q′ by appealing to certain principles. This is opposed to ordinary causation, where the idea q'_{n+1} *does* resemble a set of impressions q'_{1-n} that we have actually experienced (recall Chap. 3). This kind of causation corresponds to indirect probable reasoning.

Transcendental Causation: In 1.4.2, Hume mentions a "*kind* of reasoning from causation" (T 1.4.2; SBN 195; emphasis added). In Chap. 6, we saw that this kind of reasoning from causation must be understood as a transcendental causal inference. As such, it is "considerably different" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197) from ordinary causation. In particular, it arises from our experience only in an "indirect and oblique" manner (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197), whereas ordinary causation is a direct function of experience, of custom.

Very basically, this phenomenon proceeds as follows: We experience constant and coherent impressions. We may refer to this as Level 1 constancy and coherence. In virtue of this constancy and coherence, we "suppose" (T 1.4.2.22; SBN 198), i.e. we *imagine*, that there are objects that have a continued and distinct existence (where, recall, the properties of continuity and distinctness are roughly interchangeable with the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability; recall the summary of Part II). Moreover, these objects are imagined to be the cause of our perceptions. In virtue of imagining ideas of such objects, our impressions take on an even "greater regularity" (T 1.4.2.21; SBN 197), i.e. they seem even more constant and coherent. We may refer to this as Level 2 constancy and coherence.

We may characterize this kind of causation as "transcendental" because it is *not* based on "custom," at least not directly. Hume also discusses this kind of causation (although a bit more indirectly) on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74 where he mentions "secret causes," and in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system, where he explicates his principle of individuation.

Finally, transcendental causation must be distinguished from indirect causation. In cases of indirect causation, we rely on the experience that others have had and our belief in certain philosophical principles. We do no such thing in cases of transcendental causation (recall Chaps. 5, 6, and 7). In fact, indirect causation *presupposes* transcendental causation. For in order to think of any object, regardless if it resembles impressions we have actually had or not, we must first have an idea of what an object is (recall Chaps. 5, 6, and 7). Transcendental causation comprises transcendental probable reasoning.

2.4 Two Kinds of Reality

We also saw that Hume operates with two systems of reality in Book I of the *Treatise*, which may be thumbnailed as follows:

System of Reality 1: Memories of sense impressions (which are ideas; recall Chap. 1) and any "immediate impressions" that we may be experiencing at the moment. As a result, this reality is comprised of what I call elementary beliefs (recall Chap. 3).

System of Reality 2: In addition to conceiving of and believing in objects that do resemble impressions we have had (by way of ordinary and transcendental causation), we may conceive of and believe in objects that do not necessarily resemble sense impressions *we* have had (but other people have had). This occurs by way of our ability to think in terms of indirect causation (recall Chap. 3).

2.5 Two Kinds of Objects

Proto-Objects: These are either ideas that exactly represent impressions (i.e. are memories), or, are impressions. Thus, they are not mind-independent. Although they may resemble each other, they may not be conceived of as either distinct and continuous or as invariable and uninterrupted. Thus, they are not only *not* mind-independent, they may not be *conceived* of as being mind-independent (recall Chap. 4). However, by definition, they belong to Hume's first system of reality; proto-objects *are* elementary beliefs. As such, they are *real* (recall Chap. 4). Thus the following terms are interchangeable: (a) impressions and/or ideas that exactly represent impressions (b) elementary beliefs and (c) proto-objects.

Objects That Admit of Perfect Identity: These are ideas that are *imagined* to represent the properties of invariability and uninterruptedness (and so, continuity and distinctness). As a result, they are *not* mind independent; they are not actually invariable and uninterrupted, nor continuous or distinct. Hume gives three and a "half" accounts of how we *always* imagine objects that admit of perfect identity, where in each case, we must (a) imagine such objects by way of transcendental causation and (b) our idea of an object is similar to an abstract idea (although in the former case we imagine ideas of particular objects, where these ideas do not exactly represent any member of the revival set).

I. *Three (and a half) Accounts of Transcendental Perfect Identity*:

1. Hume gives his first account of perfect identity in 1.3.2, where he discusses "secret causes" (recall Chap. 5).
2. His second account occurs in the course of his discussion of the two levels of *constancy and coherence* that concern our notions of a properly-conceived of object (T 1.4.2.15–24; SBN 194–199; recall Chap. 6). This includes a discussion of the two properties that he thinks necessarily and always hold of properly-conceived of objects, namely, *continuity* and *distinctness*.
3. His third account occurs in part 1 of 1.4.2's four-part system, where he presents his "principium individuationis," i.e. *the principle of identity* (T 1.4.2.25–30; SBN 199–201) (recall Chap. 7).

3.5. His final, rather convoluted attempt occurs in the course of his discussion of personal identity, in 1.4.6. This is "half" a case precisely because of its convoluted nature (recall Chap. 10).

In conflict with these 3.5 accounts of transcendentally conceived-of objects, Hume presents two and a "half" cases where it seems we may *only* imagine objects that admit of perfect identity *via* a philosophical rejection to the vulgar. However, philosophers are never aware that they are only *imagining* objects that admit of perfect identity. Rather, they mistakenly think that they are using reason to conclude that mind-independent objects actually exist.

II. *Two (and a half) Accounts of Philosophical Perfect Identity*

1. Hume's first account occurs at the end of 1.4.2, where he discusses the philosopher's rejection of the vulgar perspective (recall Chap. 9).
2. Hume's second account occurs in the course of discussing three instances of aberrant philosophical thought (recall Chap. 11):

   (a) The Ancients (T 1.4.3.1–11; SBN 219–225)
   (b) The Moderns (T 1.4.4.1–15; SBN 225–231)
   (c) The Notion of an Immaterial Soul (T 1.4.5.1–35; SBN 232–251)

2.5. Hume's final account occurs in the course of discussing perfect identity 1.4.6. However, he attacks himself for doing as much in the Appendix of the *Treatise*, and so, we may view this as "half" an account (recall Chap. 10).

III. *Imperfect Identity*
Both the transcendental and the philosophical account of perfect identity must be distinguished from the *vulgar* perspective on objects, which may be divided into two perspectives, or phases of thought (recall Chap. 8); both of these perspectives represent cases of "imperfect identity" (T 1.4.6.9; SBN 256):

(a) Vulgar Perspective I (T 1.4.2.31–36; SBN 201–205)
(b) Vulgar Perspective II (T 1.4.2.37–40; SBN 205–208)

3 Justification

With the main concepts and terms developed in this book at our fingertips, we may now review our conclusions regarding justification. In Chap. 11, we saw why Hume seems to think that some objects that we imagine to admit of perfect identity are *justified*, while others are not. However, it will be helpful to review why this is the case here, in light of the summary of terms and concepts given above. Following, in light of this review, we may see why Hume seems to think that certain *causal relations* are justified.

3.1 Objects

We saw in Chaps. 2 and 3 that Hume clearly thinks that some perceptions are more "real" than others, regardless of the fact that no perception, by definition, is mind-independent. This is precisely why he presents us with his two systems of reality; *real* perceptions are opposed to perceptions that are the "*mere offspring*" of the imagination (cf. Loeb 2002). In particular, our elementary beliefs, i.e. our impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions, constitute the *first* system of "reality." We *should* believe in them because they are real. In this respect, elementary beliefs are *justified* beliefs.

However, elementary beliefs do not admit of a perfect identity. Rather, as explained above, they constitute beliefs in *proto*-objects. For impressions, and any idea that exactly represents them cannot represent the properties of continuity or distinctness, i.e. the properties of uninterruptedness or invariability (recall Chap. 4).

Meanwhile, ideas of objects that we imagine to admit of perfect identity inhabit the *second* system of reality. For as explained in Part II of this book, *in order* for us to think that causal relations (particularly, indirect and philosophical causal relations; see Sect. 3.2 below) obtains between particular objects that admit of perfect identities, we must *imagine* ideas of those particular objects by way of transcendental causation. Moreover, these imagined objects are *real* in the respect that they indirectly represent elementary beliefs, i.e. proto objects, or, in still other words, impressions or ideas that exactly represent impressions. Thus, we *should* believe in such imagined causes, and so, our belief in them seem to be justified; in regard to them, one "reasons justly and naturally" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225).

In the course of discussing the ancients, the moderns, and the idea of a soul, Hume claims that objects that are imagined to have a perfect identity that do *not* indirectly represent a member of a set of resembling impressions or ideas that exactly represent impressions (i.e. proto-objects, i.e. elementary beliefs) are indications of "weak minds," and smack of psychological "malady[s]" (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225–6). This kind of belief is what we—somewhat less pejoratively than Hume—have characterized as fantastic belief.

This means that Hume did, to some degree, operate in the spirit of the Scottish naturalists, but in a qualified sense. As pointed out in Chap. 6 of this book, Mounce (1999) writes, reminiscent of Kemp Smith:

> The naturalism which appears in the profounder aspects of Hume's work is the same as the Scottish naturalists … It holds that the source of our knowledge lies not in our experience or reasoning but in our relations to the world which for the most part pass beyond our knowledge. Thus in all our experience or reasoning we presuppose our belief in causality or in an independent world. (p. 8)

As we have seen, Hume's *second* system of reality presupposes our ability to think in terms of transcendental causation, and concomitantly, ideas of objects that we imagine to admit of a perfect identity. Thus, Hume's *second* system of reality seems to square with the Scottish naturalist's general position, as Mounce portrays it—"in all our experience" we do "presuppose belief in causality or in an independent world."

However, the *first* system of reality does not square with this picture. For this is the system where we have impressions and memories of them, and nothing more. While engaged in this psychological system, we merely experience the Level 1 constancy and coherence that naturally obtains of our perceptions, i.e. of proto-objects. We are, at this level, witness only to a certain *regularity* that obtains of our perceptions. Thus, this experience does *not* presuppose belief in causation (of any kind) nor an ability to imagine mind-independent objects.[2] Such a presupposition only occurs in the *second* system of reality, as explained above. Thus, contrary to at least Mounce's and Kemp Smith's reading of Hume, it is not the case that "in *all* our experience or reasoning we presuppose our belief in causality or in an independent world" (emphasis added), but only in *some* of our experience, i.e. in the second system of reality.

3.2 Causality[3]

A survey of the secondary literature shows that there are four fundamental ways to deal with Hume's "negative" account of induction (recall Chap. 2), where the question is: Is a Humean causal inference *justified*? (1) Some argue that Hume must have

[2] However, our ability to think in a natural, reflexive causal manner (where we do not believe in this relation; recall Chap. 2) *does* seem possible; see Sect. 3.2.1 of this chapter for more detail.

[3] The bulk of this section was presented at the *Upstate New York Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy*, at Cornell University in 2008. I am grateful for the remarks given to me by my commentator, Alex Klein, and the audience.

thought that inductive inferences are, in fact, *worthless* (e.g. Stove (1973)). In brief, Stove argues that Hume was a closet "deductivist," where Hume *meant* to show that any method that does not rely on *a priori* principles is worthless. (2) Others have alleged that Hume only meant to show that we cannot use *demonstrative* reason to justify inductive inferences, but we can, apparently, justify them with probable reason (e.g. Beauchamp and Rosenberg 1981; Arnold 1983; Broughton 1983; Baier 1991). (3) Still others argue that Hume's notion of justification (in regard to beliefs in general) should be understood in two stages in Book I. In the first, Hume *does* lay out a normative theory of justification. In the second (particularly in 1.4.7), he retracts it (e.g. Passmore 1952/1968, pp. 54–64, pp. 99–101); Loeb 2002). (4) Finally, there are those who claim (including Strawson 1952) that no "justification" is needed. In fact, asking for it amounts to a misplaced demand for epistemic explanation. All that Hume has recourse to is descriptive *psychological explanation* (e.g. Garrett 1997 and Owen 1999).

As noted throughout this book, I agree with Garrett and Owen that it was Hume's intention to present an account of how, from a psychological point of view, we come to think in terms of causes and effects. And so, it seems that I should agree that Hume is only offering a *descriptive* account of causality, where questions of justification do not arise. For, it seems, what causal relations we *should* or should *not* believe in belong to a normative epistemology, not a descriptive psychological account.

But this is not quite accurate. Perhaps the best way to show that this is the case is through a systematic rebuttal of one the one most outspoken critics of the psychological account: Husserl (whose critique of Hume is largely overlooked). By using Husserl as a foil, I will show that Hume thought that there are some kinds of causal relations that we *should* believe in, and some that we should *not* believe in. Thus, I will show that according to Hume, some kinds of causal relations are, it seems, justified, while others are not. Nevertheless, Hume must still be viewed as giving a psychological account of the phenomenon of thinking in terms of causes and effects, albeit a *normative* psychological account.

3.2.1 A Reply to Husserl

Husserl was deeply troubled by empiricism, regardless if it is "extreme" (i.e. claims that there are *no a priori* truths), or "moderate" like Hume's (i.e. claims that there are *some a priori* truths, like demonstrative truths). He writes in the *Logical Investigations*:

> it goes no better with Hume's moderate empiricism, which, despite bouts of psychologistic confusion, still tries to keep for the pure spheres of logic and mathematics, an *a priori* justification, and only surrenders the factual sciences to experience. Such an epistemological standpoint can likewise be shown up as untenable, even *absurd*, for a reason similar to that brought by us against extreme empiricism. Mediate judgments of fact—we may compress the sense of Hume's theory into this phrase—never permit of *rational justification*, *only of psychological explanation*. (LI, p. 117; first emphasis added)

Husserl recognized that Hume could not and did not justify his method (his empiricism) with an appeal to reason (probable or demonstrable). Rather, all Hume

could do was give a "psychological explanation" of "mediate judgments of fact," i.e. inductive inferences. But, Husserl argues, justification *is* needed. According to Husserl, because Hume's method is not grounded by any certain *principles*, it does not admit of "rational [i.e. *a priori*] justification." As a result, any conclusions that Hume's psychological method yields are not only uncertain, they are, Husserl thought, downright *irrational*.[4] Worse still, a psychological explanation is circular, and so, is patently *absurd*:

> One need then but ask how this applies to the rational justification of the psychological judgments (about custom, association of ideas, etc.) on which the theory itself rests, and the factual arguments that it itself employs. One then at once sees the self-evident conflict between the sense of the proposition that the theory seeks to prove, and the sense of the deductions that it employs to prove it. The psychological premises of the theory are themselves mediate judgments of fact, and therefore *lack all rational justification* in the sense of the thesis to be established. In other words, the correctness of the theory presupposes the irrationality of its premises, the correctness of the premises the irrationality of the theory (or thesis). (LI, p. 117; emphasis added)

Here's the first part of the problem, which comprises the first part of the circle: Empiricists must think that their method is *correct*. But in what respect are the premises of the method (i.e. empirical observations) "correct?" How are they justified? Subjective insight? Superstition? Religious epiphanies? Demonstrative reason? Probable reason? The empiricist *can't* claim that any of these sources of information justify her premises because doing so would respectively presuppose the preeminent correctness of subjective insight, superstition, religion and reason (demonstrative and probable), *not* empiricism. But this means that, by definition, the empiricist's premises are not only *not* subjective insights, *not* superstitious, and *not* religious, they are *not rational*; they are irrational "mediate judgments of fact."

More precisely, according to Hume, neither demonstrative nor probable reason can justify the principle of uniformity,[5] upon which all probable reasoning (and so, all "mediate judgments of fact") rest. Recall our discussion in Chap. 2, where we saw that this is the case because A.) the principle of uniformity may be imagined otherwise, without generating a contradiction, and so is not demonstrative (T 1.3.6.5; SBN 89), and B.) The principle of uniformity could not be justified *by* probable reasoning because it is needed to justify probable reasoning (T 1.3.6.6–7; SBN 89–90).[6] Thus, because all causal inferences are not justified by reason, it seems that

[4] In some respects, this anticipates Stove's (1973) analysis of Hume. However, Stove argues that Hume was a closet "deductivist," where Hume *meant* to show that any method that does not rely on *a priori* principles is worthless (see Millican 1995) for a comprehensive discussion (and dismissal) of Stove's position). Husserl however, thought that Hume had no such noble intentions. Rather, Husserl thought that the Scotsman was just horribly mistaken, mired in a rather absurd methodological circle (see above).

[5] Recall that Hume defines this principle in the *Treatise* as follows: "*instances of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same*" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89).

[6] And so, we must reject Beauchamp and Rosenberg (1981), Arnold (1983), Broughton (1983) and Baier (1991). Cf. Garrett's rejection (1997).

they are irrational. And so, as Husserl puts it, "the correctness of the theory presupposes the irrationality of its premises."

Now we may examine the second half of the circle incurred by a psychological explanation of inductive claims—as Husserl sees it. It seems obvious that certain observational claims are *correct*, e.g. "If I jump out in front of a moving bus, I'll get hurt." But this claim is only correct if we assume that repetitive empirical observation (testing and retesting, i.e. *custom*) justifies it. But repetitive empirical observation (custom), is, by definition *not* (according to Husserl *and* Hume (recall Chap. 2)) *reasoning*, and so, it is *irrational*. Thus: "The correctness of the premises presupposes the irrationality of the theory." And so we have, Husserl thought, a vicious, absurd, methodological circle. Psychological explanation just won't cut it, and so, Husserl would have had grave concerns over (at least) Garrett's recent claim that "Hume's famous argument [concerning induction] itself requires no apology, it is the first and still … one of the most persuasive arguments for a true and fundamental thesis in cognitive psychology" (1997, p. 95).

However, Husserl claims in at least the *Logical Investigations* (1900–1901), "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" (1911) and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1934–37), that the obvious shortcomings of Hume's method paved the way for phenomenology. Hume's work, like no empiricist before him, clearly demonstrated the *absurdity* of the scientific method (cf. Rocknak 2001): "Plainly, therefore, the demand for a fundamental justification of all mediate knowledge can only have a sense if we can both see and know certain ultimate principles on which all proof in the last instance rests" (LI p.116). Meanwhile, Husserl's *phenomenology*—i.e., the special science of a "pure consciousness"—was grounded in the method of the "epoché" (see at least I1, lines 59–60), where this method is allegedly *presupposed* by empirical inquiry, and so, breaks the circularity of naturalistic methodology. As a result, Husserl tells us, primarily because of its manifest absurdity, "Hume's Treatise…represent[s] a great historical event" (C, p. 89; cf. Rocknak 2001).

A Closer Look at the Circle

But is Hume really trapped in this absurd methodological circle? If one or both of the following can be shown, then he is *not*: (1) "The correctness of [Hume's] theory [*does not*] presuppose…the irrationality of its premises," (2) "The correctness of the premises [*does not*] presuppose the irrationality of the theory." If (1) and/or (2) is correct, Hume's psychological method is not necessarily circular, and so, is not necessarily absurd. And thus, it seems, scholars like Strawson, Garrett and Owen do not commit Hume to an untenable position—at least in regard to characterizing Hume's project as a psychological explanation.

The Theory: Is It Irrational?

As we just saw, according to Husserl, for Hume's theory (the empirical method) to be "correct," inductive claims would have to be correct. However, because inductive

claims cannot be justified by reason (probable or demonstrative), they are, seemingly by definition, "irrational." It is in this respect, Husserl alleges, that Hume's theory presupposes the "irrationality" of the premises. This leads to two questions: (1) Can we really say that the inductive inference is an irrational inference? (2) Regardless, does Hume actually think that the ("irrational") correctness of inductive inferences *justifies* the empirical method? Makes it "correct"?

We tackle (1) in the next section, so for now, let's focus on (2), where the answer is: No. We need only recall at the Introduction to Hume's *Treatise* to see that this is the case (recall Chap. 1 of this book). Here, Hume explicitly tells us that "metaphysical reasoning" (T Intro. 3; SBN xiv) only leads to conflict and confusion; it gets us nowhere:

> Principles taken upon trust, consequences lamely deduced from them, want of coherence in the parts, and of evidence in the whole, these are everywhere to be met with in the systems of the most eminent philosophers and seem to have drawn disgrace upon philosophy itself." (T Intro. 1; SBN xiii)

"Pure" *a priori*, "rational" reasoning, i.e. what Hume seems to mean by "metaphysical" reasoning, effectively amounts to a *reductio* (metaphysical reasoning lacks "coherence"). Along these lines, Hume writes: "There is nothing which is not the subject of [metaphysical] debate, and which men of learning are not of contrary opinions" (T Intro. 2; SBN xiv). Therefore, we should reject the metaphysical method, i.e. the method where we traditionally appeal to pure *a priori* reasoning.

What method then, should we use? Hume tells us in the Introduction to the *Treatise* that "all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to *human nature*; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another" (T Intro. 4; SBN xv; emphasis added). In fact, he continues: "Even *Mathematics*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Natural Religion*, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since they lie under the cognixance of men, and judged by their powers and faculties" (T Intro. 4; SBN xv). All of our sciences fall under *our* purview, the *human* purview. Thus, in anticipation of Kant's famous "Copernican Revolution," Hume claims that we must study *that purview*. The object of our method then, must be "human understanding," where we "explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings" (T Intro. 4; SBN xv).

Having established the object of his inquiry (human understanding), Hume announces his method, which we discussed in Chap. 1: "And as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on *experience and observation*" (T Intro. 7; SBN xvi; emphasis added). Hume's method must be comprised of experience and observation because we *can't* use metaphysical reasoning, i.e. "pure," *a priori* reasoning to divine the "essence" of human understanding; this method only leads to conflict and embarrassment. The only alternative is the method of observation: "it seems evident, that the *essence* of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact *experiments*" (T Intro. 8; SBN xvii; emphasis added). "And," he immediately continues, "the *observation* of those

particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations" (T Intro. 8; SBN xvii; emphasis added).

Thus, squaring with what we saw to be the case in Chap. 1, we may conclude that Hume's aversion to the confusion and conflict bred by metaphysics is the motivation behind Hume's method; *it* makes his method, his theory, "correct" by default. Thus, Husserl was simply wrong to say that "The correctness of [Hume's] theory presupposes the irrationality of its premises." Rather, the "correctness" of Hume's theory presupposes the irrationality of metaphysical inquiry.

But to be fair, this is not *quite* the problem that Husserl has with Hume's method. For Hume explicitly tells us that his method will never be "correct" in the respect that the principles it employs are universal, nor are they *a priori*. Rather, Hume writes in the Introduction to the *Treatise*:

> tho' we must endeavor to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the upmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical. (T Intro. 8; SBN xvii)

In fact, as we saw in Chap. 1, all of Hume's "principles," to use Hume's own term, are *not* "demonstrative," and so, they can be imagined otherwise without generating a contradiction. But does the fact that a Humean principle is *a posteriori* make it *irrational*?

The Premises: Are They Irrational?

We have been led back to question 1. raised above, i.e. can we really say that the inductive inference is an "irrational" inference? Concomitantly, can we really say that all Humean *principles* are irrational, and thus, his entire *method* is irrational?

As explained earlier, inductive inferences ("mediate judgments of fact") are not, according to Hume, justified by demonstrative and probable reasoning. Thus, on the face of it, it does seem that they are *not* reasonable. As noted above, to many, even those who do not think that causal inferences are worthless and absurd, this means that they are not only in some sense, *ir*rational (e.g. Millican 1995, pp. 204–212, 2002b),[7] but, because they are not justified by reason (demonstrative or probable),

[7] More precisely: Millican argues that inductive claims are not justified by a "faculty of intellectual insight" (1995, p. 211), but the "true foundation of such extrapolation is revealed to be animal instinct" (1995, p. 212). This means, Millican argues, that there *is* a looser sense in which inductive claims may be classified as "reasonable:" "Hume thus has the basis for a naturalistic account of his intermediate sense of 'reason,' according to which beliefs and methods of inference count as reasonable if they have a place within a consistent and systematic rule-governed framework dominated by the 'permanent, irresistible, and universal' principles of the imagination, and in particular by the fundamental belief in inductive uniformity and the rules by which to judge of causes and effects which systematize its implications. Hume can, of course, give no independent justification for this fundamental belief itself" (1995, p. 207). Similarly, Millican writes in 2002b:" Our beliefs

they are not justifiable at all (e.g. Strawson 1952; Garrett 1997, p. 228; Owen 1999, p. 177). For what else, besides *reason,* would count as justification—would allow us to evaluate some inductive claims as being better than others, if not allow us to determine *what* is an inductive claim versus what is not?

What else could do this? The regularity that naturally obtains of our elementary beliefs, i.e. of proto-objects, or equivalently, of impressions and ideas that exactly represent them. To see why this is the case, we must begin by revisiting the distinction between natural and philosophical causal relations, and so, Hume's "two definitions of cause."

Natural vs. Philosophical Causes: Revisited

As explained in Chap. 2, our ability to think in terms of causes and effects is not a *belief*, it is a *reflex*. Yet Hume certainly does suggest that we *believe* in certain causal relations. In particular, we all seem to *believe* in the principle of uniformity, which is the "mediate judgment of fact" that grounds all probable reasoning, but is not justified *by* probable or demonstrative reasoning.

In particular, in virtue of believing in this "principle" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89)) and other causal relations, we come to certain reflective conclusions; we "*reason*…from causes or effects" (T 1.3.7.2; SBN 94; emphasis added). Thus, it certainly seems that when it comes to making causal inferences, we *do* infer, i.e. we do reason, rather than just reflexively react (cf. Millican 1995, p. 207; Garrett 1997, p. 92). In fact, Hume writes: "we infer a cause immediately from its effect; and this inference is not only a *true species of reasoning*, but the strongest of all others" T 1.3.7.5 n20; SBN 97; emphases added). Moreover, "One who concludes somebody to be near him, when he hears an articulate voice in the dark, *reasons justly and naturally*; tho' that conclusion be deriv'd from nothing but custom (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225; emphases added).

To understand just how we *believe* in the principle of uniformity (without justifying this belief with probable or demonstrative reason) and it turn, reason upon this belief, we must revisit a topic we briefly discussed in Chap. 2—Hume's two definitions of cause. As we saw in Chap. 2 of this book, Hume employs *two* senses of causality: the *natural* relation of causality, and the *philosophical* relation of causality. The former is a conditioned reflex, which is *not* believed in (although it produces belief) and the latter *is* a belief, where it may be believed in as a result of comparing the idea of the cause with the idea of the effect.

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about the behavior of objects in the external world, and the operations of our own mind, are founded on a naïve assumption of uniformity, a blind reliance on the past rather than on any sort of supernatural insight into why thinks work the way they do" (31). I show above, however, that our belief in the principle of uniformity does is in fact, seem to be justified, however implicitly. Strictly speaking, although our belief in the principle of uniformity is not *rationally* justified, it is not, as a result, "naïve" or "blind." Rather, it is duly informed by the regularity that naturally obtains of our impressions, where that regularity is not be confused with a principle *about* the regularity (i.e. the principle of uniformity). See above for more detail.

Hume characterizes the two definitions of cause as follows in the *Treatise*:

> **Philosophical**: We may define a CAUSE to be "An object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are plac'd in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects, that resemble the latter." (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 170)

> **Natural**: If the [philosophical] definition be esteem'd defective, because drawn from objects foreign to the cause, we may substitute this other definition in its place, viz. "A CAUSE is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other. (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 170)

As explained in Chap. 2, philosophical relations of causality may be *believed in* as a result of reflectively comparing the cause and the effect, where we understand the cause to be an "object" δ that is "precedent and contiguous" to another object π. Moreover, any object that resembles δ (i.e. δ_{1-n}) may also, when placed in "like relations of precedency and contiguity" to objects that are similar to π (i.e. π_{1-n}), be understood as a cause. The reflection that is used to think in this manner is what Hume refers to as "philosophical:" it is a "comparison of two ideas" (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 170, cf. T 1.1.5.1; SBN 14, T 1.3.1.1; SBN 69, T 1.3.6.16; SBN 94). Meanwhile, in those cases where the philosophical definition of cause is "defective" we can appeal to the natural definition of cause—where the cause is simply that *proto* "object—"i.e. what Hume defines above as the *impression* p and any impression that resembles p, i.e. p_{1-n}—which reflexively determines us to think an idea q′ or any idea that resembles q′, i.e. q'_{1-n}.

But when would we have a "defective" philosophical definition of a cause? Given what we have seen above, we may conclude that these are cases where a philosophical relation of causality is *not* based on a natural relation of causality, i.e. cases where an "object" δ does not indirectly represent a proto-object from a set p_{1-n} (see Schliesser (2007) for why, in this respect, Hume rejected certain aspects of Newtonian mechanics, e.g. invisible forces).

Having reviewed this general distinction, we must now ask: How does it pertain to the *principle of uniformity*? Is this principle a natural relation of causality or a philosophical relation of causality? Or both? Both. Moreover, in both cases, it may be argued that Hume implicitly presents a purely *extensional* account of the principle of uniformity. As a result, it may be shown that in both the "natural" and "philosophical" case, the principle of uniformity is justified by the regularity that naturally obtains of our elementary beliefs—i.e. of our proto-objects, i.e. of our impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions.

The Principle of Uniformity: An Extensional Account

Before we begin, a brief overview of "extension" vs. "intension" is in order. An extensional definition consists of just the members of a given set. For instance, the extensional definition of a cat would consist of the set of all cats, e.g. $\{cat_1, cat_2, cat_3 \ldots cat_n\}$. How do we acquire such sets? In some cases, such as in the case of mathematics, this could occur thanks to a certain function, e.g. we could acquire a

set of numbers by adding 1 to 0, adding one to *that* sum, then adding one to *that* sum, and so on. Very basically, some kind of rule for inclusion in the set must exist, where that rule may be very minimal. Meanwhile, an intensional definition is a generalization, e.g. "A cat is a carnivorous feline mammal." How do we get to such generalizations? We have three choices. We can merely stipulate it, we can deductively derive it, or we can arrive at it inductively. According to Hume, as explained above, an inductive generalization would presuppose the principle of uniformity, i.e. the idea that "*instances of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same*" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89). For instance, an inductive generalization of a cat, i.e. an inductive intensional definition of a cat, presupposes that all future instances of cats will resemble all past instances of cats, such that we may say, with some assurance, that "a cat is a carnivorous feline mammal."

With the general distinction between extensional v. intensional definitions in mind, recall that in Chap. 2, we saw that in virtue of being able to naturally "intuit" the resemblance that holds between the pairs of perceptions that occur on T_1–T_n, one may, thanks to his imagination, "unify" all pairs of $p_{1–n}$ and $q_{1–n}$ with each other such that when presented with an impression p or a memory of p, he is reflexively determined to think the idea q'_{n+1}, where he *imagines* the idea q'_{n+1} based on its resemblance to $q_{1–n.}$

Over time, it seems that we would amass a number of such sets of reflexive propensities, e.g.:

Set $_1$. {upon experiencing $p_{1–n}$, I think $q'_{1–(n+1)}$}
Set $_2$. {upon experiencing $a_{1–n}$, I think $b'_{1–(n+1)}$}
Set $_3$. {upon experiencing $c_{1–n}$, I think $d'_{1–(n+1)}$}
Set $_4$. {upon experiencing $e_{1–n}$, I think $f'_{1–(n+1)}$}
Set $_n$

Thus, by parity of reasoning, it seems that Hume could easily say that we "inuit" a certain resemblance obtaining between these *sets of pairs* in the respect that they are all *reflexive propensities*. Thus, when we think of one pair-set (e.g. Set_1), we would naturally tend to call to mind, i.e. "revive" all resembling pair-sets (i.e. Set_2–Set_n). This process would be very similar to the process behind Hume's notion of abstract objects, *and*, as I have argued throughout this book, the process behind particular objects. Thus, this way of thinking would not be alien to Hume's thought.

Moreover, Hume could have easily argued that something *else* occurs when we bring all resembling sets of reflexive propensities to mind. In particular, upon calling to mind all of the resembling pair sets of reflexive propensities, we would seem to be naturally and *reflexively* conditioned to *imagine* at least one proxy pair set that we have *not* actually experienced, just as we may *imagine* q'_{n+1} based on it's resemblance to $q_{1–n}$ when presented with impression p or a memory of p. By "proxy" I simply mean a variable set, which as such, does not stand for any particular reflexive propensity. Rather, it merely has to resemble our other sets of reflexive propensities, just as the idea q'_{n+1} does not represent any particular impression, but rather, resembles $q_{n–1}$ (recall Chap. 2). A chart might help to clarify this phenomenon (Fig. 12.1).

Conditioning process behind the natural relation of causality	*Conditioning about Conditioning*
After experiencing a number of constant conjunctions, e.g. p_1, q_1 p_2, q_2 p_3, q_3 p_4, q_4 . . . p_n, q_n We reflexively *imagine* q'_{n+1}upon experiencing impression $p_{1\text{-}n}$	We naturally become conditioned to think in terms of the following reflexive propensities: **Set** $_1$. {upon experiencing $p_{1\text{-}n}$, I think $q'_{1\text{-}(n+1)}$} **Set** $_2$. {upon experiencing $a_{1\text{-}n}$, I think $b'_{1\text{-}(n+1)}$} **Set** $_3$. {upon experiencing $c_{1\text{-}n}$, I think $d'_{1\text{-}(n+1)}$} **Set** $_4$. {upon experiencing $e_{1\text{-}n}$, I think $f'_{1\text{-}(n+1)}$} . . . **Set**$_n$ Upon thinking of any Set, I call to mind Set_1-Set_n. Upon doing so, I am reflexively compelled to *imagine* the *proxy* **Set**$_{n+1}$ e.g. {upon experiencing $x_{1\text{-}n}$, I think $y'_{1\text{-}(n+1)}$}

Fig. 12.1 Reflexive propensities

The proxy set, Set_{n+1}, resembles the set of pair sets we *have* experienced in the respect that it contains impressions (whatever they are, e.g. x_{1-n}) that naturally and reflexively compels us to think certain ideas (whatever they are, e.g. y'_{n+1}).

Thus, although Hume never explicitly says as much, it would be in keeping with his thought to conclude that this Set *of* Sets, i.e. the Set consisting of {Set_1, Set_2, Set_3, Set_4 … Set_{n+1}} constitutes the *natural*, reflexive and *extensional* version of the *principle of uniformity*, i.e. the idea that "*instances of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same*" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89). The "past" is comprised of Set_1-Set_n, where, in each case, in virtue of reflexively imagining a certain idea upon being presented with a certain impression, we *psychologically manifest* the idea that events that happened to us in the past (e.g. q whenever p) will happen again in the future. However, each set did not come about *because* of this idea; analogously, we do not imagine q'_{n+1} upon being presented with an impression of p or a memory of p *because* of the idea that the future will resemble the past. Rather this reflex is a product of the regularity of our experience. Moreover, in virtue of being reflexively determined to imagine a proxy set, i.e. Set_{n+1}, we naturally expect that there will be more manifestations (at least one) of the idea that the future will resemble the past. This proxy set, this reflexive expectation, reflects the "future." But this expectation is not *based* on the idea that the future resembles the past. It is simply a conditioned, reflexive propensity to imagine a proxy set, based on its resemblance to $Sets_{1-n}$. Thus, in virtue of reflexively imagining this proxy set, we extensionally manifest the idea that the future will resemble the past.

Because this definition is extensional, it does not require us to perform an induction on past experiences, i.e. we need not generalize our experience *in light of* the principle of uniformity; an extensional definition acts as the "generalization," it is comprised of *just* the members of the set which have been compiled thanks to a certain "rule." In this case, the "rule" is simply the regularity of our experience, i.e. the regularity of our perceptions, and our ability to become psychologically conditioned by that regularity.

This extensional definition is the *natural* principle of uniformity. It is a set *of* sets of reflexive tendencies. Thus, it may be argued that on my interpretation, Hume neither explicitly nor implicitly appeals to reasoning (particularly, probable reasoning) to justify the principle of uniformity. But it does seem to be justified by the regularity of our experience in the respect that it is *extensionally comprised* of the regularity of our experience and the imagination; if our experience were *not* regular, there would be no such pair-sets, and no such imagined proxy-set. In particular, such regularities are "real," in Hume's sense of real; they reflect patterns that obtain of our elementary beliefs, i.e. of our proto-objects, i.e. of our impressions and ideas that exactly represent impressions. These regularities are *real* regularities that obtain of *real* things—in Hume's sense of reality. Meanwhile, any reflexive sets that do not reflect the real regularity of our perceptions, but say, hallucinated patterns, or any other imagined occurrences, would *not* be justified. Such reflexive tendencies would not be "healthy," as Hume suggests in T 1.4.4; thus we should *not* think in such ways.

At this point, some might complain that this account of the natural principle of uniformity is viciously circular. For to say that the principle of uniformity is justified by the regularity of our experience, is in effect, to say that the principle of uniformity is justified by the *uniformity* of our experience, Q.E.D. But keep in mind that a principle *about* x is not the same thing as x. The natural principle of uniformity is a set of conditioned reflexive *propensities* for human beings to think in a certain way, whereas the regularity (i.e. the "uniformity") that obtains of our experience, of our perceptions, is just that, a regularity that naturally obtains of our perceptions. This regularity is not be confused with any psychological tendencies that may naturally occur *in light of* that regularity. Thus, this account of the natural principle of uniformity is not circular.

But what about the *philosophical* principle of uniformity, i.e. the causal principle that we *believe* in? It would be in keeping with Hume's two definitions of cause to say that we may "reflect" about the set of our conditioned tendencies, i.e. the set comprised of $\{Set_1, Set_2, Set_3, Set_4 \ldots Set_{n+1}\}$. In particular, we can philosophically "compare" (T 1.3.14.31; SBN 169–70, cf. T 1.1.5.1; SBN 13–14, T 1.3.1.1; SBN 69–70, T 1.3.6.16; SBN 94) sets of ideas of similar *causes* to sets of ideas of similar *effects* (recall that upon being conditioned to think the idea q'_{n+1} whenever we experience an impression p or a memory of p, we, "without any farther ceremony, call the one *cause* and the other *effect*, and infer the existence of the one from that of the other" (T 1.3.6.2; SBN 87; emphases added)). Thus, this reflection merely entails thinking of the set $\{p_{1-n}, a_{1-n}, c_{1-n}, e_{1-n,} x_{1-n}\}$ as "causes" and thinking of the set $\{q'_{1-(n+1)}, b'_{1-(n+1)}, d'_{1-(n+1)}, f'_{1-(n+1)}, y'_{1-(n+1)}\}$ as "effects." As such, we effectively (however tacitly) create a set of ordered pairs, where each pair consists of "causes" and "effects", respectively, i.e. $\{\{p_{1-n}, q'_{1-(n+1)}\}, \{a_{1-n}, b'_{1-(n+1)}\}, \{c_{1-n}, d'_{1-(n+1)}\}, \{e_{1-n}, f'_{1-(n+1)}\}\ \{x_{1-n}, y'_{1-(n+1)}\}\}$. This set is different from the set of all reflexive propensities because it contains ordered pairs of what we call "causes" and "effects" rather than sets of reflexive propensities—where in the case of the set that contains ordered pairs, we *believe* that p causes q, etc. rather than just reflexively think the idea q'_{n+1} whenever the impression p_{n+1} is present.

This is the extensional version of the philosophical principle of uniformity. It represents our belief that similar effects have similar causes. And, thanks to reflexively imagining the proxy pair set $(x_{1-n,}\ y'_{1-(n+1)})$, we *believe* in the extensional principle "*instances of which we have had no experience must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature always continues uniformly the same*" (T 1.3.6.4; SBN 89). For in keeping with any extensional definition, "always" pertains to *just* the members of our set of ordered pairs. Thus, $(x_{1-n,}\ y'_{1-(n+1)})$ represents our belief that we will come across *more* cause and effect relationships, whatever those may be. This reflects our expectation that nature will operate in a uniform, causal manner. This is the *philosophical* and extensional version of the principle of uniformity, which we believe in. It is a direct reflection of the natural relation of causality, which, recall, is justified by the *real* regularity that naturally obtains of our perceptions. Thus, the philosophical version of the principle of uniformity is also justified by the regularity of our experience. Any set of ordered causal pairs that reflects a set of natural propensities that are generated by the *real* regularity of our perceptions is, it seems, justified.

Finally, in light of this analysis, we may clarify a remaining issue regarding Hume's transcendental account of objects. It seems that in order to think in a reflexive causal manner, we need only have conceptual access to proto objects, i.e. impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions, i.e. elementary beliefs. That is, thinking in terms of *natural* causation does *not* seem to necessarily presuppose belief in mind-independent objects. Hume's language in regard to the natural vs. philosophical definition of cause indicates as much, as does much of his language in 1.3. Recall Chap. 2, where we saw that although Hume switches back and forth between speaking of "objects" and perceptions, for the most part, he talks about our reflexive, natural tendency to think in a causal manner as obtaining between *impressions and ideas*, not mind-independent objects. However, there *are* instances where he does talk about the natural relation of causality as obtaining between "objects" (e.g. T 1.3.6.1; SBN 86–7). However, given what we have seen, he must be speaking of *proto*-objects, i.e. impressions, or ideas that exactly represent impressions, i.e. elementary beliefs. Meanwhile, to think in terms of the philosophical relation of causality, where causal relations appear to obtain of, at least,[8] mind-independent objects, our ability to imagine mind-independent objects is necessarily presupposed.

The Regularity of Our Experience: A Closer Look

One might ask at this point, where in the text does Hume explicitly discuss the "regularity" of our perceptions? Recall that in Chap. 6, we saw that impressions are *not* random. Rather, they are, by and large, *constant and coherent*; they admit of

[8] Causal relations might also obtain of *events*. However, Hume never clearly distinguishes between events and objects in the *Treatise*.

Level 1 constancy and coherence. This means that we all seem to experience roughly the *same* repetitive *patterns* of impressions (T 1.4.2.16–19; SBN 194–195).

For instance, the impressions of the "mountains, houses and trees" that Hume sees out his window constantly appear to him in the "*same order*," in the "*same uniform manner*" (emphases added). In fact, he writes, "We have been accustom'd to observing a constancy in certain impressions, and have found, that the perception of the sun or ocean, for instance, returns upon us after an absence or annihilation with parts and in *a like order*" (T 1.4.2.24; SBN 199; emphases added). As we saw in Chap. 6, the order, i.e. the *uniformity* that obtains of our impressions is made even more regular in virtue of imagining objects that admit of a perfect identity; recall that doing so yields Level 2 constancy and coherence.

Thus, we all experience similar *patterns* ("orders") of impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions, i.e. elementary beliefs, i.e. proto-objects. As a result, we all tend to imagine similar objects that admit of perfect identities, e.g. mountains, houses and trees, *and* we reflexively think in terms of *similar patterns*, e.g. q'_{n+1} whenever the impression p or a memory of p—the constancy and coherence of our impressions *makes this so*. For instance, the majority of us experience the impression pain with the impression of being burnt. In this very fundamental respect, we do not *impose* regularity upon experience. Rather, our experience regulates us, not only in regard to the kinds of objects we imagine, but in regard to the causal relations that we are conditioned to think in terms of, and thus, the majority of us think that burns cause pain (cf. Stroud 1977, p. 140).[9] As explained above, this constancy and coherence, this *real* regularity that obtains of our experience, justifies both the natural principle of uniformity and the philosophical principle of uniformity.

In fact, it may also justify *other* causal inferences, including the *a posteriori* principles that Hume employs in his "science of man." If it can be determined that his principles reflect the regularity that naturally obtains of our elementary beliefs, i.e. proto-objects i.e. impressions, and ideas that exactly represent impressions, then they are justified. This means that Hume's naturalistic theory is justified by the regularity of our experience, by the first system of "reality" and nothing more. This is precisely why Hume refers to certain instances of causal reasoning as being "just" in at least four separate instances (T 1.3.6.7; SBN 89, T 1.3.13.3; SBN 144, T 1.4.2.54; SBN 216, T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225); (cf. Loeb 2002, Chap. 2, Sect. 1).[10]

[9] Stroud writes: "[No] objective connection between perceptions or objects [is] required in order for me to come to think of things as causally connected with each other. As long as my experience exhibits *certain regularities* I will come to have that 'fictitious' idea" (p. 140, emphasis added).

[10] In a footnote, in response to Loeb's earlier work (1997, pp. 283–6), Owen (1999) argues that in these instances, Hume does not have what modern epistemologists mean by justification in mind. Owen writes: "In the early modern period, to explain something as the product of the faculty of reason was to explain the production of a state that we take to be true. It is natural enough for Hume to think that when he has explained the production of belief, he has explained the production of a state we take to be true, even though he denied that we were determined by reason. But this is a much weaker claim than modern claims about justification. Similar remarks apply to Hume's frequent use of expressions such as 'reason justly' (T 72) and 'just inference' (T 89)"

Thus, Husserl was simply wrong to claim that the correctness of Hume's theory presupposed the irrationally of its premises and *vice versa*. Causal inferences (including the principle of uniformity) are not "irrational," because they are indeed *justified* (contra at least Strawson 1952; Garrett 1997; Owen 1999), but *not* by reason. Rather, they are justified, i.e. they are "instructed," by the regularity that naturally obtains of elementary beliefs, i.e. the regularity inherent in Hume's first system of reality. We *should* believe in causal relations that are grounded in the first system of reality. We should *not* believe in causal relations that are not.[11]

In virtue of establishing as much, we have, I think, exposed the general relationship between Hume's skepticism and his naturalism regarding causality; a relationship that has been much discussed in the literature (e.g. Passmore 1952; Flew 1986; Millican 1995, 2002b, 2002c; Falkenstein 1997b; Garrett 1997; Owen 1999; DePierris 2002). Hume was, indeed, a skeptic in the respect that *reason* does not justify causal inferences, which meant that none of the principles of his own theory could be justified by *reason*. However, as we saw above, such principles are extensional reflections of the regularity of our empirical experiences, and so, despite his skepticism regarding the justificatory role that reason plays in his system, he can continue his work with *some* degree of confidence. Hume, must, despite any intermittent inclinations he has otherwise, be satisfied with (feel justified by) the natural *regularity* that obtains of his experience, of his elementary beliefs, rather than by *certainty* (T 1.4.7.10; SBN 270).

4 The New Humeans

In the 1980s, a reading of Hume surfaced that generated, and continues to generate, a great deal of controversy. Commentators such as Wright (1983) and Strawson (1989) argued that although Hume thought that we cannot *know* what the true nature of objects and causality are, he did think that mind-independent objects and causal powers exist; they are *not* just psychological constructions. This reading gives us a "New Hume," i.e. a Hume that is a "skeptical realist."[12] Meanwhile, the old Humeans

(p. 139, n. 38). However, if, on Hume's account, we believe something to be true, to be *real*, we are, in *some* instances, engaged in a proper, i.e. *justified* belief production process, and in others, we are clearly *not*, i.e. all those instances where we come up with fantastic beliefs. Thus, Hume is doing more than simply explaining the production of a state we take to be true; he gives us an account that distinguishes between those states that we take to be true that are *not* justified, but are "occult" (e.g. believing in an immaterial soul) v. those that *are*. Also see Loeb's 2002 response to Owen, p. 43, n 13.

[11] In this respect, Hume may, generally speaking, be classified as what some call an "internalist," i.e. as Bonjour (2010) puts it: "justification is internalist if an only if it requires that all of the factors needed for a belief to be epistemically justified for a given person be *cognitively accessable* to that person, *internal* to his cognitive perspective" (p. 364). However, an extensive discussion of internalism v. externalism would take us beyond the scope of this project.

[12] There are many other New Humeans (e.g. Broughton; see Read and Richman 2007), but I cannot effectively address all of their positions here.

can be put into two general categories, (a) Those who think that Hume did not think that *mind-independent* casual powers or objects exist. These scholars may be referred to as anti-realists, and in some cases, as "regularity" theorists (Strawson 2007, p.31). According to many regularity theorists, Hume thought that the universe admits of regularity, and nothing more, e.g. Kripke (1982, p. 62), Ayer (1973, p. 183), (Woolhouse 1988, pp. 149–150), Stroud (2000, p. 11) and Millican (2009). (b) Those who think that Hume did not *know* if mind-independent causal powers or objects exist, e.g. Popkin (1980, p. 130) and Winkler (2007). Sometimes this is referred to as a Pyhrronnistic, or agnostic reading of Hume.

Generally speaking, I am an old Humean, type (b). Hume could not determine if mind-independent causal powers and objects do or do not exist. This is not say that I think that Hume did not think that a certain regularity obtained of our *perceptions.* It does indeed, as explained earlier in this chapter, but this does not mean that such regularity obtains of a mind-independent "universe." Rather, as we have seen throughout this book, Hume's focus in the *Treatise* is on giving us a rather complicated psychological story of how we come up with our ideas of causal powers and objects thanks to the regularity that obtains of these *perceptions*, and just these perceptions. Moreover, this is a normative account—we should believe in some of these ideas, and we should not believe in others.

4.1 Objects

Let's begin with a general review of the theory of ideas, since this motivates much of the debate surrounding the New Humeans. Recall that in Chap. 1, we saw that all simple ideas must exactly represent simple impressions. Meanwhile, complex ideas *may* exactly represent complex impressions, but not necessarily. However, even in cases where complex ideas do not exactly represent complex impressions, their parts—simple ideas—must exactly represent simple impressions. Any idea that does not either exactly represent an impression, or is not a complex idea that is comprised of simple ideas that exactly represent simple impressions, is not, it seems, an *intelligible* idea. This is the standard reading of Hume's theory of ideas.

As we saw in Part I of this book, we never have an impression of an object that admits of a perfect identity. This means that we never have an impression of a mind-independent object, complex or simple. Thus, the question is, given Hume's theory of ideas, how could *any* idea of a mind-independent object be intelligible, much less be believed in, or known to exist? I have explained throughout this book that according to Hume, we imagine ideas of objects, where, at least in part, these ideas do represent impressions; this aspect of these ideas is not imagined. What *is* imagined are the properties of uninterruptedness and invariability, or continuity and distinctness, as well as the notion that the object at hand *causes* our interrupted and variable impressions of it. These properties are imagined thanks to a transcendental imagination, i.e. a faculty that, by and large is presupposed by experience, and thus, it is not

funded by experience. As a result, as we have seen throughout this book, according to Hume we *can* intelligibly think of a mind-independent object in those cases where the idea at hand indirectly represents an impression. In those cases where an idea does *not* indirectly represent an impression, we *cannot* intelligibly think of a mind-independent object; recall, for instance, the ancients' idea of a "substance," it is "incomprehensible" (T 1.4.3.8; SBN 222).

Thus, at least on the face of it, it seems that I am in partial agreement with the New Humeans. Generally speaking, the majority of these scholars argue—in direct opposition to many Old Humeans (e.g. Winkler 2007; Millican 2009)—that according to Hume, we can intelligibly form an idea of mind-independent object, which, as such, does not exactly represent any impression. However, at least Strawson (2007) and Wright (2007) argue that such an idea does not indirectly represent an impression either. Moreover, both of these scholars argue that because it is entirely plausible that we can intelligibly form an idea of a mind-independent object, then it is entirely plausible that we can intelligibly form an idea of mind-independent causality (i.e. what some refer to as Causality with a capital 'C' (Strawson 2007). And finally, generally speaking, the fact that we can intelligibly, and in some cases *justifiably* form these ideas, is good reason to think that Hume thought that there *are* such things as mind-independent objects and that mind-independent causality exists (e.g. Strawson 2007; Kail 2007a).

In the proceeding sections, I would like to distance myself from this these claims, particularly (a) the claim that an intelligible idea of a mind-independent object can be, according to Hume, entirely without content. (b) The notion that according to Hume, being able to intelligibly and justifiably think of a mind-independent object (and causality) means that such things exist, independent of the mind. However, to do so, I cannot give a comprehensive account of *all* the various New Humean positions here; that would take another book. Instead, I focus on just Strawson (2007) and Kail (2007a) and to some degree, Wright (2007).

4.1.1 Strawson and Objects

In a recent book devoted to just the New Hume debate (Read and Richman 2007), Strawson argues that "relative ideas" enable us to think of mind-independent objects.[13] Understanding their role shows how Hume "was committed to the intelligibility of the realist conception of objects." (2007, p. 35).[14] Moreover, Strawson admits that if

[13] This article, "David Hume: Objects and Power," reflects many of the ideas Strawson presented in his earlier book, *The Secret Connexion: Causation, Realism and David Hume* (1989). "Objects and Power" was initially published in 2001 in the first edition of Richman and Read's *The New Hume Debate*.

[14] Much of Strawson's explanation concerns the *Enquiry*, which falls outside the scope of this book. However, to make his case concerning relative ideas, he relies heavily on a handful of passages from the *Treatise*. We focus on those here.

he fails to show that Hume thought that there are real, mind-independent objects, then his argument regarding Hume's thoughts concerning mind-independent causal powers is in deep trouble: "if [the suggestion that Hume always thought that objects just refer to mental occurrences, i.e. perceptions] were correct it would be easy to understand why Hume might wish to adopt a regularity theory about causation in the objects" (2007, p. 33).

Like Berkeley, Locke and Kant, Strawson argues, Hume thought that we can have a "relative idea" of an external object (2007, pp. 35–36). Granted, such an idea will have no content, no meaning (cf. Millican 2009), but it will surely be intelligible in the respect that it actually *refers* to something. For instance, Strawson explains,

> according to Locke, the word 'gold' is completely *meaningless*, it lacks any positive descriptive content on the terms of the theory of ideas—in so far as it is taken to refer to the unknown real essence of gold. *And yet it does so refer*, as Locke concedes. We can perfectly well talk about the real essence of gold and take it to exist. (p. 35; emphasis added)

Hume is no different, Strawson argues. Consider, for instance, what Hume writes on T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68:

> The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when [they are] suppos'd *specifically* different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects.

Thus, Strawson concludes:

> external objects are 'incomprehensible;' we have only a 'relative' idea of them. But a relative idea of X is not no idea at all. An everyday example of a case in which one has a referentially efficacious but in a sense contentless and hence merely 'relative' idea of something X is the idea one has of something when one can refer to it only as, say, 'whatever it was that caused this appalling mess.' In this case, one may have no positive conception of the nature of X. (2007, p. 36)

We can, according to Strawson's reading, certainly think that there *are* external objects, but we can't intelligibly think *about* them. This leads Strawson to conclude that Hume makes a distinction between "supposing" and "conceiving" where, thanks to relative ideas, we may intelligibly *suppose* an idea of an object, but we may not *conceive* of it in the respect that we are having an idea that represents an impression, indirectly or not. Consequently, a supposition will not be "contentful" (2007, p.38), although it does refer to something. Meanwhile, ideas that we *conceive* of *do* represent impressions, and thus, they have "content."

Having made this distinction, Strawson concludes: "it is either true or false that there are external objects, but we cannot know which. *A fortiori*, the supposition—and natural belief—that there are external objects is intelligible, and hence, meaningful. Hume himself takes that it is true, for the belief that it is true is part of natural belief" (2007, p. 38). That is: (1) We cannot, according to Hume, *know* if it is true or false that there are external objects. (2) However it is certainly intelligible to *believe* that there are external objects. (3) Hume believes that it is *true* that there are external objects, because believing as much is a natural belief. To reinforce this

point, Strawson writes just a page later: "[Hume] really does *believe* that external objects exist, and that Causation exists" (2007, p. 39; emphasis added).[15]

Indeed, as we have seen throughout this book, Hume does think in the *Treatise* that we may intelligibly think of (i.e. *imagine*) an idea of an external object; this is what we do when we imagine an idea that we think admits of perfect identity. But, as we have seen, Hume's explanation for why this is the case does not turn on the single sentence that Strawson cites from T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68, nor on Hume's indirect reference to relative ideas on T 1.4.5.19; SBN 241, which Strawson cites later in his paper in regard to Hume's thoughts on causality.[16] Rather, as we have seen, throughout Book I, we imagine ideas that admit of perfect identity, i.e. ideas that we think are mind-independent, through a process similar to how we come up with abstract ideas. However, Hume's story about how this occurs is deeply conflicted. On the one hand, we may imagine objects that admit of a perfect identity as a result of the transcendental imagination (recall Part II of this book). On the other hand, we may imagine such ideas as a result of rejecting the vulgar perspective of objects (recall Part III of this book). Recall that this conflict comes to a head in 1.4.6, where Hume discusses personal identity.

Regardless of this conflict, in both cases, these ideas of objects *do* have content in virtue of the fact that they indirectly represent impressions. In fact, in those cases where they do not indirectly represent impressions, and so, do *not* have content, they are unjustified and fantastic. Consider for instance, the "idea" that we have of a substance: "A substance is *entirely* different from a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of a substance" (T 1.4.5.6; SBN 234; emphasis added). However, in all those cases where Hume discusses an imagined idea of object that indirectly represents a proto object (and so, is real, i.e. has content, and so is justified), are cases where Hume refers to imagining as "supposing." Thus, Hume frequently uses the word "suppose" to refer to cases where we imagine *content-ful* objects, although, in these cases, our imagined ideas only indirectly represent a proto-object (T 1.3.2.3; SBN 74, T1.4.2.21; SBN 198, T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1; recall Part II of this book). Immediately then, we should be concerned about Strawson's distinction between "supposing" and "conceiving."

With this concern in mind, let's take a closer look at the context of T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68 and T 1.4.5.19; SBN 241, i.e. the passages that Strawson relies so heavily on to

[15] Kail writes regarding the New Humeans: "realists do not, and more importantly, need not, read Hume as *believing* in powers. Realists talk instead of Hume's 'assumption' or his 'taking for granted' or his 'supposition' of powers. And when realists do talk of 'belief' the term is either uses in a sense not intended to respect technicalities of Hume's own view of belief, or else appeals to the technical term 'natural belief, a category which carries its own complications" (2007b, p. 254). However, Strawson does not give any kind of extensive definition of natural belief in this paper. Regardless, as we will see in our discussion of Kail (Sect. 4.1.2 above), "natural belief," as it is articulated by Kail, is somewhat similar to my notion of transcendental belief.

[16] It should be noted that Hume explicitly mentions relative ideas just once in the *Treatise*, at T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68. He indirectly refers to them one other time, at T 1.4.5.19; SBN 241, and once in the *Enquiry*, EHU 7.29; SBN 76–7.

make his case. First, recall T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68, but now paired with the sentence that immediately follows it—a sentence that Strawson conspicuously omits:

> The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when [they are] suppos'd *specifically* different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking we do *not* suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connexions and durations. (second emphasis added)

Here, Hume does seem to be specifically referring to ideas that do *not* have content, such as substances, immaterial souls, etc. But these are not objects in general, as Strawson claims. Rather, Hume seems to be referring to *fantastic* ideas here, where such ideas do not refer to anything; Hume did not think that substances, souls and primary qualities actually exist—they are not like Locke's gold, nor, as Strawson puts it, like the "whatever" in the clause "whatever it is that caused this appalling mess" (2007, p. 36).

As explained in detail in Chap. 11, in the case of fantastic ideas, we do, indeed, attempt to come up with ideas of objects that are "specifically different from our perceptions of them." Yet we don't *usually* make it our business to conjure up such fantastic ideas of objects. This is the job for the superstitious, the weak-minded, and for certain kinds of philosophers (e.g. the Ancients, the Moderns and Spinoza): "Generally speaking we *do not* suppose our ideas of objects to be specifically different from our perceptions" (emphasis added). Meanwhile, our ideas of everyday, particular objects that admit of perfect identity *do* represent impressions; they *do* have content. It's just that we imagine such ideas to be uninterrupted and invariable or continuous and distinct (and so, they only *indirectly* represent impressions). This is precisely what Hume means when he claims that in these justified cases, we do not suppose objects to be specifically *different* from perceptions, *but*, we do "attribute to them different relations connexions and durations;" i.e. we imagine them to be invariable and uninterrupted, or continuous and distinct, and, we imagine them to be the causes of our interrupted and variable perceptions. Indeed, in a footnote to the passage cited above (T 1.2.6.9n.14; SBN 68), Hume promises that he will tell us more about how we make such attributions in 1.4.2. This should come as no surprise, for as we saw in Part II of this book, this is where he lays out the bulk of his explanation for how we imagine objects that admit of perfect identity (recall Part II of this book where we discussed this imaginative process at length).

In short, on T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68, Hume makes a distinction that Strawson fails to call our attention to—ideas of objects that are "specifically different from our perceptions," where such ideas are fantastic, without content, and do *not* refer vs. ideas that we attribute "different relations, connexions and durations" to, where such ideas indirectly refer to impressions, and thus, have content, and so, are not fantastic.

A similar interpretation should be given to T 1.4.5.19; SBN 241, which occurs in the context of Hume's critique of Spinoza. In order to show that Spinoza's "hideous hypothesis" regarding the unity of substance is almost the same as the hypothesis that there is an immaterial soul, Hume asks us to recall a distinction:

> let us remember, that as every idea is deriv'd from a preceding perception, 'tis impossible our idea of a perception, and that of an object or external existence can ever represent what

> are specifically different from each other. Whatever difference we may suppose betwixt them, 'tis still incomprehensible to us; and we are oblig'd either to conceive an external object merely as a relation without a relative, or to make it the very same with a perception or impression. (T 1.4.5.19; SBN 241)

We may break Hume's thought down as follows: (1) Every idea is derived from a perception. (2) Therefore an idea of an object, i.e. an idea of an external existence, must always represent a perception (and ultimately, an impression or impressions). (3) Therefore, we can conceive of an external object as either (a) "a relation without a relative" or (b) "make it the very same with a perception or impression." In short, we can either attempt to come up with a *fantastic* idea that has no content (a relation without a relative) or, we can justifiably imagine an object that admits of a perfect identity by bringing to mind a specific perception (a proto-object) and imagining it to be invariable and uninterrupted (i.e. make it the very same[17] with a perception or impression). Thus, Hume is merely repeating the distinction he made earlier in T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68, where "supposing" generates fantastic ideas that do *not* refer, and "conceiving" generates ideas of objects with perfect identities, which, as such, do have content. We should not, according to Hume, believe in the former kinds of ideas, and we should believe in the latter kinds of ideas. In fact, in a footnote to the passage cited above, he specifically refers to 1.2.6, where we find T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68 and the very same distinction, as explained above (T 1.4.5.19 n.45; SBN 241).

Hume immediately proceeds to make the claim that is cited by Strawson, which, Hume tells us, follows from the distinction made above:

> I say then, that since we may suppose, but never can conceive a specific difference betwixt an object and impression; any conclusion we form concerning the connexion and repugnance of impressions, will not be known certainly to be applicable to objects; but that on the other hand, whatever conclusion of this kind we form concerning objects, will most certainly be applicable to impressions. (T 1.4.5.20; SBN 241)

Although we may, in *fantastic cases*, suppose a difference between objects and impressions (as in the case of thinking of an idea of a substance) we cannot conceive of such a difference. Thus, anything we think about, i.e. *conceive of* concerning objects will have to, by definition, apply to impressions. However, we might think of certain relations as obtaining between impressions that do not obtain of objects (i.e. ideas of mind-independent objects). Moreover, Hume concludes on the next page that:

> we may establish it as a certain maxim, that we can never, by any principle, but by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience, discover a connexion or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions; tho' the inverse proposition may not be equally true, that all the discoverable relations or impressions are common to objects. (T 1.4.5.20; SBN 242)

Here, Hume accounts for the fact that our ideas of external objects do not *exactly* represent impressions by acknowledging an "***irregular kind of reasoning from experience***" (emphasis added). In a footnote, Hume tells us that he discusses this

[17] Not quite the *same* since these ideas do not exactly represent impressions, but Hume acknowledges this issue on the next page of the *Treatise*. See below for more detail.

reasoning in 1.4.2 in regard to the "coherence of perceptions" (T 1.4.5.20 n.46; SBN 241–2). This is nothing other than what we identified in Chap. 6 of this book as transcendental causation, where we imagine an idea of a continuous and distinct object to be the unsensed cause of our Level 1 constant and coherent impressions.

Having analyzed T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68 and T 1.4.5.20; SBN 241 in context, we may now conclude that Strawson mistakenly conflates Hume's conception of *fantastic*, unjustified ideas of external objects (which do *not* refer to anything; recall Chap. 11) with Hume's notion of *justifiably* imagined ideas of external objects. Thus, he neglects to see on T 1.2.6.9; SBN 68 and T 1.4.5.20; SBN 241, that "supposing" equates to coming up with an unjustified, unintelligible, non-referring fantastic idea, whereas conceiving equates to coming up with an intelligible, justified idea of an external object, i.e. one with content. In these passages. Hume is using the word 'suppose' in a sense that is to be distinguished from the sense in which he uses it on T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74, T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198, T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1. Thus, Strawson's "supposing" does not do the work he needs it to; by definition, such ideas do not refer to anything, e.g. a substance does not, according to Hume refer to anything at all. Moreover, Strawson completely overlooks Hume's account of the complex psychological process that is behind those cases where we justifiably imagine an idea of an object—in virtue of the fact that it indirectly represents an impression or impressions.[18]

4.1.2 Kail and Objects

Kail, who is a relatively new New Humean, tells us in his recent book, *Projection and Realism in Hume's Philosophy*, that "Hume is ultimately a realist about the external world" (2007a, p. xxix). Further on, he writes: "To read Hume as a realist about the external world is to read him as viewing that commitment as the one with the most justification, not as something that can be 'proved' once and for all. What then is the source of such justification?" (67). Kail's answer: Natural belief. Kail follows Gaskin's (1974) account of natural belief, with some clarifications: "1. Beliefs are commonsensical. 2. They are non-rational. 3. They are necessary preconditions of actions, and 4. They are universally held. [Gaskin] also added the claim that there is 'no evidence which makes it more reasonable to adopt any alternative set of beliefs' (Gaskin 1974, p. 286)" (2007a, pp. 68–69). Kail explains that *philosophical* belief in objects meets all four conditions, although it might not, at first glance, seem universal. However, because the philosophical position is derived from the vulgar position, and the vulgar position is universal,

[18] Also see Wright (2007, p. 90) who relies heavily on T 1.4.5.20; SBN 241. Like Strawson, Wright's distinction between supposing and conceiving is, I think, mistaken; he neglects to see that it reflects Hume's distinction between fantastic ideas and ideas that have content. Concomitantly, like Strawson, Wright ignores the complex psychological account of *justifiably* imagining objects that has been explicated in Parts II and III of this book. Thus, Wright's account of objects must also be rejected.

then philosophical belief in objects may be viewed as universal as well. Thus, given this, and "(a) the falsity of the vulgar view, (b) [and] that philosophical decisions involve the "correction" of the views of common life, (c) [and] [Hume's] general assumption of objects distinct from perceptions throughout most of his philosophy" (2007a, p. 69), Kail concludes that "The philosopher's belief [is] a 'natural belief'" (Kail 2007a, 69).

In part, I agree with Kail that according to Hume, our tendency to think that objects are distinct from our perceptions is, indeed, a "natural" tendency, in the sense that Kail (after Gaskin) defines "natural;" this is what I have characterized as a *transcendental* tendency throughout this book. However, as we have seen, Hume seems to be deeply conflicted about this propensity. At some points in the text, this propensity is clearly *not* a product of reflection, i.e. T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74, T 1.4.2.15–24; SBN 194–9, T 1.4.2.25–30;SBN 199–201, and some parts of 1.4.6 and the *Appendix* (recall Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 10 of this book). Thus, at these junctures in the text, the propensity to imagine that objects exist independently of our perceptions clearly meets Gaskin's condition (2), i.e. it is *not* a rational propensity. However, when the philosophers reject the vulgar belief in objects thanks to reason, their subsequent belief in an external world is, by definition, a product of rational thought. The fact that the philosophers employ reason to come up with their respective notions of imagined causes is precisely what makes them "philosophers" (recall Chaps. 9 and 11 of this book). Thus, as explained throughout this book, such an approach could not be transcendental, or natural; it is *not* presupposed by the bulk of our experience. Rather, to be philosophers we need to learn to reason, by way of, at least, becoming conditioned to think in terms of the natural relation of causality and subsequently, reflecting about such relations (recall Chap. 2). Thus, we must view the philosophical belief in objects as violating Gaskin's conditions (2) and (3), and thus, I don't think that Kail should characterize them as "natural." However, as explained in this chapter and in Chap. 11, some philosophical conceptions of objects do seem to be more justified than others, in the respect that they indirectly represent impressions (also recall Chap. 9). Thus, I sympathize with Kail's attempt to legitimize certain philosophical beliefs in light of the fact that they are grounded by a "*propensity* to believe our senses" (Kail 2007a, p. 69). However, unlike Kail, I do not think that this propensity permeates all philosophical systems in virtue of the fact that all such systems represent a rejection of the vulgar system. Rather, as explained at length in Chap. 11, and here, some philosophical systems are, according to Hume, especially abhorrent precisely because they are *not* grounded in experience.

Having established the sense in which Kail uses the term 'natural belief,' let us now turn to his argument in support of realism. To frame his approach, Kail explains that there are four general forms of anti-realism: "(a) reductionism, (b) non-cognitivism, (c) rejection or (d) deep incoherence" (Kail 2007a, p.56). Kail dismisses (a) as follows:

> reductionism rejects the core content for the respective belief, and replaces it with analysis of such commitments couched in terms of allegedly more tractable materials. A classic instance of reductionism is *phenomenalism.* But phenomenalism might nevertheless be congenial to Hume if he thinks that the notion of a continued and distinct object is incoherent.

> If it is incoherent, then we might think of recasting such object talk phenomenalistically. (Kail 2007a, 57)

However, Kail does not think that the notion of a continued and distinct object is incoherent (see below), and thus, reductionism may be set aside. As far as non-cognitivism is concerned, he writes:

> Non-cognitivism holds that statements regarding God or the external world express statements of mind, the function of which is other than representing the world to be thus and so. Again, somewhat briefly and dogmatically, there is no evidence that Hume thought anything like this for perceptual or religious belief." (Kail 2007a, p. 57)

Having dismissed this approach, Kail focuses on (c) "rejection," which he characterizes as the "justificatory threat" and (d) "deep incoherence," which he calls the "semantic threat." The former, i.e. "rejection" is the anti-realist idea that belief in mind-independent objects "lacks justification and without it we should not believe" (Kail 2007a, p. 57). The latter, i.e. "deep incoherence" is the anti-realist idea that "the external world is utterly unthinkable" (Kail 2007a, p.57). Kail argues that if Hume can meet both of these threats, i.e. if he shows that we can and do have justified, coherent ideas of mind-independent objects, then Hume is a realist. Thus, after arguing why Hume *does* think we have justified, intelligible ideas of mind-independent objects, Kail concludes: "I have argued that realism is defensible for Hume on the external world by showing that the supposition of external objects is coherent, and although not supported by reason, is nevertheless liable to a form of justification" (Kail 2007a, p. 72).

Thus, it would seem that I too must think that Hume is realist regarding the external world, since this book has been devoted to showing how and why Hume thinks that we can have intelligible and justifiable ideas of mind-independent objects. Moreover, in some cases, (i.e. transcendentally conceived of cases, recall Part II of this book), we believe in objects thanks to what Kail, after Gaskin, defines as "natural belief." However, I don't think that Kail's conclusion regarding Hume's realism necessarily follows, nor does it seem to be supported by the text, but I will hold off on explaining why after we discuss the New Humean approach to causality.

4.2 Causality

The question for the New Humeans is: Do we, does *Hume*, think, or know that there are mind –independent causal powers in the world, mind-independent necessity? We never have an impression[19] of powers or necessity, so, according to Hume's theory of ideas, how could we know that powers or necessity exist, much less intelligibly think about and believe in such things (Strawson 2007)?

[19] As explained in Chap. 2, we do have an impression of necessity. However, it is an impression of reflexion, which is merely a habituated reflex to "pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant" (T 1.3.14.22; SBN 165–6).

4.2.1 Strawson and Causality

The first premise of Strawson's argument to show that Hume thought that mind independent causality (i.e. Causality with a capital 'C') exists, is: We can intelligibly refer to something that does not have content; this occurs through the "supposing" that Hume thinks takes place regarding objects. The rest of Strawson's argument concerns textual evidence in the *Enquiry*, that Strawson argues, shows that Hume had similar thoughts regarding causality.

However, we need not address any of Strawson's arguments concerning the *Enquiry*. We merely need to deny his first premise. As we have seen, Strawson's (as well, as, at least, Wright's 2007) account of "supposing" is a red herring. In justified instances of imagining objects that admit of perfect identity, we do imagine ideas of objects that have content, although these ideas only indirectly represent impressions. As we saw in Part II of this book, Hume uses the word 'suppose' in this sense on at least three different occasions: T 1.3.2.2; SBN 74, T 1.4.2.21; SBN 198, T 1.4.2.29; SBN 200–1. Meanwhile, in the passages that *Strawson* cites to make his case, 'supposing' applies to *unjustified* content-less ideas of imagined objects; particularly, ideas that do not refer to anything. Thus, regardless if Strawson can produce textual evidence to show that we may "suppose" an idea of mind-independent causality (in the pejorative sense of 'suppose' just given) such an idea, cannot, according to Hume, be justified, nor does it refer to anything.[20]

4.2.2 Kail and Causality

To introduce his argument in favor of causal realism, Kail explains that: "for the causal realist…what makes it true that *a* causes *b* is that the particular *a* manifests some power in virtue of which *b* is brought about or produced. Regularities in

[20] As is the case with Strawson, Wright's first premise in his argument to show that Hume thought that mind-independent causality (i.e. Causality) exists is: We may "suppose" that mind-independent objects exist, where such objects do *not* represent (indirectly or not) impressions. Nevertheless, these ideas *refer* to mind-independent objects. Thus, because we can "suppose" content-less ideas of objects that refer to mind-independent objects, we may also "suppose" content-less ideas of Causality that refer to mind-independent causal relations. Note: "It is clear then that at least in his discussion of external existence, Hume argues that we are not limited in our beliefs about objects to what is based on our legitimate impression-derived ideas. The same then is to be found in his discussion of space and time in Part 2, Book I of the *Treatise*. Why should there be an exception in the case of Hume's discussion of causality?" (2007, p. 90). However, as we have seen, this is not the case. When Hume uses the word 'suppose' in the passages that Strawson and Wright rely on to make their case, he is referring to an *unjustified* act of the imagination, e.g. cases where we imagine substances and souls. But these ideas do not refer to anything; Hume does not think that such things actually exist. As far as our *justified* ideas of objects are concerned, we must imagine an idea of an object that *indirectly* represents an impression (and in fact, this is also the case in regard to our ideas of space and time; they are abstract ideas; recall Chap. 7. Thus, we may deny Wright's first premise as well, and thus, effectively undermine his argument that Hume thought that there are content-less ideas that refer to mind-independent causal relations.

nature—or those that constitute laws—are expressions of the causal powers of particulars, rather than causal relations being merely instances of regularities" (2007a, p. 79). To show that such causal powers exist, Kail explains that Hume must meet two threats, as was the case with mind-independent objects: the semantic threat and the justificatory threat. Thus, Kail must show that Hume thought that we must, in some way, be able to think coherently about causal powers, and that such ideas are, somehow, justified. Accordingly, Kail introduces and defends what he calls the "Bare Thought" (2007a, p. 83), to show that although we have no idea of causal powers, we can at least, according to Hume, "specify uniquely that of which we may be ignorant" (2007a, p. 103). As far as the justificatory threat is concerned, Kail is ultimately force to conclude that:

> I think that at this stage we reach a stalemate between the realist reading and the anti-realist reading. For although there are some points that can be squared with realism, others are more difficult…On the balance, all this suggests that…*there seems little to favour anything stronger than an agnostic position.* That's what I used to think [Kail (2001)]. The considerations in the next chapter, if successful, tip that balance in favour of realism. (2007a, p. 124; emphases added)

To tip the scales in favor of realism, Kail appeals to the *Appendix* to the *Treatise,* particularly those passages where Hume redresses his account of personal identity. Kail summarizes his argument as follows:

> Let us suppose that Hume is realist about causation in the sense that he thinks that any genuine causation involves necessary connection. On that supposition, his *Appendix* worries can be seen to have the following shape. The reasoning Hume exploits to undo the notion of the self as a simple substance of which perceptions are modes, forces the conclusion that perceptions are metaphysically independent items, that cannot be necessarily connected. But the self, on his system, is a bundle of perceptions, a bundle, furthermore, connected by *causation*. A realist Hume assumes that anything that is causally connected is connected by an unknowable necessary connection. So his account of self forces an unacceptable conclusion. (2007a, p. 125)

Kail's argument may be parsed as follows: (1) Assume that Hume *is* a causal realist. (2) In 1.4.6, Hume shows that the self is composed of perceptions—i.e. "metaphysically independent items"—which cannot be necessarily connected. (3) But Hume also shows in 1.4.6 that these perceptions are connected by causation, which means, according to the causal realist, they *are* necessarily connected. (4) Thus, Hume must come to an "unacceptable conclusion," i.e. he is forced into a contradiction: perceptions are both necessarily connected [(3)] and *not* necessarily connected [(2)]. *This* is the problem that Hume alludes to in the *Appendix*. (5) Thus, reading Hume as a causal realist explains the *Appendix's* critique of 1.4.6, and thus, the scales tip in favor of reading Hume as a causal realist, rather than as an agnostic.

However, as we have seen in Chap. 10, I think that there is a viable alternative reading of 1.4.6 and the related passages in the *Appendix*. In particular, we saw that 1.4.6 is a manifestation of the tension between Hume's natural, or transcendental conception of objects and the philosophical conception of objects. Regarding the object the "self," we *imagine* that our various perceptions are causally connected, and that some kind of final cause "unite[s]" (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261) all of these various

imagined causal relations. Thus, we saw that causal realism need *not*, and should not, be assumed to account for this process. Relatedly, nor do we need to assume that Hume was a causal realist to account for his remarks in the *Appendix*. Thus, I do not think the scales tip in favor of realism; agnosticism, by Kail's own account, must prevail (Kail 2007a, p. 124).[21]

5 Final Thoughts

5.1 Ideas That Admit of a Perfect Identity: Do They Refer?

It has been shown that Hume thought we may justifiably imagine ideas of mind-independent objects, i.e. ideas of objects that admit of a perfect identity, and, believe in such ideas. Skeptical realists such as Kail (2007a) agree. The question is: Do I think, like Kail (2007a), that such ideas necessarily refer to mind-independent objects?

No, as already suggested above. Giving an account of how and why humans intelligibly and justifiably believe in objects is not necessarily an ontological commitment; it may merely be a description of what humans do, and in some cases, what they should do given their limited capacities. Analogously, an anthropologist's account of how and why a certain group of individuals believes in certain entities—which may even entail normative aspects—does not commit that anthropologist to those beliefs. Similarly, I do not think that Hume is committed to the beliefs that he attributes to the majority of human kind.

More importantly, this conclusion is substantiated by the text. Hume never suggests in the *Treatise* that our justified and coherent ideas of mind-independent objects necessarily refer to mind-independent objects. In fact, in the first paragraph of 1.4.2, where he discusses objects at length, he writes: "We may well ask, *what causes induce us to believe in the existence of body*? but 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or not?* That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings" (T 1.4.2.1; SBN 187). This claim may be read three ways: 1. Mind-independent bodies exist. This is a fact that we must always take for granted, and thus, we need *not* ask if they exist or not. 2. We must take it for granted in "all our reasonings" that we cannot ask whether or not bodies exist (i.e. exist independently of our minds). Thus, we shall avoid that question in 1.4.2. Or 3. We must, *in order* to reason, take it for granted that bodies do exist. But whether or not they *actually* do exist is not a question we can tackle. We must focus instead on determining what causes us to believe in the mind-independent existence of bodies. This is what 1.4.2 is devoted to explaining.

[21] Cf. Millican (2009), who takes a different, anti-realist approach to Kail's work, particularly Kail (2007b).

First, let's rule out option (1). Hume never claims, anywhere in the *Treatise*, that mind-independent objects exist; if he did, one would expect that he would offer an explanation as to why this is the case. Rather, throughout the *Treatise*, he tells us time and again that all we have access to is our perceptions, i.e. our impressions and ideas. Thus, we may never apprehend mind-independent things, nor can we use reason to conclude that they exist. This is why we must *imagine* ideas of mind-independent objects (recall Parts II and III of this book). This fact, one might argue, constitutes the heart of Hume's skeptical despair. For at the end of 1.4.2, Hume openly "vents" (T 1.4.2.56; SBN 217–18) his frustration in regard to the fact that we may only *imagine* mind-independent objects, properly conceived of or not: "I cannot conceive how such trivial qualities of the fancy … can ever lead to any solid and rational system" (T 1.4.2.56; SBN 217). In fact, "This skeptical doubt, both with respect to reason and the senses, is a malady, … can never be radically cur'd, but must return upon us every moment" (T 1.4.2.57; SBN 218). Thus, it would simply not be in keeping with Hume's general position to blithely claim that "mind-independent bodies exist; let's just take that for granted." Consequently, we may rule out (1)

As far as (2) and (3) are concerned, (3) seems to be the most accurate interpretation. Recall that according to Hume's transcendental account of objects, we must, *in order* to think in terms of at least philosophical and indirect causal relations obtaining between mind-independent objects, imagine that there *are* mind-independent objects. Thus, it seems that we must "take it for granted" that bodies exist in order to reason, i.e. at least, in order to think in a philosophical or indirect causal manner in regard to objects. However, whether or not they actually *do* exist is not a question we can answer. Thus, according to this passage, Hume must be viewed as being agnostic about the mind-independent existence of objects.

This conclusion may be further substantiated as follows: Although our justified imagined ideas of particular objects must indirectly represent impressions, particularly, sense impressions, sense impressions do not necessarily represent mind-independent objects; i.e. they do not necessarily refer to mind-independent objects. Rather, as we saw in Chap. 1, Hume makes it abundantly clear that sense impressions have strictly *unknown* causes: "The first kind [of impressions, i.e. sense impressions] arises in the soul originally, from *unknown causes*" (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7; emphases added). In fact, for all we know, *we* could be the author of sense impressions:

> As to those *impressions*, which arise from the *senses*, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, *perfectly inexplicable* by human reason, and 'twill always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produc'd by the creative power of the mind, or are deriv'd from the author of our being. Nor is such a question any way material to our present purpose. We may draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions, whether they be true or false; whether they represent nature justly, or be mere illusions of the senses. (T 1.3.5.2; SBN 84; emphases added)

Again: Impressions of sensation have strictly *unknown* causes. In fact, determining (a) What such causes are or (b) If they are "true or false" or (c) If "they represent nature justly" or (d) if they are "mere illusions of the senses" is *irrelevant*. All that

matters is explaining how and why we "draw inferences from the coherence [i.e. the *regularity*] of our perceptions." As we have seen throughout this book, Hume focuses on explaining how and why we believe in objects thanks to the regularity of our experience, and concomitantly, how and why we can think in a causal manner thanks to the regularity of our experience. But he *cannot* determine if objects exist, or, if they do not exist. "'Tis in vain to ask whether there be body or not." Thus, although our ideas of particular objects do have content, Hume cannot determine if these ideas refer to mind-independent things or not, nor is determining as much relevant to his task (cf. Winkler 2007). In this respect, Hume *does* seem to be a "non-cognitivist," as Kail describes it, although, as we saw above, Kail rejects this interpretation: "Non-cognitivism holds that statements regarding God or the external world express statements of mind, the function of which is other than representing the world to be thus and so" (Kail 2007a, p. 57).[22]

As far as the mind-independent existence of causality is concerned, we may conclude that if it can't be determined if mind-independent objects actually exist, then if follows that it can't be determined if mind-independent causal relations exist. For mind-independent causal relations would, it seems, have to obtain of some mind-independent objects—it would be strange theory indeed that claimed that mind-independent causal relations obtain *only* of mind-*dependent* things, i.e. ideas. Moreover, there is no textual evidence to support the claim that Hume had such a theory in mind. Thus, whether or not mind-independent causal relations exist is another question that Hume cannot, and need *not* answer. Thus, Hume is neither an anti-realist nor a "New Humean" (cf. Winkler 2007).

5.2 Berkelian Idealism?

Hume's contemporary, George Berkeley, thought that everything that exists is an idea, including objects; "*esse* is *percipi*." (PHK, p. 3). Moreover, there's no doubt that Hume *did* read Berkeley (Morrisroe 1973; Mossner 1980, p. 627). So, was Hume's conception of objects—as I have presented it in this book—deeply influenced by the Irish idealist? Undoubtedly there *was* some influence. However, to see just what that was, in all its subtle detail, would take still another book. But it will be helpful to end this project by addressing just two fundamental differences.

According to Berkeley, we cannot intelligibly conceive of mind-independent objects. The reason for this is rather simple: To "conceive of" means to have an *idea* of. Thus by definition, there can be no conception of something that is *not* an idea (i.e. is mind-independent; PHK, p. 6). Furthermore, Berkeley argues, there is no good reason to believe that mind-independent objects exist (regardless of

[22] Also recall Chap. 4, Sect. 3 of this book, where we saw that according to Hume, to conceive of is, indeed, to ontologically commit to, but only in terms of *de dicto* existence.

whether we can conceive of them or not). For as evidenced by our dreams and hallucinations, we may have ideas of objects that are not caused by mind-independent objects. Think of all the crazy, fantastic things we imagine in our dreams that have no basis, it seems, in what we take to be "reality." Thus, "it is possible we might be affected with the ideas we have now, though no bodies resembling them existed without" (PHK, p. 18). There is no good reason then, to even think that it is *possible* that there is an external world (PHK, p. 19). In fact, there is more reason to conclude that there is *not* (PHK, p. 20). As a result, the perennial question about whether or not one's ideas correspond to a mind-independent world is eliminated. However, this is no cause for disappointment. Rather, Berkeley thinks, his idealism releases us from the scourges of skepticism; we may happily assert that reality *is* our perceptions. Also, only *God* could regulate our perceptions, and so, we may rest easy in our faith in God. In short, Berkeley was a rather content God-fearing idealist.

Hume was not. As we just saw in the last section, the Scotsman was deeply affected by the fact that we cannot apprehend a mind-independent world through either our senses or reason (a fact that Philonous ultimately convinces Hylas of in Berkeley's *Dialogues*). However, unlike Berkeley, this does not lead Hume to conclude that there is *no* mind-independent world. Rather, although we must *imagine* our ideas of the objects that inhabit the external world, Hume did, at least, think it was *possible* that a mind-independent world existed, if only because we cannot determine that there is *not* an external world.

Furthermore, Hume did not invoke God to regulate our perceptions. Rather, as we have seen, in the *Treatise,* he appealed to the Level 1 constancy and coherence of our impressions. The "raw" regularity that naturally obtains of our experience is enough, Hume thought, for us to effectively regulate how we imagine objects. In turn, we may conceive of such objects as obtaining in causal relations.

Thus, although Hume, like Berkeley, thought that we only have *ideas* of mind-independent objects, his account differs from Berkeley's in at least two fundamental respects: Hume did not think that God had a hand in regulating our ideas of objects, nor did Hume eschew the possibility of a mind-independent world.

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