Hume’s Scepticism and Realism

His Two Profound Arguments against the Senses in
An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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In the end it is my beloved wife Tiina who made all possible. Otherwise I would not be writing this and the world would be “this world of none”.

Jani Hakkarainen

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Hume’s Scepticism and Realism

Two Profound Arguments against the Senses in An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding

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ABSTRACT

The main problem of this study is David Hume’s (1711­76) view on Metaphysical Realism (there are mind­independent, external, and continuous entities). This specific problem is part of two more general questions in Hume scholarship: his attitude to scepticism and the relation between naturalism and skepticism in his thinking.

A novel interpretation of these problems is defended in this work. The chief thesis is that Hume is both a sceptic and a Metaphysical Realist. His philosophical attitude is to suspend his judgment on Metaphysical Realism, whereas as a common man he firmly believes in the existence of mind­independent, external, and continuous entities. Therefore Hume does not have any one position; accordingly, a form of “no one Hume” interpretation (Richard Popkin, Robert J. Fogelin, Donald L.M. Baxter) is argued for in the book.

The key point in this distinction is the temporal difference between Hume’s philosophical and everyday views. It is introduced in order to avoid attributing a conscious contradiction to him (a problem which has not attracted enough attention in the literature). The method of the work is modelled on Peter Millican’s work on Hume and induction. The approach to the main problem is to study the two “profound” arguments against the senses that Hume presents in the Section 12 of An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (1748). These arguments are first reconstructed in detail resulting in Millican-type diagrams of them and then Hume’s endorsement of them is established on the basis of the diagrams. The first profound argument concludes that Metaphysical Realism and thus any Realistic theory of perception is unjustified as well as the existence of God and the soul. The second profound argument goes further having first conceptual conclusion: the very notions of Real entity, material substance, and bodies are completely out of the reach of the faculty of understanding. Therefore they ought to be rejected according to Hume. This is a consequence of the consistent use of the Humean faculty of reason: idea-analysis and inductive inference. The second profound argument thus concludes that believing in Metaphysical Realism is inconsistent with the rational attitude that is to refrain from
this belief. Hence, if we attributed both of them to Hume, we would end up with a great philosopher who embraces a manifest contradiction.

The study is finished by arguing that this sceptical and Metaphysically Realistic interpretation concurs well with (1) Hume’s professed Academical philosophy and (2) project of the science of human nature. (1) According to Hume, Academical philosophy is in the first place diffidence, modesty, and uncertainty including suspension on certain issues. Secondly, it is restriction of the range of topics for which experience can provide a standard of truth. This kind of empiricist epistemological realism is coherent with the sceptical attitude on Metaphysical Realism because the latter does not rule out inter-subjective consensus on what we experience. (2) Suspension of judgment on Metaphysical Realism coheres with the mind-dependency of the objects of Hume’s science of human nature: the understanding, passions, morals, aesthetics, politics, and the human culture in all of its manifestations.

Although the study takes the first Enquiry to be Hume’s authorised word on the understanding, his juvenile work *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) is argued to support this “no one Hume” interpretation. Hume’s other works are also discussed when needed.
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**ABBREVIATIONS OF REFERENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Abs.</em></td>
<td>An Abstract of a Book lately published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>App.</em></td>
<td>The Appendix (to A Treatise of Human Nature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Categ.</em></td>
<td>Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>A Companion to Epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>The Philosophical Writings of Descartes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHP</td>
<td>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHU, first Enquiry</td>
<td>An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPM, second Enquiry</td>
<td>An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>The Letters of David Hume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Lennon-Olscamp translation of The Search after Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Liddell and Scott’s Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>A Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHK</td>
<td>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Princ.</em></td>
<td>Principles of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>The Search after Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T, Treatise</td>
<td>A Treatise of Human Nature</td>
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“Hume’s philosophic writings are to be read with great caution.”

L.A. Selby-Bigge

“Those who study Hume’s philosophy with care inevitably come away impressed by the tension between the surface of his smoothly flowing style and the complex philosophical structures that move beneath.”

Donald W. Livingston
1 Introduction

Like all studies in history, every work on the history of philosophy reflects its own time. The work at hand exemplifies this general principle. Its main problem is to position Hume in one of the liveliest philosophical discussions of recent decades, that on realism and anti-realism (see Brock and Mares 2007). However, this controversy revolves around a question already discussed in slightly different terms in David Hume’s (1711-1776) times. Are there mind-independent entities that are also external to the mind and exist continuously? This ontological side of what is nowadays known as ‘the problem of the external world’ owes its first appearance on the agenda of philosophy to Descartes; for the ancients, it was little unknown and less important (Larmore 1998, 1146). Besides, Hume’s view of the existence of mind-independent, external, and continuous entities is among the oldest problems of his interpretation. As will shortly be shown, the debate on it began during Hume’s lifetime and has not so far vanished from the discussion of Hume’s relation to scepticism. The dissertation will also establish that it really is Hume’s problem. Our main question is not therefore only up to date; it is no way anachronistic.

Whether Hume is a Metaphysical Realist is a pivotal question for the interpretation of his thinking in general. Metaphysical Realism\(^1\) is the doctrine that there are Real, that is, mind-independent, external, and continuous entities.\(^2\) The work itself constitutes evidence for the importance of Metaphysical Realism, but it is initially possible to remark something. In the first place, it has epistemological, in Hume’s terms, logical (Abs.3), implications because it is connected to the problem of the standard of truth, for instance. If Hume does not believe in the existence of Real entities, it follows that he cannot hold the strong version epistemological realism according to which the standard of truth is in the nature of Real entities. Another epistemological point is that Hume’s view of the Realistic theories of perception depends on his attitude to Metaphysical Realism.

In the second place, it has implications for his metaphysical and ontological views. Traditionally, notions like “substance”, “essence”, “property”, and “cause” referred to the realm of human being independent world. Hume’s attitude to and possible divergence from traditional ontology depends therefore on whether or not he is a Metaphysical Realist. In addition, in the case that Hume rejects these traditional meanings of the terms, it will also affect his constructive ontological positions.

\(^1\) Capitalised in order to distinguish it from the other senses of realism.
\(^2\) More accurate definition of the components of the definition of Real entities will be given in Chapter 3.2.
In this book, a novel answer to this old question will be rest on a firm interpretative foundation. However, before going into that, it is necessary to draw a map of the main interpretations proposed so far on the question.

### 1.1 Of Different Interpretations on the Problem

To the question of Hume’s position on the existence of Real entities, there are three principal, basic answers: (1) he believes in their existence, (2) he believes that they do not exist, and (3) he does not take any stance on the issue but suspends his judgement on it. If Hume endorses the first affirmative position, he can be called a positive dogmatic regarding the existence of Real entities, that is, a Metaphysical Realist. In the case that the second negative answer represents Hume’s view, he is an anti-Realist in the sense of a negative dogmatic concerning the existence of Real entities. The last position of suspension is what is arguably, following ancient Pyrrhonists, the only true sceptical attitude to the matter. It is also the other anti-Realist position. The main problem of the dissertation can be thus put in terms of whether Hume is a positive or negative dogmatic, or a sceptic regarding the existence of Real entities.

The situation, however, is not that simple. There is no logical obstacle to attributing to Hume different combinations of these positions (if indeed suspension can be called a position). We may claim, for example, that at one time Hume is a positive dogmatic on the issue and at another, a sceptic. This does not involve attributing any contradiction to him because of the difference in temporal dimension. Consequently, if we do not take the order of the positions into account (not ordered pairs), there are, in principle, four combinative interpretations of Hume’s stance: (4) a positive dogmatic and sceptic, (5) a positive and negative dogmatic, (6) a sceptic and negative dogmatic, and (7) a positive dogmatic, sceptic, and negative dogmatic. As these combinative interpretations can be represented by readings according to which Hume has more than one position, I will call these accounts “no one Hume interpretations”.

Most of these seven interpretative options have been defended in the history of Hume scholarship. To begin with the oldest, perhaps, it was once a prevalent view...
that Hume denies the existence of Real entities - he is a negative dogmatic. This was part of the general interpretation that Hume is a destructive thinker who denies the existence of or even the possibility of knowledge concerning everything except his own mental occurrences, which he calls “perceptions”. According to this interpretation, extreme Subjectivist Idealism is the logical consequence of ‘British empiricism’, which Hume inherits mainly from John Locke (1632-1704) and George Berkeley (1685-1753). This reading was created by Hume’s contemporary critics, his cousin Lord Kames (Henry Home, 1696-1782), and the so-called Scottish common-sense philosophers and Metaphysical Realists James Beattie (1735-1803) and Thomas Reid (1710-1796). Its status as the prevalent Hume interpretation was established later by T.H. Green (1835-1882), who was a ‘British Idealist’ following in Hegel’s (1770-1831) footsteps. Together with T.H. Grose, he edited Hume’s philosophical works published in 1874-5 and wrote the over 300-page interpretation to the edition, where he fervently argued for the totally negative dogmatic interpretation.5

After Norman Kemp Smith (1872-1952)6 trampled on this reading in his double article in Mind (Smith 1905) and especially in the indisputable classic The Philosophy of David Hume (Kemp Smith 2005/1941), it has almost completely gone out of fashion and for good reason.7 Even the more limited negative dogmatic reading denying only the existence of Real entities has suffered the same fate - with only a few exceptions.

In the positivistic atmosphere of the first part of the 20th century, the limited negative dogmatic reading was endorsed in the form of the phenomenalistic Hume interpretation by the Oxford philosopher H.H. Price (1899-1985), for example. Although Price adheres to the negative dogmatic account in relation to the existence of Real entities, Hume’s overall intentions are not, according to him, destructive but constructive as leaning towards phenomenalism. Hume does not deny the possibility of conceiving of external objects; he merely reduces them to aggregates consisting of “perceptions”. (Price 1940, 227)

In recent years, Louis Loeb has defended the negative dogmatic interpretation concerning Metaphysical Realism. First of all, Loeb makes the standard point, as we will see, that Hume thinks that we cannot sustain the rejection of the belief in the

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5 A fine summary of this interpretation can be found in Reid (2002, 162). For other references, see Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 3-8, and chap. IV; Norton 1982, 3-5, 192, and 196-204.
6 Like Hume, Kemp Smith (before 1910 Smith) was a Scot, born in Dundee. He died in Edinburgh and was Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh (1919-45), to the alumni of which Hume belonged. Kemp Smith was also a distinguished Descartes and Kant scholar and translator. For Kemp Smith’s life, see Garrett 2005.
7 It still survives in some late 20th century textbooks of the history of philosophy.
existence of Real entities. Yet his reading is that according to Hume, philosophical reflection leads inevitably to the position that there are no Real entities since Hume condemns every account of them that he discusses. None of them is satisfactory and one is even impossible (the modern notion of the matter with only primary qualities). This entails that according to Hume, no belief, including the belief in Real entities, is epistemically justified. Reflection leads to an unstable position and Hume’s theory of justification claims that the criterion of epistemic justification is stability. Besides, Loeb explicitly dissociates himself from the positive dogmatic, that is, Metaphysically Realistic interpretation. (Loeb 2002, viii and 215-6) The general characteristic of Loeb’s reading is that under intense reflection Hume’s naturalistic theory of epistemic justification entails the denial of the possibility of any epistemically justified belief. (Loeb 2002, viii)

This way of making the main problem of the interpretation of Hume’s philosophy in general the relation between naturalism and scepticism was created by Kemp Smith, whose ground-breaking work founded the naturalistic reading of Hume (Garrett 2005, xxxiv). One part of this general interpretation is that Hume is a positive dogmatic with regard to the existence of Real entities – as also in many other questions. Kemp Smith’s own view is that Hume is a firm Metaphysical Realist. According to him, the belief in the existence of Real entities is one of the “natural” fundamental human beliefs, concerning which our will is impotent. It is therefore an involuntary belief for humans, an inevitable fact of the human condition. As a result, no sceptical argument can undermine it. (Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 124 and 126)

Kemp Smith does not claim, however, that Hume is a positive dogmatic across the board, or even concerning every question revolving around the belief in Real entities; he thinks that Hume denies the possibility of any rational epistemic justification for it. There can be no reason justifying its truth. This is what Hume’s sceptical arguments put beyond doubt. (Ibid. 116, and 118-9) Kemp Smith’s point, however, is that this negative conclusion is chiefly ground-clearing for Hume’s positive naturalistic thesis. The function of the sceptical arguments is to establish the negative conclusion that makes way for the positive that the origin of the belief in Real entities is in a natural instinct (instead of the epistemic justification and coherence seeking reason). It is not mere reason but natural instinct that inevitably makes us all

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8 In this work, I use “to reject” and “rejection” in the sense of believing that not-\( p \).
9 I take epistemic justification to concern truth in contrast to practical justification that may concern morally good, for example.
10 An interesting feature of Loeb’s interpretation is that he intends to amend Hume in the way that he can avoid this negative conclusion (chaps. VI.5, 6, and VII.2).
Metaphysical Realists. (Ibid. 116-121, 124-7, and 129-132) For Hume, sceptical arguments and their negative conclusions are therefore “an ally, but in due subordination, not as an equal” in relation to his naturalism (Ibid. 132). This is parallel to Kemp Smith’s famous ‘subordination thesis’ that in Hume’s philosophy reason is, and ought to be, only the slave of, subordinate to, natural beliefs, instincts, and sentiments. (Ibid. 11, 543, and 545)

Though Kemp Smith’s interpretation denies any rational epistemic justification for the belief in Real entities, and perhaps even any epistemic justification, there is an interesting undercurrent in his reading. That is what can be called providentialism. As the subordination thesis states, reason not only is but it also ought to be the slave of natural instincts. So Kemp Smith goes to claim that according to Hume, every impulse of “Nature” is “wholesome and beneficial” when it is duly proportioned and kept within its “natural conditions” (Ibid. 131). From the context of the claim, scepticism with regard to the senses, it is clear that he thinks that this also concerns the belief in Real entities as a “natural” belief. It is thus Kemp Smith’s view that Hume takes this belief to be practically justified, it has beneficial results. Consequently, we not only must but also should entertain it - whatever our subordinate reason may tell us. Kemp Smith connects, then, Hume to the providentialism that was typical of his day (Ibid.). What Nature has implemented on us is good and beneficial for human well-being. We are led by the providence of Nature. (see also Garrett 2005, xxxiii-iv)

The basic tenets of Kemp Smith’s naturalistic interpretation of Hume’s attitude to the existence of Real entities are then the following. Hume holds the natural belief in their existence for the following reasons (positive dogmatic and Metaphysically Realist). (1) As a fundamental natural belief, it is involuntary at the end of the day (must). (2) Thus, the sceptical arguments challenging it are impotent. (3) It is practically justified because it has beneficial consequences (ought). Providential Nature has made us hold it for our own good. The negative side of Kemp Smith’s interpretation is that the belief in Real entities cannot have rational epistemic justification. This is what Hume’s sceptical arguments can establish. But his purpose in advancing the arguments and their negative conclusion is ultimately positive, to make way for his constructive naturalism. The aim subordinate to it is to show that mere reason as the faculty that seeks justification and consistency could not compel us to believe in the existence of Real entities.

Kemp Smith’s student, Charles W. Hendel, adheres to all these tenets of his master in Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume, which was originally published in 1925, before Kemp Smith got his book out (Hendel 1963, 194, 198-9, 217, 221-2, 363,
Among established philosophers and Hume scholars, Barry Stroud has more recently endorsed Kemp Smith’s theses except the practical justification. This is manifest in his seminal *Hume* (Stroud 1977, 115-7), but it is his latest Hume article that explicitly celebrates Kemp Smith’s Metaphysically Realistic interpretation (Stroud 2006, 340-5). Two other commentators who endorse it are H.O. Mounce in his introductory book on Hume’s naturalism and Harold W. Noonan in a reading guide to *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Mounce 1999, 59; Noonan 1999, 186).

Perhaps the most distinguished current Hume scholar to align himself with the naturalistic interpretation is Don Garrett. In 1997, Garrett published his *Cognition and Commitment in Hume’s Philosophy*, which is one of the most important books on Hume ever, and has since defended and developed his reading in articles. Although Garrett sees differences between his and Kemp Smith’s interpretations, his position on the belief in Real entities comes very close to that advanced by Kemp Smith. Hume is a Metaphysical Realist, he holds a positive dogmatic position on the existence of Real entities for two reasons (Garrett 1997, 208, and 234; 2004, 83, and 90; 2006, 167, and 171). First, suspension of belief produced by sceptical arguments suffers a psychological defeat after the philosopher moves from his study to common life. The belief in Real entities is an involuntary opinion that we cannot continuously suspend. (Garrett 2004, 83, and 90) Second, it is epistemically worthy of assent; there is a positive evaluation of its truth (Garrett 1997, 234; 2004, 88; 2006, 167). It is especially this second reason that distinguishes Garrett from other current naturalistic commentators like Stroud and makes him closer to Kemp Smith. Garrett has made it clearer and clearer that according to Hume, the belief in Real entities has indeed some epistemic merit (especially Ibid.). Even though it cannot have any rational epistemic justification (Garrett 2004, 83; 2006, 167 and 171). In Garrett’s view, then, Hume assigns naturalistic, non-rational, epistemic justification to the belief in Real entities.

This happens by means of what Garrett calls “the Title Principle” (Garrett 1997, 234; 2004, 88 and 90). Hume claims it in the *Conclusion* to the first Book of the *Treatise*. It affirms that when “lively” reason is united with “some propensity”, “it ought to be

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11 Hendel made only one change to his main chapters in the 1963 second edition. He cut out the original fifth Chapter on space and time (T 1.4.2). (Hendel 1963, viii) He merely added a new preface, supplement, and revised the four appendices (Ibid. xiii).

12 One of Garrett’s followers in general is Noonan. David Owen also comes close to his interpretation (Owen 1999). Peter Millican has vigorously and insightfully attacked Garrett’s and Owen’s views of Hume on induction (Millican 2002c). In the exposition of Garrett’s reading, I will use mainly the articles since he is more explicit of his views in them.
assented to.” (T 1.4.7.11) Garrett reads this in the way that when the understanding serves our inclinations, needs, and desires, its products are worthy of (epistemic) assent (Garrett 1997, 241). The criteria for the justification of the understanding and its products are thus their practical consequences. In the case of the belief in Real entities, this means that it is justified to take it as a true belief since it serves human needs and desires. Thus, it can be said that according to Garrett, Hume considers the belief in Real entities as having consequentially naturalistic, epistemic justification and we ought to hold it. This point comes close to Kemp Smith’s claim that it has practical justification as having good consequences, the mechanism of which has been laid down by providential Nature. Yet there are two subtle differences between Garrett and Kemp Smith. In the first place, Garrett does not ground justification in providential Nature. Second, he sees justification as epistemic, concerning truth, whereas Kemp Smith does not but understands it in practical terms.

A further difference between these two prominent naturalistic commentators is the relation between the naturalistic and sceptical materials in Hume’s works, especially in the Treatise. As we have seen, for Kemp Smith, scepticism is largely ground-clearing for naturalism in Hume’s works; it shows that mere consistency and epistemic justification seeking reason cannot make us believe in fundamental natural beliefs. Garrett sees their relation as more complicated. The first phase of Hume’s argumentation for him is not sceptical but naturalistic (Garrett 2004, 89-90). It consists of the explanation of which natural operations of the human mind produce belief or movement of thought. It is true that this phase of cognitive psychology involves a negative part showing which natural operations are not responsible for belief and thinking. But the main intention is to establish the positive result. It is only in the second main phase that Hume starts to reflect on the negative, epistemological implications of the naturalistic phase: whether he is still allowed to continue using his intellectual faculties or not. This happens in the Conclusion of Treatise 1 and it leads Hume to answer “no”, that is, to the brink of “unmitigated practicing sceptical doubt”. Yet this verging on total suspension of belief suffers a psychological defeat, it is psychologically impossible to sustain it. The force of the sceptical arguments is overcome by natural impulses. But for Garrett, as for many naturalistic commentators, this is not the end of the story. We are led to adopt the Title Principle and to commit ourselves again to the workings of the understanding that allowed by this principle, that is, to those that serve our needs, desires, and inclinations. According to Garrett, then, Hume’s final position is naturalism combined with “mitigated, constant, general, prescriptive and epistemic merit scepticism”. We are justified in assenting moderately to certain cognitive operations and their results. (Ibid.)
Besides Kemp Smith, Robert J. Fogelin is Garrett’s acknowledged masters in Hume scholarship (Garrett 1997, Acknowledgements; 2004, 89). Fogelin has been particularly influential in studying scepticism and sceptical arguments in Hume’s philosophy, which is the topic of his *Hume’s Skepticism in the Treatise of Human Nature* (1985). In that book, and in a later article “Hume’s Skepticism” (1993), Fogelin wants to distinguish himself from Kemp Smith and one of the means for this is to claim, like Garrett, that the most radical scepticism is consequent to the naturalistic phase of Hume’s studies. Fogelin and Garrett think that in Kemp Smith’s interpretation, scepticism is merely ground-clearing for naturalism. As will be seen in Conclusion, it seems to me that they oversimplify Kemp Smith’s views. Here the relevant point is, however, that in these works Fogelin is actually quite close to the standard naturalistic reading regarding the belief in Real entities. He thinks that Hume takes it as rationally and epistemically unjustified but still as involuntary (Fogelin 1985, 6-7, 79, and 81; 1993, 91-2, 93, 111, and 112). Fogelin’s account repeats then the standard naturalistic point that the sceptical arguments against it are in time overcome by natural beliefs. For him, in these two works, Hume is a Metaphysical Realist (1985, 64, and 150; 1993, 94).\(^{13}\)

David Fate Norton, who is an established Hume scholar, has sharply criticised Kemp Smith’s subordination thesis. Yet he practically agrees with what Kemp Smith has to say about Hume’s attitude to the existence of Real entities. Norton interprets Hume thinking that the belief in their existence is involuntary, Hume assents to it and is a Metaphysical Realist. Norton’s specific point is to maintain that Hume’s assent is moderate or mitigated in two senses. Epistemically, Hume both believes and challenges the existence of Real entities (Norton takes pains to prove this possibility). Factually, Hume endorses mitigated naturalism as he claims that the belief in Real entities is instinctive, that is, it is caused rather than reasoned. From this, it does not follow, however, that it is true. (Norton 1982, 216, 221, 232-4, 237-8, 279, and 290-2) Despite of the somewhat uncertain truth of the belief in Real entities, Norton goes on to claim that Hume is an epistemological realist. For him, the criterion of truth is independent of human thought. (Ibid. 298, and 309)

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\(^{13}\) Another Hume scholar who has both emphasised sceptical and even inconsistent elements in Hume’s thinking and still maintained that Hume is a Realist is John Passmore. He thinks that the rescue for the sceptical argument against the belief in Real entities that nature can offer is psychological. It is not psychologically possible to keep on rejecting the belief. Hume’s reply to those arguments is not another argument refuting them but a psychological fact. (Passmore 1952, 1-2, 87 142, 146-9, and 152-3).
Hence, the Metaphysically Realistic and especially its naturalistic version of Hume reading is currently the dominant interpretation. It seems to me that this state of affairs corroborates the dependency of the history of philosophy upon the more general philosophical currents. Another account of Hume’s thinking of which we can say the same thing is the causal Realist reading by the so-called New Humeans (a term coined by Kenneth Winkler in 1991). According to this interpretation, Hume is not, as the Old Humeans claim, a pure regularity theorist of causality; Hume adheres to the position that causation is more than mere regularity between the types of events or objects. Moreover, some of them go on to claim that Hume also believes in the existence of Real causes underlying and explaining the observed regularities – though their nature is beyond our conception. (Richman 2000, 1-2) The New Hume reading is accordingly also called the sceptical Realistic interpretation. The term was invented by John P. Wright who is one of the proponents of the strong New Hume interpretation (Wright 1983). In the dissertation, I will also take Galen Strawson and Stephen Buckle as examples of that reading – though focusing here on Wright and Strawson.\footnote{I will discuss New Hume more extensively in Chapter 4.2.2. It has been especially influential in Britain and also defended by Janet Broughton (1987), Edward Craig (2000), Paul Stanistreet (2002), Peter Kail (2003), and Helen Beebee (2006).}

As Wright and Strawson commit Hume to the existence of Real causes, they also need to defend the reading that he is a Metaphysical Realist in general. For this, they advance different strategies. Wright comes quite close to Kemp Smith in making the standard naturalistic point that the belief in Real entities is involuntary (Wright 1995/1986, 231, and 234; Wright 1983, 75-6). So Hume's permanent position must be that there are indeed Real entities (Ibid. 223). His real contribution, however, is that Hume's theory of ideas leaves room for “inconceivable suppositions”, by virtue of which we can believe in Real entities in the various common life and philosophical forms discussed by Hume. It is with the help of these that Wright interprets Hume holding a Representative Realism close to some readings of Locke. There are Real material entities with only the primary qualities of extension, solidity, figure, number, etc., which cause our sense-perceptions of them. We can suppose and believe this philosophical theory although strictly speaking we cannot conceive it. (Wright 1995/1986, 226-7, and 231-4; 1983, 107-112)

Strawson’s move is to attribute “relative ideas” to Hume’s theory of ideas. Although it is not possible to conceive of Real entities in terms of descriptively contentful perceptions, we can suppose their existence as distinguished from other entities through relative ideas. The relative idea of Real entities is of incomprehensible beings
causing our sense-perceptions. It is this relative idea that provides content for the belief in the existence of Real entities, despite the fact that it does not give any contentful insight into their properties and nature. (Strawson 2002, 239-42; Strawson 1989, 49-53)

A camp of the Metaphysically Realistic and positive dogmatic readings of Hume is formed by those commentators who maintain that Hume holds a Realistic theory of perception. Like Garrett and Wright, John Bricke and John Yolton are among those scholars who take Hume to be some kind of Representative (indirect) Realist (Bricke 1980, 21, and 23-4; Yolton 1984, 162-3; and 2000, 109-13). Recently, not only William Edward Morris but also Cass Weller has defended the interpretation that Hume is a Direct Realist (Morris 2000, 108-9; and Weller 2001).

The readings of Hume by Donald Livingston, Annette Baier, and Morris claim that the sceptical arguments that he presents are not really his own. Hume does not endorse either their premises, argumentative links, or conclusions. His assent to some of them is contended. Therefore, the fact that Hume presents sceptical arguments against the belief in Real entities does not show that he rejects or suspends judgment on it. (Livingston 1984, 2-4, and 9ff.; Baier 1991, 21, and 107; Morris 2000, 96-102, and 106) Conversely, all these commentators believe that Hume is a Metaphysical Realist. According to Livingston, Hume takes the everyday belief in Real entities as a transcendental presupposition of our experience and reasoning (Livingston 1984, 3, and 15). For Baier, Hume’s true philosophy is critical application and self-reflection of common life beliefs and reasonings including the belief in Real entities (Baier 1991, 20-7). Morris claims that Hume advocates going back to common life from the philosophical “problem space” of “modern philosophy”, which produces the hardest sceptical argument against the belief in Real entities. (Morris 2000, 108-9)

A distinguished scholar of the history of scepticism in early modern philosophy, Richard H. Popkin, laid the foundations for the contemporary combinative accounts of Hume’s attitude to the existence of Real entities. Above I have coined the term “no one Hume interpretation” to cover these readings. In his classic article *David Hume: His Pyrrhonism and His Critique of Pyrrhonism*, Popkin maintains that Hume is “the only “consistent” Pyrrhonian” sceptic (Popkin 1980/1951, 103). In the case of our question, this means that at one time he suspends his judgement on the existence

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15 For a description of these theories of perception, see Chapter 3.3.
16 To be precise, Morris does this only in relation to what I call “the second profound argument against the senses”, see Chapter 3.4.
of Real entities; at another, he firmly believes in it. According to Popkin, Hume is both a sceptic and a positive dogmatic on the issue. When he is in his rational “mood”, by means of irrefutable sceptical arguments, he comes to the conclusion that we ought to suspend our belief in Real entities (Ibid. 132, 112, 114-5, 119-20, 126, and 130). That belief cannot have any rational basis and it involves insolvable paradoxes (Ibid. 112, 119-20).

Though the intellectual mood is also natural for certain people, philosophers (Ibid. 123, 131), it is yet in the strong natural mood that Hume is a Metaphysical Realist. With this respect, Popkin repeats the basic naturalistic claim that natural instincts force us to believe in it notwithstanding the irrefutable sceptical arguments. (Ibid. 116, 119-20, 123-6) Hume is the only consistent Pyrrhonist because he does only what nature compels him to do. In their lives, the ancient Pyrrhonists followed nature in form of appearances, what seemed to them to be the case, but suspended judgement on the question of how things really were. Hume follows nature more consistently as he believes firmly when nature necessitates him to do so. Actually, Popkin goes so far as to claim that Hume believes only what nature makes him believe. (Ibid. 126-30 and 132)

Another circumstance with respect to which Hume is also a consistent Pyrrhonist is that since he suspends and believes in different periods of time, he is not subject to any inconsistency. Popkin does not make this explicit but it turns out to be so in the more recent “no one Hume” interpretations by Fogelin and Donald L.M. Baxter, to which I next briefly turn.

In his most recent Hume article, which is a comment on Garrett’s book, Fogelin defends a form of “no one Hume” interpretation. Actually, in his book, he already acknowledges his debt to Popkin and there are also hints at this kind of reading in it and the 1993 article (Fogelin 1985, xii, and 149-50; 1993, 113). However, it is only in the most recent paper that he explicitly maintains a “no one Hume” reading. Fogelin’s latest view is that Hume is a radical perspectivalist: his writings exhibit inconsistent positions depending on the perspective from which things are considered. From one point of view, Hume is a Metaphysical Realist; from another, he is not. At this point, I shall not go into detail on Fogelin’s new interpretation. Suffice it to note two things. First, Fogelin does not attribute any inconsistency to Hume’s philosophical positions. The inconsistent views are held from distinct perspectives and therefore they are not contradictory with each other. (Fogelin 1998, 164-8) Second, Fogelin also reads Hume as the first philosopher doing the “natural history of philosophy” (Fogelin 1998, 168). This means that especially with regard to Real entities and perceiving them with our senses, Hume’s account should be taken
as “a sequence of philosophical perspectives”, which unfold naturally when one is doing philosophy in “an unrestricted manner.” (Ibid.; for a detailed account, see Fogelin 1985, 80ff.)

Recently, Baxter has deliberately followed Popkin’s footsteps and defended the view that Hume is a Pyrrhonist regarding the existence of Real entities. Baxter’s interesting claim is that Hume’s various remarks on the issue are best accounted for by making a subtle distinction between two kinds of assents. Baxter thinks that in this regard, Hume models himself on Sextus Empiricus who, according to Popkin and Michael Frede (1997), distinguished between active endorsement and passive assent.

Applied to the case of Real entities, this means the following. On the one hand, Hume suspends his active assent to their existence since it is epistemically unjustified - there are no reasons to support its truth. Actually, Baxter takes Hume to be a complete Pyrrhonist in the sense of suspending active endorsement on every belief due to the absence of reasons. However, on the other hand, Hume assents passively to the existence of Real entities because it is involuntary, almost irresistible and instinctive. The passive endorsement is for Baxter then what the naturalistic interpretation takes as Humean, natural belief. His contribution, which is close to Popkin, is to distinguish this following of natural impulses from the upper case, philosophical endorsement. The relevant point here, as in Popkin and Fogelin’s latest interpretation, is that this is a way to avoid attributing an inconsistency to Hume. (Baxter 2006, 114–7) As Baxter concisely puts it, “[i]n this sceptical way Hume takes for granted the existence of body.” (Ibid. 116)17

In light of this survey of Hume scholarship, it can be thus said that reading Hume as a Metaphysical Realist is practically the dominant interpretation of his thinking at this moment. The proponents of the naturalistic interpretation hold it without exception. It is included in the influential New Hume reading. Writers on Hume’s theory of perception tend to think that he is some kind of Metaphysical Realist. Even among the commentators who like to emphasise the sceptical or negative dogmatic aspects of his writings still think that he is a Metaphysical Realist regarding the existence of Real entities - at some points, moments, or moods at least. Despite the fact that it was once widely held that Hume denies their existence among other things, nowadays it is quite hard to find any Hume scholar who seriously challenges this consensus. Loeb is a rare exception; yet he thinks that Hume rejects the existence of Real entities only under intense reflection.

17 In his most recent work, Baxter develops his interpretation into a direction, which is subtly but significantly different. See the note on the topic in Chapter 5.3.
Corresponding consensus prevails regarding Hume’s view of the rational epistemic justification of the belief in Real entities. As far as I know, only Baier and Livingston may contend that Hume does not deny its possibility – and it must be acknowledged that even this is dubious. There is therefore significant agreement among Hume scholars that he rejects the possibility to support the veracity of the existence of Real entities by any reasons whatsoever.

1.2 Theses

The interpretation advanced in this work differs from this widely held consensus of Hume being a Metaphysical Realist. Normally this issue is discussed in terms of Hume’s philosophical position. But I deem it important that we distinguish Hume’s philosophical view from his everyday opinion in this matter. My interpretation is thus founded in the first place on Hume’s distinction between common people and philosophers in its various forms. My intention is not to dispute the wide consensus in the case of Hume’s everyday opinion on things. However, I deny that Metaphysical Realism is Hume’s philosophical position. My main thesis in the dissertation is that Hume is both a sceptic and a positive dogmatic on the existence of Real entities along with the material substance and bodies (insofar as they are considered mind-independent). As a philosopher, Hume suspends his judgment on the existence of Real entities, the matter, and substantial bodies. Instead, Hume the common man firmly believes in their existence. In contemporary philosophical terms, Hume’s philosophical position is anti-Realistic and his everyday belief Metaphysical Realism. I thus endorse and defend a form of the combinative “no one Hume” interpretation.

The crucial point in the interpretation is that there is temporal difference between Hume’s philosophical and everyday views; one of my contributions is to substantiate that Hume thinks that there is a contradiction between the philosophical use of reason and everyday belief in the existence of Real entities, which arises under intense reflection. It is by virtue of the temporal distinction between Hume’s philosophical position and common life opinion that my “no one Hume” interpretation is meant to avoid this inconsistency. I will show that in light of the different interpretations, this is a novel way of resolving this inconsistency puzzle. Besides, it has not attracted enough attention in Hume scholarship.

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18 When I mention matter as a substance in the sense of a perception-independent entity, I use the definitive form “the matter”.

19 This sense is either clear from the context or I refer to independent bodies by the term “substantial bodies”.
Another reason for this interpretation is the sub-conclusion of the dissertation that Hume considers Real entities (the matter and substantial bodies) to be completely out of the reach of our faculty of understanding. We can have no intellectual access to them. I thus claim that Hume professes conceptual negative dogmatism concerning these entities and rejects their notions as inadequate. This does not mean, however, that Hume thinks that Real entities, the matter, and substantial bodies are non-existent or impossible entities. His suspensive, philosophical attitude to Real entities is manifest in this question, too, because he does not dogmatically deny their existence or possibility. There may be Real entities beyond our understanding; we just cannot comprehend them. I will also conclude that Hume does not take the term “Real entity” as totally meaningless because it can have obscure and confused though not precise meaning. In the first place, we are able to deceive ourselves that we have the perception of Real entities. Secondly, it is possible to have an idea that is close to the idea of Real entity and to confuse these two ideas. These two perceptions may provide some meaning for “Real entity”, which is confused, however, instead of determinate.

Though my reading is opposite to the prevalent view in the case of Hume’s philosophical position on Metaphysical Realism, I do not dispute the wide consensus on Hume denying the possibility of any rational, epistemic justification for it. Rather, my intention is to put this finally beyond any reasonable doubt. I also go further and claim that any epistemic justification and Kemp Smith’s practical justification for Metaphysical Realism is rejected by Hume. This conclusion concerning Metaphysical Realism is also defended in the case of Hume’s view of the existence of God and the soul. I establish these claims concerning justification chiefly by means of showing that Hume renounces any rational, epistemic justification for Representative Realism. Representative Realism is a theory of perception, according to which perceptions with the senses represent their Real objects (representation involves resemblance and/or causation). At the end of the dissertation, I give reasons for the interpretation that Hume’s philosophical position in the first Enquiry does not involve any theory of perception.

1.3 References

The method of this study may be approached from the direction of which works by Hume are considered to be the primary textual sources in it. Regarding this question, too, the work takes an untypical route, for it is Hume’s mature masterpiece on the faculty of the understanding, An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, that is the primary reference. This diverges from the standard principle of Hume scholarship of recent decades to use Hume’s first work, A Treatise of Human Nature (3 volumes,
1739-40), as the text to which Hume scholars ought to refer in the first place when studying his theory of the understanding, passions, and morals.

The first Enquiry was published anonymously in 1748 under the title Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding (Beauchamp 2000a, xlvi). For the 1758 edition, Hume changed the name to the existing (Ibid. l). The last edition under his supervision fell from the press posthumously in 1777. I have used Beauchamp’s critical edition, which is mainly based on the 1772 edition.

There are two reasons for this deviant approach. First, the first Enquiry has been too much ignored in Hume scholarship, especially when we compare it with its corresponding Book in the Treatise, the first (Millican 2002d). So far, only four book-length studies in English have been published on it, while there are dozens of works on the first Book of the Treatise (Flew 1961, Stern 1971, Buckle 2001, and Millican (ed.) 2002). The main reason is, nevertheless, that the first Enquiry is Hume’s mature, authorised piece on the understanding, on what he calls logic (EHU, Advertisement). Hume also edited the first Enquiry for almost 30 years, whereas the Treatise was written in a couple of years (E, MOL, xxxiv). There is therefore a clear message from Hume’s side for us that the first Enquiry contains his deliberated word on the understanding. The interpretative principle that follows from this is that we ought to treat it as the primary reference in Hume’s logic (theory of understanding, epistemology, philosophy of science, logic) whenever it is possible. Commentators doubting this norm should reflect on a situation in which their work is studied and even judged on their juvenile work instead of well-honed, mature compositions.

It is a different question how we judge these two works philosophically, which is an issue that cannot be settled here. Many people find the Treatise more interesting and philosophically stimulating. Of course, if we want to study Hume’s philosophy as it is in the Treatise, his juvenile views, or thoughts that are omitted from the later works, taking it as the primary reference is not a problem. However, the readings of Hume that choose the Treatise as the primary reference of his authorised views are under the treat of conflating interpretation with assessment or juvenile views with mature positions in their very premises.

This does not mean that we should ignore the Treatise completely in this work. According to good interpretative principles, no text can be properly understood out

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20 The so-called second Enquiry was published in 1751 under the title An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.

21 Philosophy of religion is a more problematic case because of the Dialogues.
of context, and the author’s other works form the closest textual context for it. In
this regard, Hume’s entire corpus bears potential textual evidence for any study that
begins with the first Enquiry. In some questions, the evidence that the first Enquiry
can provide is so scarce that we have to use all the potential evidence. Besides, we
shall see that there are particular cases where it is possible to document that Hume
still holds the view in his later works that he maintained in the Treatise. Thus, he
must endorse it in the first Enquiry as well, although we do not have any textual
evidence for it in that work. In this respect, the Dialogues, Hume’s essays The Sceptic
(1741), Of the Standard of Taste (1757), and the posthumous Of the Immortality of the
Soul are relevant.

It is therefore predictable that, among commentators, the Hume scholar who has
worked most extensively on the first Enquiry has been the main influence on this
work. Millican’s Introduction to his anthology especially, his chapter on the context
and aims of EHU, and his master article on Hume on induction have provided the
general point of view to approach the first Enquiry (Millican 2002a–c). Of the other
books on the first Enquiry, much can be learned about Hume as a philosopher of the
Enlightenment from Buckle (2001).22 Flew’s and Stern’s pieces are, however, dated
and they do not merit discussion.

Although other Hume literature focuses on the Treatise, no Hume scholar can deny
that he or she is standing on the shoulders of the giants of the literature. Kemp
Smith’s classic (2005/1941) is a self-evident instance of this. Excellent work by
Baxter (1997, 2006), Owen (1999), Loeb (2002), and Falkenstein (2006), to name a
few, are also indisputable classics of Hume scholarship. Amid the viable New Hume
though they disagree - are invaluable and Strawson’s thought provoking.23

As already mentioned, Hume is hard to understand without taking his context into
account. Nowadays the body of literature on the so-called early modern philosophy
is vast, but I have learned most from Yolton (1984) and Michael Ayers (1991,

22 As we recollect. Buckle endorses the New Hume interpretation. Consequently, it suffices to
discuss Wright’s and Strawson’s accounts in its stead.
23 On Hume, there is also a master’s thesis in Finnish by Dr. Juha Koivisto (Filosofia ilman ‘takuita’ –
David Humen ihmistiede (Philosophy without ‘guarantees’ – David Hume’s Science of Man).
University of Tampere 1991). Without this work, the general view of Hume as a philosopher who
understands human nature as social, which is implicit in this dissertation, would not have been
possible.
1998b). On Sextus Empiricus, Julia Annas (1985 and 2000 with Barnes) and Jonathan Barnes (1997) have been the most important resources.

1.4 Of Method

The discussion of my main question on Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism is organised upon his view of the so-called two “profound” sceptical arguments against the senses. I will approach this sub-problem of what Hume thinks about the arguments by means of a careful, detailed reconstruction of them. The reason for this is that it is useful first to have as good an understanding of the arguments as possible before tackling the problem of Hume’s attitude to them.

Hume presents these arguments in Part 1 of the last Section of the first Enquiry, Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy.24 They take 10 paragraphs from EHU 12.1.7 to 16 - three to five pages depending on the edition. The first part of the book consists of the most detailed, close reading of these paragraphs, by means of which the two profound arguments are reconstructed step-by-step. In this approach, Millican’s and Garrett’s work on several Hume’s arguments have been influential. Garrett’s method of outlining them in Hume’s words is a useful and reliable way of initially organising the arguments. The reconstruction results in diagrams of the arguments similar to those of Millican in the case of Hume’s famous argument on induction in Section 4 of the first Enquiry (Millican 2002c).

As such, this meticulous reconstruction work is valuable in two respects. First, it raises the accuracy of the interpretation of the arguments to a new level. The reconstructions themselves are thus a contribution to Hume scholarship. Although Bricke has analysed them briefly in some detail (1980, ch. 1), nobody has reconstructed the arguments resulting in the structure diagrams as Millican has done for EHU 4. It is in this respect that this book is intended to supplement and continue Millican’s work.25 Secondly, it is surprising how little Hume’s arguments in Of the modern philosophy of the Treatise (1.4.4), which corresponds to the second profound argument, have attracted attention. Instead, Of scepticism with regard to the senses (1.4.2), which is similar to the first argument, has been much studied. To this state of affairs, Wright, Garrett, Bricke, and Kemp Smith are notable exceptions.

24 The tables of the contents in the 1748-56 editions read “Of the sceptical or academical philosophy” (Beauchamp 2000a, xlvi).

25 Naturally, this does not mean that we agree on every point of interpretation. I am also aware that the chapters dealing with the reconstruction and diagrams are quite hard to understand in certain points but I take the end to justify the means.
Wright and Garrett have analysed T 1.4.4 in some detail, and Bricke and Kemp Smith are two of the few to realise the importance of its conclusion (Wright 1983, 107-12; Garrett 1997, 215-20, Bricke 1980, 9-10, 19ff., Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 127-132, and 490-4).  

The second part of the work consists of the discussion of Hume’s view of these two profound arguments. In it, their impeccable reconstruction is rewarding. First of all, in this part, I establish that the two profound arguments against the senses are really Hume’s own arguments. For this, their Millican-type diagrams provide a useful framework. Hume’s endorsement of the arguments can namely be established by showing that he subscribes to their central premises. Thus, as I will substantiate that he endorses the links of the arguments, he must assent to their conclusions, too, if he is consistent.

In the third part of the dissertation, this leads to comparing the implications of Hume’s assent to the profound arguments with other, potential textual evidence on Metaphysical Realism. By virtue of this comparison, I justify my sceptical and positive dogmatic interpretation of Hume’s attitude to it and the sceptical reading of his view of the different theories of perception. The reconstructions of the arguments in the first part form thus a rock-solid basis, from which we can advance to address the main question of the dissertation in the second and especially in the third part.

In all these efforts, I have followed a case-specific method. The main reason for this is that studying texts calls for an approach that is sensitive to the characteristics of each part of the text. Three examples may be given how this is present in this work. First, I apply slightly different points of view to the two profound arguments against the senses. As we shall see, the first of them does not require so much of a contextual approach as the second. In it, we do not need to be so historically sensitive. In the second place, I have used contemporary philosophical terms whenever appropriate, for the sake of making the text more accessible to the present-day readers. However, when the parlance of Hume or his times have been necessary, appropriate or illustrative, they have been employed. Thirdly, as the reader may observe, my method is a hybrid of so-called rational and historical reconstructions. On the one hand, I scrutinize EHU 12.7-16 and other Hume’s relevant texts following a rigorous textual approach, which is coupled with a somewhat detailed contextual study when needed. On the other, I aim at the

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Accordingly, I will focus mainly on their interpretations. Bricke is not therefore on the wrong track when he claims that the problem has gone “unnoticed” before him (Bricke 1980, 19).
reconstruction of the two profound arguments as valid philosophical arguments as the text admits.

The rational reconstruction side of my approach is connected to another general principle that I have followed. That is coherence: we ought to avoid attributing any incoherence or even tension to Hume so far as is reasonable. This is not only a good interpretative principle – normally the problem is in the presuppositions of the reader - but also appropriate in the case of a philosophical dissertation, which is an exercise in philosophy. Besides, seeking coherence is many times rewarding. It often happens in the history of philosophy that the simple-minded accounts of philosophers and their arguments become prevalent. At the same time, some possibilities of thinking and potential lines of argument are forgotten. The history of philosophy that treats its “objects” as great thinkers not falling to inconsistencies easily may thus remind us of the once lost philosophical possibilities. As such, it is possible that they draw a more accurate map of the landscape of philosophy.

1.5 Overview

I begin the work with preliminary considerations (Chapter 2) on Hume’s so-called Copy Principle, the terminology of the dissertation, structure of Section 12 of the first Enquiry, and Hume’s conception and refutation of Pyrrhonian scepticism. The aim in this section of the work is to set stage for the subsequent reconstruction of the two profound arguments (Chapter 3) and the discussion of Hume’s attitude to them (Chapter 4). Before the reconstruction of the arguments, I provide an overview of them. The sections on Hume’s view of the arguments are preceded by a brief exposition of the main interpretations of his attitude to each argument. Although the first argument is longer in Hume’s text, his attitude to the second will take much more space because of being a more complicated issue. In it, we have to dig into Hume’s theory of belief, his doctrine of the perception of extension, and his view of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. We also have to use Hume’s other texts than the first Enquiry much more in its case than in establishing his assent to the first profound argument.

I finish the work with a quite extensive Conclusion, in which I pull the strings together: the implications of Hume’s adherence to the two profound arguments for his position on the existence of Real entities, the matter, God, and the soul. I will also discuss the questions whether Hume has any theory of perception and what his “perceptions” are. The very last section of the dissertation shows that the interpretation advanced here fits well with Hume’s general programme to develop a
comprehensive science of man on inductive-experimental basis, to study human nature in its various manifestations from the understanding to the history of religion.
2 Preliminary Considerations

2.1 Hume’s Sensibilism

In the 20th and 21st century, the standard way of categorising early modern philosophers has been to distinguish them into rationalists and empiricists. However, I take Wayne Waxman’s distinction between sensibilism and intellectualism to be more accurate. According to Waxman, sensibilism is the doctrine that

“all our ideas – perceptions in Hume’s terminology, representations in Kant’s – originate in (are coeval with) being perceived, and have no existence prior to or independently of their immediate presence to consciousness in perception.” (Waxman 2005, 3)

Intellectualism is the negation of sensibilism that

“the ideas of constitutive of intellection generally (conception, judgment, and reasoning), and of objective understanding most particularly (thought and cognition of substances, causes, quantities, etc.) exist prior to and independently of their being perceived in sensation or reflexion, and so are composed of contents distinct from sensations and reflexions.” (Ibid. 5)

Terms “sensibilism” and “intellectualism” are therefore illustrative in themselves because they indicate that intellectualists believe in the existence of the so-called pure intellect. Pure intellect is the faculty by virtue of which we are able to understand independently of what we perceive with our outer or inner senses. Sensibilists deny that we have pure intellect and claim that all apprehension, judgment, and reasoning can be explained in terms of what originates in perceptions with these senses.

Before we can go into in what sense Hume can be called a sensibilist, it is necessary to remark something of the three terms of his: “perceptions”, “impressions”, and “ideas” (EHU 2.1, and 3). Here it is enough to say more or less vaguely that by “perceptions” Hume means any mental occurrences, that is, any mental contents and acts (EHU 2.1-3). It is common knowledge that he divides perceptions “into two classes or species”, “impressions” and “ideas”. Their distinguishing feature is “their different degrees of force and vivacity.” Sometimes Hume also speaks about “liveliness” or its cognates instead of “vivacity”. (EHU 2.3) Naturally, in Hume scholarship, there has been on-going discussion of this basis of the distinction between impressions and ideas and thus of their nature (see Millican 2002d, 424-5). As this question is not so relevant for our purposes, it suffices to say that all perceptions with the five, outer senses are impressions and any mental representations of them are ideas.

Hume is a sensibilist in the sense of what one of his central tenets, the so-called Copy Principle (CP) implies. There is no consensus among Hume scholars about the correct interpretation of the Copy Principle (Millican 2002d, 425-7). I follow
Garrett’s empiricist and naturalistic reading of the principle, according to which it is a well-grounded empirical tenet stating that every simple idea is caused by and resembles some simple impression.\(^{27}\) In Garrett’s reading, the relation of copying consists then in causation and resemblance. (Garrett 1997, 41-8) When we add to this that every complex perception consists of nothing but simpler perceptions,\(^{28}\) we can say that every idea is copied from impressions directly or through its elements.\(^{29}\)

It follows from this that there is no idea, according to Hume, that cannot be, in principle, reduced to impressions. The understanding cannot add, so to speak, any new simple idea to thinking. Every idea is dependent on perceiving with the senses. This does not mean, however, that it cannot form unperceived complex ideas like the idea of golden mountain (EHU 2.5). Hume thus rejects pure intellect because there is no need to postulate that faculty; there are no proper intellectual ideas. (T 1.3.1.7) It is possible to account for the ideas that we actually or potentially have by means of the senses, memory and imagination (T 1.1.1.3). In these senses, we can say that he is a sensibilist.

### 2.2 Of Terminology

In addition to “perception”, “impression” and “idea”, I have characterised initially how terms “Real entity”, “the matter”, “substantial body”, “the soul”, “Metaphysical Realism”, and “Representative Realism” are used in this book. The meaning of some terms will be explained when they first occur in the text. Before we embark on the work itself, it is however needed to say something about the use of the central terms that surface constantly on the text.

The first family of terms concerns the acts of perceiving with our five outer senses and the contents (objects) in which these acts result. Different terminology of them has been employed in the history of philosophy, but here I use the following terms in order to avoid misunderstandings as much as possible. To the contents of perceiving with the outer senses, I refer by “sense-impression” or “sense-perception”, in which the meanings of “impression” and “perception” are Humean

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\(^{27}\) “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) Of Hume’s more traditional distinction between simple and complex perceptions, see T 1.1.1.2.

\(^{28}\) This distinction is missing from the text of the first Enquiry. Nonetheless, I take it as the natural explanation of what Hume says about the limits of the understanding in EHU 2.

\(^{29}\) “Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.” (EHU 2.5)
in the above outlined sense. The situation is made a little bit complicated by the fact that "sense-perception" can also refer to the act of perceiving with the senses. The context will make explicit which one of these two uses of the term is employed. Sometimes I also speak about "Real object" in the connection to Representative Realism. In that case, I mean Real entities as the possible indirect objects of sense-perception.

In contemporary philosophy, Hume is most famous not only because of his scepticism but also due to his analyses of induction and causation. Although induction, causation are not the topics of this dissertation, they cannot be totally avoided in reconstructing the two profound arguments and interpreting Hume’s view of them. It is therefore necessary to make evident how different terms referring to them are used.

Regarding cause and effect, “causation” and “causality” are susceptible to some ambiguities. I use “causation” to refer to production: that the effect comes about because of the cause. So I employ it in the sense of causal relation. “Causality” may be its synonym, but it also refers to the efficacy of the cause, that is, to the circumstance in the cause that produces the effect, which Hume calls “power, force, energy” (EHU 7.1.3) In the case of “causality” as well, it will be evident from the context which one of these two meanings is in question.

For Hume, any inference from experience beyond it is based on causation (EHU 4.2.14). Hume’s own terms of this extrapolative inference are, to name a few, “reasoning[s] concerning […] matter[s] of fact” (EHU 5.1.3, 4.1.4, and 10.1.3), “reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence” (EHU 4.2.18), “moral reasoning” (EHU 12.3.28), “experimental reasoning” (EHU 9.1), “experimental inference” (EHU 8.1.17), “probable argument”, “argument concerning existence” (EHU 4.2.19), and “probable reasoning” (T 1.3.6.6). In Hume scholarship, one of the settled terms is “causal reasoning”. As Humean reasonings concerning matter of fact are not merely causal, in its stead, I will use the following meaning of “inductive inference” or “inductive reasoning” defined by Millican:

“Inductive inference”: “Factual inference to the unobserved that operates by extrapolation on the basis that the unobserved will resemble the observed”

“Factual inference to the unobserved”: “Factual inference that moves from premises about what has been observed, to a conclusion about something which has not been observed (however that inference might operate)”

“Factual inference”: “Inference that draws a conclusion about matter(s) of fact, beyond what is deductively (‘demonstratively’) implied by the premises (whatever those facts might be, and however that inference might operate)”. 
(Millican 2002c, 120)
According to Hume, inductive inference results in belief. For these beliefs, I will accordingly use the term “inductive belief” and sometimes “causal belief” if I want to emphasise that it concerns cause or effect.

2.3 Structure of EHU 12

Millican and Norton have observed that it is difficult to get grasp of what is really going on in Section 12 of the first Enquiry. Even its structure does not seem to be very clear at bottom although it seems so on the surface. (Millican 2002b, 62-5; Norton 2002, 379, and 391-2) The structure of EHU 12 does not belong to the main topics of this work and therefore would not be reasonable to justify its interpretation advanced here by means of working from the details of the text, which I do in reconstructing the two profound arguments. Yet the arguments and Hume’s view of them cannot be understood out of this context. Accordingly, next I will present an interpretation of the structure, which will justify itself if it makes good sense of what is going on in the Section and puts the pieces nicely together.

Section 12 is organised on the distinction between “antecedent” and “consequent” scepticism (EHU 12.1.3, and 5). In the (Humean) logical context of the Section, this distinction means that there is scepticism both prior to and following philosophical study of the factual human understanding. The sub-distinction of this categorisation is between “universal” or “excessive”, and “moderate” or “mitigated scepticism” (EHU 12.1.3, 12.2.21, 12.1.4 and 12.3.24). There are thus four types of scepticism that Hume discusses in EHU 12: (1) universal antecedent scepticism, (2) moderate antecedent scepticism, (3) excessive consequent scepticism, and (4) mitigated consequent scepticism. He calls the first of them “the CARTESIAN doubt”, “which is much inculcated by DES CARTES and others” (EHU 12.1.3). The second type does not get denomination, but the third is “PYRRHONISM” and the fourth “ACADEMICAL philosophy” (EHU 12.2.21, and 12.3.24).

Hume categorises Cartesian scepticism under the universal antecedent heading because it subjects the understanding to all-embracing doubt before its specific study or even using it in philosophy (if that is possible). It is most likely that Hume has in mind Descartes’ (1596-1650) well-known project in the Meditations (1641) and Discourse (1637) when he discusses Cartesian scepticism briefly in paragraph three. His discussion is so short that it hardly merits of being accurate. That is also betrayed by its dismissive, immediate refutation in the same paragraph. Instead, Hume’s attitude to moderate antecedent scepticism is much more positive. This happens in the next fourth paragraph. It consists of being cautious, meticulous, accurate, and starting from “clear and self-evident principles” in philosophical reflection and
reasoning. Hume considers it as “a necessary preparative to the study of philosophy” and the only method “by which we can ever hope to reach truth, and attain a proper stability and certainty in our determinations.” (EHU 12.1.4)

When it is taken into account that the two first paragraphs of EHU 12 are mainly introductory, we can say that the rest of 34 paragraphs of the Section are devoted to consequent scepticism. There is thus a noteworthy difference between the rooms given to consequent scepticism and to the antecedent form, 30 to two paragraphs. This circumstance is not surprising when we realise that consequent scepticism has more intimate connection to what Hume has established in the previous sections of the first Enquiry. It is also more in the spirit of Hume’s empirical philosophy than Cartesian a priori scepticism. Its excessive form – Pyrrhonism – and the Pyrrhonian arguments are discussed in paragraphs 5 to 23. Hume’s treatment of the mitigated type of consequent scepticism, or Academical philosophy, occurs in the last, third Part of the Section (EHU 12.24-34).

What Hume understands by Pyrrhonism is spread out almost all over Section 12. Although the two introductory paragraphs mainly state the question of what scepticism means and what its limits ought to be, the second paragraph contains also the initiative characterisation of the Pyrrhonist. The Pyrrhonist’s philosophy is nonetheless chiefly discussed in paragraphs five, 18, 21-4, and n.32. I will come back to this issue in the next Chapter, so at this point it is enough to categorise the Pyrrhonian arguments and to see where they occur in the Section.

Hume distinguishes the Pyrrhonian arguments in terms of both content and target. His division with regard to content is into “trite” or “popular”, and “profound” or “philosophical” arguments (EHU 12.1.6, 14, and 12.2.21). The trite or popular arguments are worn or commonplace in philosophy and everyday reflection (EHU 12.1.6, and 12.2.21), whereas the profound or philosophical arguments originate in deep philosophical enquiry (e.g. EHU 12.1.14-15). The categorisation in terms of which intellectual capacity the target is follows closely Hume’s distinction between the senses (and memory), intuition, demonstration, and inductive inference (Owen 1999, 85; see also Garrett 1997, 27; and Millican 2002c, 128-32). Only intuition is not subjected to the Pyrrhonian arguments. So we have five types of the Pyrrhonian arguments: (1) trite arguments against the senses, (2) profound arguments against the senses, (3) philosophical arguments against demonstration\(^\text{30}\), (4) popular arguments against inductive inference, and (5) philosophical argument against inductive inference.

\(^{30}\) Hume’s other term for it is “abstract reasoning” (EHU 12.2.18).
inference. It is the profound arguments against the senses that get reconstructed in this dissertation.

Hume begins his treatment of these reasonings with the trite arguments against the senses in paragraph six. His attitude to them is equally dismissive as in the case of Cartesian scepticism. He rather alludes to them than really discusses these arguments and presents a quick solution on them. The popular arguments against inductive inference get a similar treatment in paragraph 21. It is therefore in the profound or philosophical arguments where Hume’s interest lies.

The first profound argument against the senses is discussed in paragraphs 7 to 14 and is very briefly recapitulated in the last paragraph of the first Part (16). The second profound argument against the senses is stretched over this and the previous paragraph. In the second Part of the Section, Hume proceeds to the Pyrrhonian arguments against reasonings and makes a quick general comment on them in EHU 12.2.17; the break between parts is thus located at the point of proceeding from one intellectual capacity to another, from the senses to inferring. Hume begins the proper discussion of inferences with the philosophical arguments against demonstration, which follow from the putatively demonstrated, infinite divisibility of space and time. This occurs in paragraphs 18 to 20. After discussing the popular arguments against induction in the next paragraph, Hume advances to the philosophical, sceptical argument on it. It is here where the consequential nature of the Pyrrhonian arguments with regard to the first Enquiry in its entirety is most evident. The philosophical argument builds on Hume’s theories of inductive inference and causality in EHU 4-7 (that is probably why Hume speaks about the argument in plural: “philosophical objections”). It recapitulates his “Sceptical Doubts” and “Sceptical Solution” concerning induction (EHU 4-5) and the negative argument for the impossibility of finding the idea of necessary connection in the impressions of particular cases (Part 1 of Section 7). Hume’s positive view of the idea of causality as fundamentally the idea of constant conjunction is also included. To these results, the argument attaches that custom, the origin of induction and the idea of causality, is possibly misleading as a natural instinct (EHU 12.2.22).

31 This is very short compared with T 1.2, which is mainly devoted to the topic of infinite divisibility. Hume’s sceptical argument with regard to demonstration in T 1.4.1 is also missing from the first Enquiry. This book is not the right place to speculate on this issue.

32 Although the customary modern term is ‘theory of causation’, I use “theory of causality” in its stead. The reason for this is to emphasise that Hume’s well-known two definitions of causation in EHU 7.29 are primarily definitions of cause and only derively definitions of causal relation. “Causality” refers better to the cause than “causation”, which indicates more production, that is, causal relation.
Preliminary Considerations

Hume’s criticism and refutation of Pyrrhonism itself begins already in EHU 12.2.21 as one part of the refutation of the popular arguments against induction. That this criticism is more general and concerns Pyrrhonism as a philosophical approach is revealed by two circumstances. Hume makes the same points at the end of paragraph 22 and they are included in his refutation of Pyrrhonism in EHU 12.2.23. The second Part of Section 12 finishes therefore with Hume’s rejection of Pyrrhonism.

Academical philosophy ends Section 12 and the first Enquiry. I think that this is a significant fact and it is one of the reasons to take it as representing Hume’s own position (on the understanding). Unfortunately, an extensive argument for this interpretation and analysing Academical philosophy in detail is beyond the scope of this book. It will be rather assumed than justified as Hume’s final word on the understanding. Nevertheless, in Conclusion, I have to discuss Academical philosophy to some extent. At this point, it is enough to point out the following.

Hume says that there are two “species” of mitigated consequent scepticism. His selection of the term “species” is of consequence as it suggests that he is presenting one genus, Academical philosophy, that has two species. It is therefore justified to read Hume as putting forward a unified position in Part 3. Both are thus included in his own position. The first species is treated in paragraph 24 and it consists in taking every reasoning and conclusion with “caution”, “modesty”, and “a degree of doubt”. So the first species of Academical philosophy is practicing mitigated doubt on every topic (universal).

The other species gets more extensive discussion from Hume’s part. We can see that the rest of the Section is devoted to it although its clearest statement can be found in paragraph 25. The other species of Academical philosophy is limiting philosophy to the objects and topics of which our intellectual capacities are capable of getting understanding, belief, and knowledge (EHU 12.3.25). Hume specifies this in paragraphs 26 to 34. The proper objects of intuition and demonstration, that is, of knowledge strictly speaking, are at least mainly mathematical (EHU 12.3.27). Inductive inference and the senses, instead, are able to form ideas, impressions, and knowledge in a lesser sense of matters of fact and existence (Ibid. 28–9). For instance history, politics, criticism (aesthetics), and natural philosophy belong to this branch of knowledge (Ibid. 30–3). Hume finishes the discussion of Academical philosophy

33 Millican has challenged the standard reading that they are the sole objects of intuition and demonstration (Millican 2002c, 132-4). In this work, I cannot take any reasoned stance on this difficult matter.
and the first *Enquiry* with his famous and notorious demand to throw into flames all the books that violate these boundaries of true philosophy (Ibid. 34).

### 2.4 Hume’s Conception and Refutation of Pyrrhonism

Hume’s understanding of Pyrrhonism and his attitude to it are questions that would be worthy of an extensive discussion in themselves. In the context of this book, however, their significance lies in forming the framework that makes it possible to get grasp of Hume’s view of the two profound, Pyrrhonian arguments against the senses. For that reason, here it suffices to put forward an interpretation of them rather as a working hypothesis than as a fully explained and justified account (this interpretation will be justified if it can provide an interpretative framework for understanding of Hume’s attitude to the profound arguments against the senses).

Accordingly, I will not go into the similar treatment of this question as in the case of the arguments themselves and Hume’s view of them. The method of consideration is more as the one followed just above in the case of the structure of Section 12. However, in order to avoid making the impression that the interpretation advanced here is arbitrary, it is needed to bring forward the passages that support it. As their discussion is not required for our purposes, it is enough to refer to them by quotations in footnotes although this procedure may be slightly inconvenient for the reader.

To put it briefly, my interpretation of Hume’s conception of Pyrrhonism is that it is universal suspension of belief. This means that Hume’s Pyrrhonist does not have any stance on any issue whatsoever; he suspends his judgment on every question.  

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34 “But that all his [Berkeley’s] arguments, though otherwise intended, are, in reality, merely sceptical, appears from this, *that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction*. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism.” (EHU 12.1.15.n.32)

“Reason here seems to be thrown into a kind of amazement and suspense [...] And between these [light and darkness] she is so dazzled and confounded, that she scarcely can pronounce with certainty and assurance concerning any one object.” (EHU 12.2.18)

“While the sceptic insists upon these topics, he shews his force, or rather, indeed, his own and our weakness; and seems, for the time at least, to destroy all assurance and conviction.” (EHU 12.2.22)

“[A] PYRRHONIAN may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings” (EHU 12.2.23).

“[N]o man [has] ever met with any such absurd creature, or conversed with a man, who had no opinion or principle concerning any subject, either of action or speculation.” (EHU 12.1.2; see also T 1.4.7.8; Letter 21-5; and DNR 1, 34, 37, and esp. 38)
to be realised that this does not mean universal rejection. Hume’s Pyrrhonist does not reject anything because he does not believe that something is not the case either.

As we can expect on this basis, my view is that Hume rejects Pyrrhonism thus understood. In the first place, I agree on the following standard point in Hume scholarship. Hume takes Pyrrhonism as a not-so-healthy position - if it can be called a position - that is psychologically impossible to maintain: we human beings must believe in something. The standard thinking is therefore that Hume has rather an objection to Pyrrhonism than an argument against it. It is here where I am a dissenter from the standard interpretation. I maintain – secondly - that Hume has a proper argument against Pyrrhonism. I acknowledge that the argument is based partly on the psychological impossibility. My contribution is to claim, however, that it is practical in nature: even if human beings were able to maintain Pyrrhonism constantly, it could not pass as good philosophy. Like virtuous character, good philosophy has to be beneficial and agreeable and that Pyrrhonism cannot be. It would lead to the death of the Pyrrhonist (and the entire society if all people were Pyrrhonists) because human life cannot be lived without believing in something.

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35 For the standard view, see Fogelin 1983, for example. At this point, my position is opposite to the one advanced by him (1983, 410).

36 “But a PYRRHONIAN cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind [...] Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a PYRRHONIAN may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same, in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect, or with those who never concerned themselves in any philosophical researches.” (EHU 12.2.23)

“To bring us to so salutary a determination, nothing can be more serviceable, than to be once thoroughly convinced of the force of the PYRRHONIAN doubt, and of the impossibility, that any thing, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it.” (EHU 12.3.25; see also 1.4.7.9-10; Abs.27; Letter 21-5; and DNR 1, 34-5)

37 “For here is the chief and most confounding objection to excessive scepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it; while it remains in its full force and vigour. [...] But a PYRRHONIAN cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind: Or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge any thing, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease; and men remain in a total lethargy, till the necessities of nature, unsatisfied, put an end to their miserable existence.” (EHU 12.2.23)

“These arguments might be displayed at greater length, if any durable good or benefit to society could ever be expected to result from them.” (Ibid. 22; see also T 1.4.7.10, and DNR 1, 34-5)

Cf. “There is, indeed, a more mitigated scepticism or academical philosophy, which may be both durable and useful” (EHU 12.3.24). “Another species of mitigated scepticism, which may be of advantage to mankind” (Ibid. 25; see also T 1.4.7.12-3).
The third core feature of my interpretation is that we ought to distinguish Pyrrhonism from its arguments. This is perhaps the most important point in relation to our main topic, Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism and the two profound arguments. First, it has the implication that Hume’s view of Pyrrhonism may be a distinct matter from his attitude to the Pyrrhonian arguments. Thus, it is entirely consistent for him to reject Pyrrhonism and to endorse some Pyrrhonian arguments like the profound arguments against the senses. Hume’s refutation of Pyrrhonism at the end of Part 2 is not therefore self-evidently a denunciation of the Pyrrhonian arguments. It leaves Hume’s attitude to these arguments an open question.

Secondly, the distinction between Pyrrhonism and its arguments should make us to ask what their relation is according to Hume. My view of this matter is that the relation is rather causal than argumentative (logical). All-embracing suspension of belief is something that can happen to me after being subjected to the Pyrrhonian arguments. It is not something that follows from them by virtue of an argumentative link. This is a significant point for two reasons. (1) It supports the interpretation that Hume is able to both endorse some Pyrrhonian arguments and reject Pyrrhonism at the same time. (2) The (argumentative) conclusions of the Pyrrhonian argument are distinct from Pyrrhonism. Thus, Hume’s possible assent to the conclusions of some Pyrrhonian arguments does not commit him to suspend belief on every question. If we concluded that he endorses the conclusions of the two profound arguments, it would not follow that he is a Pyrrhonist.

Cf. “Whatever is valuable in any kind, so naturally classes itself under the division of useful or agreeable” (EPM 9.1.1). “And as every quality, which is useful or agreeable to ourselves or others, is, in common life, allowed to be a part of personal merit; so no other will ever be received, where men judge of things by their natural, unprejudiced reason, without the delusive glosses of superstition and false religion.” (Ibid. 3)

38 “Their only effect [merely sceptical i.e. Pyrrhonian arguments] is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism.” (EHU 12.1.15.n.32; emphases added)

“Reason here seems to be thrown into a kind of amazement and suspense, which, without the suggestions of any sceptic, gives her a diffidence of herself, and of the ground on which she treads. She sees a full light, which illuminates certain places; but that light borders upon the most profound darkness. And between these she is so dazzled and confounded, that she scarcely can pronounce with certainty and assurance concerning any one object.” (EHU 12.2.18; emphasis added)

“While the sceptic insists upon these topics, he [...] seems, for the time at least, to destroy all assurance and conviction.” (EHU 12.2.22; emphasis added)

“[A] PYRRHONIAN may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings” (EHU 12.2.23; emphasis added; see also T 1.4.7.8; Letter, 21; and DNR 1, 34, and 37-8).
Preliminary Considerations

It is perhaps appropriate to finish this Chapter by pointing out that the historical correctness of Hume’s conception and refutation of Pyrrhonism is a controversial issue. Julia Annas, an established scholar of ancient philosophy and scepticism, has contended that Hume understood very little of Sextus Empiricus’ Pyrrhonism (Annas 2000, 271, and 274-5). On this question, it may be remarked that the accuracy of Hume’s understanding depends on which stance we take in the contemporary discussion of the scope and nature of (mainly) Sextus’ Pyrrhonism. A related question is what counts as a belief according to Hume, on the one hand, and in Sextus’ view, on the other.

Tad Brennan has made a useful three-part distinction between different interpretations on the scope problem. The first is the traditional interpretation, according to which a Pyrrhonist does not have any opinion whatsoever but leaves completely uncontrolled life (Brennan 2000, 63). This reading has been vigorously attacked by Miles Burnyeat and Barnes, for instance, and they claim that the Pyrrhonist has some beliefs, after all. Sextus believes what he is compelled to believe: that he is affected in a way (feels hunger), for example. (Ibid. 63-4) Brennan himself finds the third interpretation most plausible. According to it, Sextus suspends his judgment only on “dogmata”, that is, on the doctrines of the competing philosophical schools in the Hellenistic era (Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, Epicureans, etc.). For Brennan, then, Sextus’ Pyrrhonism concerns mainly philosophical and religious problems. (Ibid. 64-5)

It is clear that if Brennan’s interpretation is correct, Hume’s understanding of ancient Pyrrhonism is deeply flawed. That seems to be the case with regard to the Burnyeat-Barnes reading as well although then we would need to go into the discussion of what finally counts as a belief in Hume’s view, which is not possible here. Instead, if the traditional interpretation were right, Hume’s understanding would be more or less accurate. However, for our purposes the most crucial point is that in all of these readings, there is something correct in Hume’s conception of Pyrrhonism if my

39 Here I am assuming that Hume is speaking about ancient Pyrrhonism instead of the so-called neo-Pyrrhonism of Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) and Pierre Bayle (1646-1706), for example (see Popkin 2003, chs. 3 and 18). But as this would make things even more complicated, I restrict this discussion out of the limits of this work.

40 For the classical articles in this discussion, see the collection edited by Burnyeat and Frede (1997).
account of it is apt: Pyrrhonism is suspension of belief or judgment rather than rejection (belief that not-\( p \)).

Whether Hume’s counter-argument to Pyrrhonism works against Sextus hangs on the historical exactness of his understanding of Pyrrhonism and we cannot go into that discussion. Hence there is no room for that discussion here either. Regarding Hume’s view of the relation between suspension and Pyrrhonian argument in my interpretation, it must be pointed out that it was Barnes’ reading of Sextus that helped me to realise it in Hume’s case (Barnes 1997/1982, 58-9). The question here should be therefore rather in the direction whether Barnes’ interpretation can aid us in understanding Hume than to ask whether this particular view by Hume is historically correct.

\[\text{\footnotesize 41 This corresponds to the distinction that I made in Introduction between true scepticism and negative dogmatism.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 42 For a negative answer to this question, which works on a simple-minded reading of Hume’s refutation of Pyrrhonism, see Annas 2000, 274-5.}\]
3 Profound Arguments against the Senses

3.1 Overview

As it is noted, the two profound arguments against the senses take 10 paragraphs from seven to 16 in the first Part of Section 12 of the first Enquiry. Their detailed reconstruction can be best approached by means of going through briefly what is going on in the arguments. They start with what Hume calls the “primary opinion of all men” (EHU 12.1.9). It consists of a two-part belief, which is put forward respectively in two paragraphs, seven and eight. Philosophically speaking, the more fundamental component of the two is Metaphysical Realism (MR): there are Real, that is, causally perception- or mind-independent, continuously existing entities, (absolutely) external to the perceiver. The other belief involved in the primary opinion is perception-theoretical. These Real entities are (directly) present to the mind in sense-perception, which is a form of what is nowadays called Direct Realism (DR).

In the first two paragraphs, two claims about the psychological origin of the primary opinion are brought forward. The first is negative and it states that “reason” is not the origin. At this point, it is not needed to explicate this term any further. Suffices it to point out that the affirmation is that the cause of the primary opinion is “a natural instinct” (EHU 12.1.7). It is common knowledge in Hume scholarship that this affirmation is much elaborated in the Section “Of scepticism with regard to the senses” of the Treatise (1.4.2). In the first Enquiry, however, Hume is content with saying that every human being has a “natural prepossession” to believe that there are Real entities which are present to the mind in sense-perception (EHU 12.1.7).

The philosophical criticism of the primary opinion is advanced in paragraph nine. It is based on the so-called table argument to the negative result that Real entities are not present with the mind in sense-perception. The positive doctrine that it is intended to establish is that only mental perceptions can be present to the mind in sense-perception or thinking in general. For this doctrine of some consequence, I have coined term ‘Conscious Mentalism’ (CM). What we can be conscious of in any act of the mind is mental in its ontological status, that is, causally perception-dependent.

The target of the philosophical counter-argument to the primary opinion is thus its perception-theoretical component. The ontological element is left to be at this point. In the next phase of the first argument, Hume describes how he thinks that philosophers try to reconcile Conscious Mentalism with Metaphysical Realism. That
is the “pretended philosophical system”, which can be called Representative Realism (RR) consisting of Metaphysical Realism and a theory of perception capable of assimilating Conscious Mentalism into it. According to RR, some sense-impressions are representations of their Real objects in two senses. First, they resemble or are similar to the Real objects. Second, the Real objects cause sense-impressions.

The philosophical system of Representative Realism is presented mainly at the end of paragraph nine after putting forward the table argument. But its exposition is stretched out to the following paragraphs as well. This occurs in the context of the sceptical counter-argument to it in EHU 12.1.10-14. That argument results in the objection to Representative Realism that denies any rational, epistemic justification for it. Its truth cannot be supported by any reasons whatsoever.

Hume’s order of presentation is here opposite to that of argumentation because he starts with the objection in paragraph ten. He goes downward in the argument to put forward two reasons for it. The first is to deny any diachronic (naturalistic), rational epistemic justification for Representative Realism. That kind of justification would refer to its causal origin as infallible. Its opposite is synchronic justification where this temporal dimension is bracketed out, so to speak. The other reason for the objection denies thus the possibility of any rational, epistemic justification of this type for the philosophical system. This strand of the argument gets more attention than the diachronic and is advanced in paragraphs 10, 12, and 14. To put it very briefly, Conscious Mentalism rules out any experience of any relation between sense-impressions and the supposed Real entities. It is only experience on which synchronic, rational epistemic justification could be founded. Representative Realism is thus without any justification of that type. Experience cannot support the truth of the proposition that there are resemblance and causal relations between sense-impressions and their Real objects.

From this perspective, what is going on in paragraphs 11 and 13 may look rather peculiar. In the former, Hume discusses the possibility of a dualistic, metaphysical proof of Representative Realism. It is ruled out as impossible because of the difference in kind between the putative material and spiritual substances. Paragraph 13 is also devoted to refuting a possibility of proving the philosophical system. In it, it is argued that the theological proof of referring to God as our creator is question begging.

These two paragraphs are thus somewhat strange in two respects. Whereas the sceptical argument against the philosophical system works mainly in terms of justification, their target is to rule out two proofs of it. Proof is the strongest form of justification. In the second place, the target of the argumentation in paragraph 13
seems to be rather Metaphysical Realism than Representative Realism. Using God’s veracity as a premise seems to presuppose MR because it assumes that there is at least one causally (human) perception-independent, continuously existing entity. But it does not beg the question whether some sense-impressions represent their Real objects, which naturally presupposes that there are Real entities.

However, instead of accusing Hume of inconsistencies, it is more fruitful to ask what these interpretative problems may tell us about the profound arguments. The first thing is that the two counter-arguments in EHU 12.11 and 13 are *ad hominem* in a certain sense. They are advanced against some philosophers starting with their own premises and showing inconsistencies in their systems (presumably Descartes, Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715), and Locke). The second point is that not only the justification of the philosophical system is ruled out in Section 12; establishing it is as well. The most important lesson is, however, the third. The target of the two profound arguments is not merely or even mainly different theories of perception although Hume says that they are arguments against “the senses” or “the evidence of sense” (EHU 12.1.6 and 16). Rather, the target is Metaphysical Realism. Therefore Hume’s attitude to it can be fruitfully studied by means of reconstructing the arguments. This becomes especial clear in the second profound argument.

Before that, nevertheless, it is required to point out that now it can be realised that the denial of any rational, epistemic justification concerns Metaphysical Realism as well. The ultimate aim in the first profound argument is that the truth of Metaphysical Realism cannot be supported by any reasons whatsoever. After realising that Metaphysical Realism is also at stake here, it is easy to see that the argument against the synchronic justification of Representative Realism works equally well against it. Let us presume that the truth of x’s existence can be supported only by the existence of its cause or effect. The existence of Real entities can thus be justified only by virtue of the production of sense-impressions by them. But we cannot have any experience of this putative causal relation because Conscious Mentalism rules out any experience beyond perceptions. On these premises, then, the existence of Real entities cannot be supported by any synchronic reasons whatsoever. In addition, the argument against the diachronic justification for Representative Realism works equally well in the case of Metaphysical Realism. We know because of Conscious Mentalism that the natural instinct causing the belief in MR is misleading. Therefore it cannot be justified by referring to its origin as infallible or reliable.

After recapitulating the first profound argument in paragraph 14, Hume proceeds to the account of the second in the following, two last paragraphs of Part 1 in Section
This argument starts with the early modern distinction between primary (PMQ) and secondary qualities (SCQ). In order to make this easily misunderstood distinction clearer, I will use the distinction between primary and sensible qualities (SNQ) in its stead. Primary qualities are mainly quantitative, Real properties of Real entities, the most fundamental of which are solidity (impenetrability) and extension. Sensible qualities are qualitative properties perceived with our five senses: colours, tactile (hardness and temperature), sounds, smells, and tastes. For our purposes, the most relevant tenet involved in the distinction is what I call ‘the Sensible Qualities Principle’ (SNQP). Sensible qualities are not Real properties of Real entities and their perceptions cannot thus resemble any Real properties of Real entities (in the case of PMQ, both these claims are negated).

In the second phase of the second profound argument, the distinction between primary and sensible qualities is forced to collapse in terms of our perceptions. It is argued that every perception of the putative primary qualities is a perception of sensible qualities. Here it is not necessary to go into the details of this argument. Suffices it to say that extension cannot be perceived without colours or tactile qualities. Thus, we cannot distinguish perceptions of primary qualities from those of sensible qualities. For the follow-up of the second profound argument, the relevant point is the implication of this collapse together with the Sensible Qualities Principle (and a couple of other premises). None of our perceptions is able to resemble any Real property of Real entities. In other words, it is not possible to have any perception of Real entities as entities that have properties. As we can see even on the basis of this quick summary, the second phase consists of the perception analysis concerning the impressions and ideas of extension and the properties derivative of it (spatial properties).

Next Hume puts forward an objection to the argument up to this point. The ideas of primary qualities are abstract in the sense that they can be conceived in total separation of the ideas of sensible qualities. This forms the third phase of the second profound argument, which occurs in the middle of paragraph 15. It is, however, refuted immediately by claiming that both the abstract ideas of particular primary qualities and the abstract general ideas of universals are “beyond the reach of human conception.” (EHU 12.1.15) The fourth phase only reiterates then what is claimed in the second phase.

43 If we take (1) Direct Realism and its philosophical refutation, (2) Representative Realism and its sceptical criticism, and (3) the second profound argument as different stages of how Hume’s argument develops in EHU 12.1, I can agree with Bricke that there are three distinct stages in Hume’s argument with regard to the senses (Bricke 1980, 5, and 10-11).
The stage is now set for the final, fifth phase of the second profound argument, in which it is manifest that the ultimate target of the profound arguments is rather Metaphysical Realism than the different theories of perception. The collapse of the distinction between PMQ and SNQ in the second phase implies that we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties. As entities without properties are out of the reach of our understanding, it follows that there can be no perception of Real entities. From this, it is inferred two claims. First, it is “contrary to reason” to believe in Metaphysical Realism, that is, in the existence of Real entities. Second, the notion of the material substance is inadequate and it must be rejected as something of which we cannot have any perception whatsoever.

It is not very easy to understand exactly the first conclusion of the second profound argument and the argument to it from proposition “no perception of Real entities”. The account defended in this work is that the belief in Real entities is contradictory to the rational attitude of refraining from that belief. Refraining is rational since “no perception of Real entities” follows from inductive inference to the SNQP, the rationality of the perception analysis behind the second phase, and from Hume’s theory of belief. That theory places the constraint for rational beliefs to have some perceptual content but that is impossible in the case of Real entities. It also allows momentary refraining from any belief. The main premises behind the first conclusion are thus an analysis of the perception of extension and other primary qualities, the inductive conclusion Sensible Qualities Principle, and Hume’s theory of belief.

The second conclusion is presented in the last sentence of Part 1 of Section 12, which was inserted by Hume in to the posthumous 1777 edition of the first Enquiry. Its interpretation advanced here is that the notion of the material substance is inadequate. The argument for this proposition begins with the imperceptibility of Real entities. It implies that we cannot have any perception of the material substance, which is a Real entity. If it is further supposed that intelligibility requires perceptibility and knowledge intelligibility, it may be concluded that the notion of the matter is inadequate as unknown and unintelligible (in the sense of incomprehensible).

The two profound arguments thus yield the following results, to put it briefly. Direct Realism is deeply problematic because of Conscious Mentalism. Representative Realism is without any rational, epistemic justification. This also concerns

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44 This line of argument and the terms used in it will be further specified when Hume’s view of it is discussed.
Metaphysical Realism. Moreover, believing in the existence of Real entities, that is, endorsing Metaphysical is “contrary to reason” and the notion of the substantial matter is inadequate because it is unknown and unintelligible. We can see, hence, that if the argument for Hume’s endorsement of the profound arguments is successful, it casts a deep shadow on the Metaphysically Realistic interpretation of his thinking.

3.2 Reconstruction Method

My method, however, is not to go straight into that argument. For it, it is fruitful to analyse first Hume’s exposition of the two profound arguments in detail and to reconstruct them as diagrams that make their argumentative structure explicit. In this phase of the work, I take them as arguments that Hume presents and keep his view of them as separated from their reconstruction as possible. This approach will pay its price back in the subsequent chapters when I discuss Hume’s attitude to the arguments.

As I have noted, the profound arguments against the senses take ten paragraphs. In order to analyse them in detail, it is accordingly needed to go through all these paragraphs sentence-by-sentence. Although Hume’s exposition of the arguments is quite brief, the brevity is rather a sign of his master skill to summarise deep and complex philosophical issues than of superficiality. For this reason too, the reconstruction of the arguments is somewhat long-winded. But ultimately, its value will come evident.

In the discussion of the each argument, I pursue the following method more or less rigorously. I begin by analysing its structure and outlining it in Hume’s words. Subsequently, I consider each part of the argument separately. First I quote the text and then I repeat the sketch of the part in Hume’s words, which also involves organisation of its argumentative structure. After that, I discuss every argumentative step in the part and form its reconstructed argument diagram, which I sometimes present right at the start. When all the parts of an argument are reconstructed, I put the pieces together and form the reconstructed profound argument, starting with the first and finishing with the second.
3.3 First Profound Argument

3.3.1 Structure

The first profound argument has a four-part structure consisting of two branches. Its first branch starts with what Hume calls the “universal and primary opinion of all men”, which is presented in paragraphs seven and eight. Paragraph 9 begins with the counter-argument to it and continues with the exposition of the “philosophical system” in phase three, which is the starting point of the second branch. (EHU 12.1.9) The second branch also concludes with a counter-argument in paragraphs 10-13, which is aimed at the philosophical system. The two branches are summarised in paragraph 14.

The structure of the argument as a diagram is accordingly the following:

The rest of this Chapter is consequently organised into four sections respectively: (1) primary opinion, (2) the philosophical argument against it, (3) the philosophical system, and (4) the counter-argument to it. Before considering them, it is needed, however, to outline the entire first profound argument in Hume’s words and organised according to its argumentative structure:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phase</th>
<th>paragraph</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7-8 (9)</td>
<td>1. &quot;universal and primary opinion of all men&quot; (&quot;faith in ... senses&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1 supposition (&quot;belief of external objects&quot;, &quot;opinion&quot;):</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;an external universe, which depend not on our perception, ... would exist&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;existence uniform and entire&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;independent of ... intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2 supposition:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;the very perception or sensible image is the external object&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>cause (causal foundation/origin):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>positive: &quot;men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession&quot;</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;men follow ... powerful instinct or nature&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;follow the instincts and propensities of nature&quot;</td>
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<td>negative: &quot;without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason&quot;</td>
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<td>p2.1: &quot;The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we move farther from it;&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>p2.2: But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration&quot; (1.1)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>c2.1: &quot;It was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind&quot; (-1.2)</td>
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<td>c2.2: &quot;nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;the obvious dictates of reason&quot;</td>
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<td>14 c2.3.1: 1.2 irrational</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>10 c2.3.2: 1.2 &quot;fallible and even erroneous&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;the opinion of external existence [...], if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;universal and primary opinion of all men [1] ... destroyed&quot; (c2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;by the slightest philosophy&quot;</td>
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<td>table argument:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>p2.1: &quot;The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we move farther from it;&quot;</td>
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<td>p2.2: But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration&quot; (1.1)</td>
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<td>c2.1: &quot;It was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind&quot; (-1.2)</td>
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<td>14 c2.3.1: 1.2 irrational</td>
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<td>10 c2.3.2: 1.2 &quot;fallible and even erroneous&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;the opinion of external existence [...], if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason&quot;</td>
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<td>9 (10)</td>
<td>2. &quot;pretended philosophical system&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>element = supposition 1.1:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;other existences, which remain uniform and independent&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>element:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[&quot;[2.2.1] the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[2.2.2] fleeting copies or representations of other existences&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;the perceptions are only representations of something external&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14 2.2.2.1: &quot;the perceptions of the mind ... caused by external objects&quot;</td>
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<td>2.2.2.2: &quot;resembling them&quot; (repeated in 12)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>&quot;philosophy ... extremely embarrassed, when she would justify this ... system&quot; (c4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>c4.1: &quot;She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>P4.1: &quot;that led us to a ... system, ... acknowledged fallible and even erroneous&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c4.2: &quot;to justify this pretended philosophical system, by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity&quot;</td>
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<td>By what argument can it be proved&quot;, &quot;to prove&quot;, &quot;argument ... to prove&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11, 13, 14</td>
<td>argument option 1: metaphysical</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>p4.2.1.2.1: &quot;mind [is] a substance, supposed of so different, and even contrary a nature&quot; than &quot;body&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p4.2.1.1/c4.2.1.2: &quot;nothing can be more inexplicable than the manner, in which body should so operate upon mind as ever to convey [2.2.2.1] an image of itself&quot; [2.2.2.2]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### First Profound Argument against the Senses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument 2: factual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p4.2.2.1: &quot;The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4.2.2 reformulated: &quot;reason ... can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove, that the perceptions are connected with any external objects [2.2.2]&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Argument 3: appeal to God

| p4.2.3.1: "the external world be ... called in question" |
| c4.2.3: "To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit." |
| 14 |

### Summary

| 5.1.1: "Do you follow the instincts and properties of nature, may they say, in assenting to the veracity of senses?" |
| "the opinion of external existence [...] if rested on natural instinct" [1.2] |
| VS |
| 16 |
| 5.1.2: "Do you disclaim this principle, in order to embrace a more rational opinion [2.2], that the perceptions are only representations of something external?" |
| "the opinion of external existence [...] if referred to reason" [2.2] |
| 16 |
| 5.2.1: "But these lead you to believe [irrational 1.2], that the very perception or sensible image is the external object." [phases 1-2] |
| "is contrary to reason" [1.2 contradictory to 2.2] |
| VS |
| 16 |
| 5.2.2: "You here depart from you natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy you reason" [phases 3-4] |
| "is contrary to natural instinct, and at the same time carries no rational evidence with it, to convince an impartial enquirer" [2.2. contradictory to 1.2 and without justification] |
| 16 |


### 3.3.2 Primary Opinion

As the “universal and primary opinion of all men” consists of two elements, Hume devotes two paragraphs to its exposition. Problematically, he uses three terms to describe the elements. First he refers to them by the verb “suppose” (Ibid. 7 and 8). They are therefore “suppositions”. Hume also writes that the first supposition is an “opinion” or “belief of external objects” (Ibid. 7). The second element is initially just supposition but since the primary opinion is an opinion, the second element must be as well. The problem is that usually “supposition”, “opinion” and “belief” refer to different degrees of certainty. Belief is the most certain, supposition the lowest. Opinion is between them. What is however certain at this point is that the first element is a belief according to Hume although we cannot say for sure which sense of “belief” he uses here. Regarding “supposition”, it can be remarked that he may use it to suggest that people assume. They believe without reasons or at least without strong ones. The follow-up of the argument supports the claim that the first element is precisely an assumptive belief. Below I shall come back to the question whether the second element is also a belief. At this point, it is enough to say that it is an assumptive opinion.

In order to distinguish belief or opinion from its content or object, I take advantage of the contemporary distinction between belief or opinion as a propositional attitude and proposition as its object (see CDP, 658-59). For example, if I believe that Hume lived in Edinburgh, my belief is a propositional attitude in relation to the proposition “Hume lived in Edinburgh.” The sentence “I believe that Hume lived in Edinburgh” can be presented formally by the formula B(p) where p is a symbol of this proposition. I apply this distinction purely as an heuristic tool without taking any side on the problems what kind of things propositions are – mental, linguistic, abstract or something else - and how Hume would regard them. I also acknowledge that it is anachronistic to employ the distinction although Hume distinguishes belief from its content (EHU 5.2.13).

Another technical detail before going into the analysis of the primary opinion is that I present a philosophical analysis of it although the primary opinion is not a philosophical doctrine. I do not claim that according to Hume, people are aware that they hold the doctrines that are philosophical explications of the primary opinion. Analysing it philosophically is however justified by the point that Hume presents the

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45 I will come back to this issue in Chapter 4.2.2.

46 For the problems of how we should exactly interpret this distinction, see Broackes 2002.
primary opinion in philosophical terms.\footnote{Hume’s philosophical point of reference might be the Aristotelian theory of perception if Aristotle (384-322) was taken to hold a kind of Direct Realism in \textit{De Anima}. For example Michael Esfeld has defended this reading (Esfeld 2000). The opposing interpretation is representative held by, for instance, Stephen Everson (Everson 1997, 175-77 and 193-203).} In addition, this will turn out rewarding in determining Hume’s philosophical commitments.

The analysis of the primary opinion is good to start by quoting it and then presenting its outline in Hume’s words and my reconstruction diagram:

“It seems evident, that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creation are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions.

It seems also evident, that, when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but representations of the other. This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it: Our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it.”

(EHU 12.1.7-8)
Hume’s formulation of the first element of the primary opinion (1.1) is that
“we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would
exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated.” (Ibid. 7)
Though the context of this formulation is testimony provided by the senses, it is
fruitful to take the passage out of this connection. In that manner, we highlight the
content of this assumptive belief that corresponds to the core of the philosophical
doctrine nowadays called “Metaphysical Realism” (MR) (CDP, 488-89). Besides,
this way of putting it does not take it completely out of the context of the first
profound argument since Metaphysical Realism corresponds to Hume’s starting
point in the argument. The starting point consists of two components, the second of
which has three modes. The first “existence component” claims that there are

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48 Hume did not use this term and not even “realism”, which was, according to OED, used first by Samuel Coleridge in 1817 (OED, realism, 2.a).
beings. The second “mode component” qualifies that these entities exist in three ways. First, they are “external” to the sense-perceiving mind. Second, their existence is, as Hume says in the last-quoted passage, independent of the beings who are capable of sense-perceiving it. Third, their existence is continuous: they exist even if they are not perceived.

What is more or less exactly meant by “externality” and “independency” is needed for later discussions. “Externality” refers to different spatial location than the perceiver (I will later relate it to the distinction between absolute and relative space). “Independency” is more ambiguous since it can be taken in ontological or causal sense, for instance. The definition of ontological independency is that \( x \) is independent of \( y \) if and only if it is possible (in some sense) that \( x \) exists and \( y \) does not exist. Causal independency differs from this in the way that \( x \) is causally independent of \( y \) if and only if \( y \)’s existence does not causally affect \( x \)’s existence. In the case of Hume, the causal sense should, of course, be taken in light of his definition of causality in EHU 7.2.29, as constant conjunction and causal association.

This distinction is a useful heuristic tool since it specifies what Hume means by independency here: causal independency. There are two reasons to think so. First, it concurs perfectly with that interpretation of the argument against the primary opinion in the second phase that I will put forward below. Second, both of his formulations of independency in EHU 12.1.7 and 8 support the interpretation that perceivers and perception would affect the existence of the world if it were mind-dependent:

“depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated.”

“Our presence bestows not being on it: Our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it.”

These formulations tell us the third thing of how Hume understands Metaphysical Realism: it also involves the proposition that there are continuously existing entities. Attribute “uniform” in the last quotation refers to this. As its meaning is, in principle, ambiguous, we need support for this reading of the term. The first reason to read it in that way is the logic of the first profound argument. In its second phase, when it is argued against the primary opinion, the argument would not work without

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49 Hume repeats this in the next paragraph: “external to our mind, which perceives it” (EHU 12.1.8).
50 This distinction depends, naturally, on the concepts of possibility and causality. Therefore it is in principle possible that the definitions overlap or even collapse into each other.
this assumption following from Metaphysical Realism. Secondly, Hume begins the corresponding Section in the Treatise (*Of scepticism with regard to the senses*) by distinguishing the different modes of existence of a “body”, that is, of a substantial body. One of them is, in addition to externality and independency, “CONTINU’D existence”: they exist even if they are not perceived (T 1.4.2.2). 51

Hence, the Humean formulation of Metaphysical Realism is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>there are entities</th>
<th>(existence component)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>whose mode of existence is</td>
<td>(mode component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>(continuity mode component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external to the mind(s)</td>
<td>(externality mode component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>external</strong></td>
<td>different spatial location from the perceiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>causally independent of the mind(s)</strong></td>
<td>(independency mode component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>causally mind-independent</strong></td>
<td>x is independent of mind(s) iff the existence of the mind(s) does not causally affect x’s existence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| that is, there is no constant conjunction and association between the mind and x. |

As the formulation of Metaphysical Realism is this complex, I will use the following terms to refer to it and the entities that it claims to exist: “independent, external, and continuous” or “Real” in this stipulated sense. 52 Another terminological point is that I am going to use terms “mind-independent”, “perceiver-independent”, “perception-independent” and their cognates interchangeably. This is justified as Hume’s only explicit view of the mind is the so-called bundle theory (T 1.4.6.4). According to that theory, the mind (and thus perceiver) is causally dependent on perceptions. Thus, x is causally independent or dependent on the mind (or perceiver) if and only if it is also such in terms of perceptions. In addition, I am going to drop out attribute “causally” or “causal” and for the sake of brevity, to speak merely about dependency and independency.

While the first element of the primary opinion concerns ontology, what there is and how, the second (1.2), presented in paragraph 8, regards the theory of perception: how Real entities are sense-perceived. Hume characterises it as follows:

“they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be external objects […] This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of

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51 See also Bricke 1980, 8-9.
52 Real entities can also be called absolutely or objectively existing entities although these attributes have had many different meanings in philosophical tradition and they can be therefore misleading. Here I qualify them meaning causally independent existence. In that sense, their opposites are relative and subjective existence as that existence is causally dependent of the mind (causally relative to the mind or a subject).
our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it: Our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it.” (Ibid. 8; see 14 as well).

There are many things said in this dense and elegant passage, of which I will concentrate on two. The first sentence seems to express the proposition that what is present to the mind in sense-perception is a Real entity; our sense-impression of a table and the Real table, for example, are the same. This means that the sense-impression and the Real entity are identical.\(^{53}\) The rest of the passage, however, appears to put the second element of the primary opinion in slightly different terms. It is the mode of existence of our sense-impression that is identical with the way the Real table exists, that is, mind-independently, externally, and continuously.

These two formulations are not, of course, incompatible. If the sense-impression and the Real table are identical, it is not incoherent to think that their modes of existence are as well – and other way around. Both of them also correspond to some form of what is nowadays called Direct or Naïve Realism (CDP, 205).\(^{54}\) For the sake of the logic of the first profound argument, I will use the mode formulation in my reconstruction of this argument. Proposition (2) and Direct Realism (DR) is thus that what is present to the mind in sense-impression is Real.

The identity formulation is also important since it has implications for determining Hume’s attitude to the second phase of the first profound argument, as I will explain in Chapter 4.2.2. It shows that Hume takes Direct Realism to involve identity between the sense-impression and its supposed Real object.

In addition to this point, it is to be realised that Direct Realism presumes Metaphysical Realism. If there were no Real entities, they could not be present to the mind. The metaphor “to be present to or with the mind” is open to many interpretations, as Yolton has pointed out (e.g. Yolton 1984, 58 and 103). Here its meaning seems to be what Yolton calls “literal”. The Real entity is literally present to the mind. For the rest of the reconstruction, however, I would like to ask the reader keep an open mind for the different interpretations of the metaphor and not to take it self-evidently as the spatial presence to the mind. The presence can be phenomenological, the content of our visual field, or cognitive, meaning our understanding of an entity and a word, for instance (Ibid. 199 and 103).

\(^{53}\) The concept of identity that is used here will be explained below.

\(^{54}\) It should be realised that the modern discussion on Direct Realism is more sophisticated than Hume’s presentation would suggest (CE, 104-108). Hume’s point is rather to describe the common sensical view of sense-perception than to discuss the philosophical doctrine of Direct Realism.
In the illustration of the white and hard table, Hume writes that the sense-perceived white and hard table “is believed to exist, independent of our perception”. The illustration thus answers the problem presented above whether the second element is also a belief. Hence, the primary opinion consists of the two assumptive beliefs, B(MR) and B(DR), in relation to the following complex propositions of my diagram as their objects:

(1) Metaphysical Realism (MR, corresponding to 1.1 in the outline): there are Real entities that exist
    causally-independently of and
    externally to the mind.

(2) Direct Realism (DR, 1.2 in the outline): what is present to the mind in sense-perception is Real (sense-impression and the Real entity are identical) (presuming MR).\(^55\)

Hume says about B(MR) that even “the animal creation are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions.” (Ibid. 7) Since people and even animals preserve it in their thoughts and designs, it seems that they entertain B(MR).\(^56\) It also affects their action. But the paragraph indicates – although Hume does not say it directly - that they do not know its cause. The cause must be discovered by the philosophical analysis of the primary opinion. This is the strongest reason for the affirmation above that Hume presents the primary opinion in philosophical terms. Few people – not to mention animals - know why they believe it.

Hume presents both a positive and a negative thesis about the cause of the primary opinion. The formulations of the positive thesis are as follows:

“men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession” (Ibid. 7)
“men follow this … powerful instinct or nature” (Ibid. 8)
“follow the instincts and propensities of nature” (Ibid. 14).

The negative thesis is that men are carried to B(MR)

“without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason”.

First of all, these theses concern precisely the cause or origin of the primary opinion. In this context, ‘to carry’ and ‘follow’ are clear causal verbs. These theses do not, therefore, concern primarily the ground or reason for the primary opinion. Here the

\(^55\) I thereby agree with Bricke on the description of the primary opinion (Bricke 1980, 5-6). I also ask the reader to remember these beliefs, their formal notations, and the abbreviations and numbers of the propositions as I will refer back to them.

\(^56\) This does not mean that they know they are conscious of Metaphysical Realism as a philosophical doctrine.
perspective is rather origin than justification - in the contemporary terms, rather psychology than epistemology.

The negative thesis states that reason is not the cause of B(MR). That is proposition number four in my diagram. The belief in the existence of Real entities is not entertained because of reasoning. Hume does not put forward any comprehensive argument for this negative thesis at this point. He just gives one reason for it: B(MR) is entertained “even almost before the use of reason”. Since people and animals believe in Real entities before or when their reason is just about to develop, it cannot be held because of reasoning.

In the case of the positive thesis, Hume is a little bit ambiguous whether the primary opinion is caused by an instinct or instincts. In the first two formulations and paragraphs 10 and 16, Hume writes in the singular, but in paragraph 14 he talks in the plural. The evidence, however, is on the side of the singular formulation. There is a natural instinct that produces the primary opinion. The positive thesis and proposition (3) of the diagram states that

B(MR) and B(DR) are caused by a natural instinct.

Like the negative thesis, Hume does not argue the positive in the first Enquiry – he just claims how things are.

Nor does he develop any explication which natural instinct is at work here or any explanation of how it produces the primary opinion. There is therefore a difference between the first Enquiry and the Treatise here. In T 1.4.2, Hume offers a complicated explanation of how imagination produces the belief in independently and continuously existing external entities despite of the dependent and interrupted perceptions (T 1.4.2.17-43). In the first Enquiry, he does not, for some reason, see this explanation required or cogent anymore. As it is not needed for my purposes either, I will not go into that discussion. Later I will, however, address the question what Hume means by “reason” here. At this point it is enough to note that Hume opposes the unreflective following of a natural inclination with believing on the basis of reflective thinking, argumentation.

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57 It could be speculated that Hume saw his expressed dissatisfaction of the explanation of personal identity to have implications for his explanation of the primary opinion as well (T App.10 and 20-21). As Hume himself notes, they are closely connected (T 1.4.2.35). For an excellent account of their connections, see Loeb 2002 (ch. V).

58 In the sections discussing the counter-argument to the primary opinion and the philosophical system substituting for it, I argue that it is Humean inductive reason that is mainly at work in the first profound argument.
I think that this is the reason why he qualifies the natural instinct with attribute “blind” (EHU 12.1.8). It is without reflection that we entertain beliefs in Metaphysical Realism and Direct Realism in the first place; unreflective inclination causes us to believe in them. This can be compared with an inclination to eat too much without reflecting on the effects of the gluttony. In that case, one follows one’s inclination “blindly” without taking it under the gaze of “one’s mind’s eye”. Yet I acknowledge that this attribute can be read in the judgemental sense referring to the next, ninth paragraph where Hume presents the argument against the primary opinion. In that argument, which I call the “table argument”, it is concluded that Direct Realism is highly problematic.

### 3.3.3 Counter-Argument to the Primary Opinion

“But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: It was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason” (EHU 12.1.9).

“Thus the first philosophical objection to the evidence of sense or to the opinion of external existence consists in this, that such an opinion, if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason” (Ibid. 16).

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50 Note that the unreflective following of a natural instinct is not necessary unjustified although my example may indicate so. For example, it is arguable that the unreflective following of the natural prepossession to satisfy appetite is justified.
The counter-argument to the primary opinion forms the second phase of the first profound argument. It comprises an objection to Direct Realism (c2.2, proposition 12), the table argument supporting it (p.2.1-c2.1, propositions 5-10), and reason’s final conclusion drawn on their basis (c2.3.1 and c2.3.1, proposition 13). The objection and the table argument are presented in the first two thirds of paragraph nine and the conclusion in paragraphs 10, 14, and 16. As Hume finishes paragraph nine by introducing the philosophical system that replaces the primary opinion and continues discussing it in the following paragraphs, phases two and three are
overlapping in the text. The order of argumentation is not the same with that of presentation. It follows from these circumstances that we have to dig out the conclusion of the counter-argument from later paragraphs and not even the first two thirds of paragraph nine follow the order of argumentation. Hume starts with the objection and continues with the table argument in the middle part.

In phase one, the primary opinion was put forward and analysed from a philosophical perspective. In phase two, “philosophy” and “reason” argue against the primary opinion. In fact, Hume says that the objection to it is inculcated by “the slightest philosophy”. (Ibid. 9) Phase two is therefore philosophical and rational critique aimed at the belief caused by the natural instinct. It is relevant that the critique is not targeted at the entire primary opinion but at its second element, the assumptive belief in Direct Realism. At this point, the first assumptive belief in Metaphysical Realism is not directly challenged since the mistake of the natural instinct is to cause the belief that what we perceive is real. Hume’s formulation of the objection to the primary opinion (12) is that

(c2.2) “this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception”. (Ibid.)

“[T]he slightest philosophy” destroys - in the sense of refuting - the perception-theoretical second element of the primary opinion: the objection is made against Direct Realism; the slightest philosophy “teaches” that B(DR) should be substituted by another belief. What kind of a belief the substituting is and how we should interpret the objection depends on two things: (1) how we read the word “perception” in the last-quoted passage and (2) what the reference point of “image” is. This is not only important for determining the substituting belief but also for settling Hume’s attitude to it, as it will be shown in Chapter 4.2.1.

(1) If Hume uses “perception” in the common meaning of a sense-impression, the substituting belief and objection are solely perception-theoretical. If he takes it in his technical sense, as a mental occurrence, it concerns a more general doctrine with regard to thinking, which has, indeed, also perception-theoretical implications. In the first reading, the substituting belief and objection concern what we are conscious of in sense-perception and in the second, what we are in sense-perception and thinking. 60 (2) In the first possibility, the addition “image or” is therefore a mere qualification of sense-perceptions. They are ‘imagistic’ in the broad sense of the

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60 Emotions, feelings and passions are naturally excluded because the context concerns extended objects.
term, sights, touches, hearings, smells, and tastes, that is, sensible although not in all of them, like in tastes, an image in the literal sense is present to the mind. In the second option, the Humean reading of “perception”, the addition is there to elicit that the doctrine concerning thinking in general also involves a theory of perception. “Image” refers to sense-impressions, as they are imagistic in the broad sense of sensible.

The context of this quote is theory of perception, Hume, for example, at the end of the paragraph, refers to pointing at “this house and that three” in a concrete sense-perception situation. Yet I follow the second possibility, the Humean reading of “perception”. The belief substituting for and objecting to Direct Realism concerns thinking in general, what its object is, and not only the theory of perception. The reason for this interpretation is the logic of the entire first profound argument. In the fourth phase, the philosophical system, which replaces the primary opinion, is disputed by a doctrine of the objects of the understanding that corresponds to the objection to Direct Realism, when it is read with the Humean sense of “perception”. The counter-argument to the philosophical system is therefore partly based on the table argument; there is a link between the second and the fourth phase.

What “the slightest philosophy” crucially teaches is therefore that nothing but Humean perceptions can be present to the mind. Philosophy and reason substitute the perception-theoretical B(DR) of the natural instinct by the more general belief of what is present to the mind in any act of the understanding. This is the first point about it: it concerns the object of our thinking in general (including sense-perception). The second is more important since it claims that these objects of thinking are, in contrast to Real entities, mental, that is, perception-dependent in their ontological status. This is not something that is self-evident in the formulation that they are Humean perceptions, for Hume nowhere in the first Enquiry discusses their mode of existence. Nevertheless, it is clear that when we incorporate it with its basis, the table argument, we can see that “perception” is here used to refer to the mental objects of the understanding. At least in this occurrence, Humean perceptions are mental in their nature.

As I have said above, this belief is of consequence in the first profound argument and determining Hume’s attitude to it, which has implications for the interpretation of his thinking in general. Let us therefore coin a special term and abbreviation for it for future reference and call its propositional object “Conscious Mentalism” (CM). It is “conscious” since it states a claim about the object of thinking. It is “Mentalism”
since it says that the mode of existence of these objects is mental. The objection to the primary opinion claims thus that

(12) nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. 61

The belief substituting for and objecting to the belief in Direct Realism is the belief in Conscious Mentalism.

In the outline above, I have sketched the table argument using Hume’s words. Accordingly, I will discuss his presentation first and after that I show how my reconstruction of the argument is formed. Its first premise in Hume’s exposition (p2.1) describes a phenomenon that is familiar to us all from everyday life. When we walk back from a table, the table appears to become smaller. The second premise (p2.2) is actually an implication of Metaphysical Realism of the primary opinion. Since the Real table exists (causally) independently of the sense-perceiving mind, the Real table does not change because of perceiving it. The initial conclusion of the table argument (c2.1) from these premises is thus that nothing but an “image” of the table was present to the mind. Philosophy and reason use this conclusion inductively to support a more general conclusion, Conscious Mentalism: nothing but mental perceptions can be present to the mind.

This is Hume’s presentation of the table argument, but for my purposes, a more accurate reconstruction is required where its unstated premises are made explicit. Before that, it is nevertheless needed to remark how Hume’s account of the table argument supports my interpretation that in the first profound argument independency is used in the causal sense. In it, he indicates that the Real table is independent since it “suffers no alteration” because of sense-perception. The point of the argument is exactly that the perceiver- and perception-dependent factors, the distance in this occasion, affects the sense-perceived table and that is because it is mind-dependent in its mode of existence.

The first premise of the table argument belongs to that category of sense-variation cases where a thing changes its apparent size depending on the distance to the perceiver. The first premise consists, therefore, actually of two. It involves an opposition between two appearances concerning one and the same table:

(5) a table appears small in long distance
(6) the same table appears large in near distance (everyday phenomenon).

The next premise of the table argument consists of two Realist assumptions that follow from Metaphysical Realism. First, Real entities, by the Humean definition,
exist continuously. In this particular case, this means that the Real table does not cease to exist between the two sense-impressions of it. It must satisfy at least this condition of continuous existence. Otherwise, the opposition would not arise; the two sense-impressions would be of two numerically distinct tables. The second implication of Metaphysical Realism is that Real entities and their Real properties are independent of the mind and its perceptions. These two Realist assumptions show that the table argument proceeds partly on the premises of the primary opinion. In order to avoid unnecessary complications, they can be joined and then we get a proposition following from Metaphysical Realism:

(7) the Real table is perception-independent and exists continuously.

The stated conclusion of the table argument is affirmation (c2.1). If we consider (5), (6), and (7) together, we are to conclude that the object of our sense-impression is not Real in the stipulated sense. On the one hand, when the perceiver changes his spatial position in relation to the table, it affects the sense-impression of the size of the table. The sense-perceived table changes because of the perceiver-dependent circumstances. It is not independent of sense-perception because the definition of causal independency requires that sense-perception must not affect how the table is perceived. On the other hand, by definition, the Real table is perception-independent and satisfies this requirement; it does not change because of the perceiver-dependent circumstances. Thus, it is not the Real table that is present to the mind; we should distinguish our sense-impression of the table from the Real table in terms of the mode of existence:

(8) the sense-perceived table present to the mind is not the Real table.

Since the sense-perceived table is dependent on the mind, it is justified to call it mental in its mode of existence. This is not explicit in Hume’s presentation of the argument, but it is evident in the logic of the argument. By contrast, it is explicit that

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61 This formulation is subject to a possible misunderstanding, but I use it for the sake of brevity. It seems to imply that there are other perceptions than the mental. I do not use it in that sense but in the sense that perception are, without exception, mental.

62 Within the Humean framework, this means that there is a constant conjunction and regular association in relation to how our sense-impression changes in these circumstances. It may be, perhaps, objected to this argument that the distance is not dependent on the perceiver but marks only a relation between the perceiver and the perceived. To this, it may be replied in the following way. First, it seems clear that Hume does not think so. Second, for his defence, it can be initially remarked the following. There are clearer instances of causal-depency as Hume’s own example of seeing double images when one of our eyes is pushed from the side (T 1.4.2.45). An occasion of this is also that we do not have any perceptions when we are unconscious. In the first case, the disposition of the perceiver doubles the number of objects. In the second, the entire sense-perception vanishes.
the sense-perceived table is also an “image”. In this particular context, the natural reading of this term is that literally an extended image of the table is present to the mind. This does not necessarily mean, however, that this image is a material brain image. An extended image in our visual field is a more natural reading of it. That is how we get conclusion c2.1 and the corresponding proposition:

(9) the sense-perceived table present to the mind is a mental image.

In the context of Hume’s presentation of the table argument, I argued that reason and philosophy use this conclusion inductively to support their Conscious Mentalism. When we extrapolate, by induction, proposition (9) to concern all sense-perception, we conclude with the perception-theoretical proposition that

(10) every sense-impression present to the mind is mental and imagistic in nature.63

As this proposition concerns sense-perception, it begets naturally a question, how can Conscious Mentalism, proposition (12), be inferred from it? In his presentation of the table argument, Hume does not give any clue. But if we attach Hume’s famous tenet, the Copy Principle (CP, see Chapter 2.1) to the argument, we get the needed conclusion. In this context, it suffices to formulate the Copy Principle as follows:

(11) all ideas are ultimately copies of impressions.

Before we can conclude with Conscious Mentalism, there is one more qualification to be made. When we extend conclusion (10) by means of the Copy Principle to concern every perception, we have to drop out the attribute imagistic (but not mental). As I argued above, Hume’s expression “image or perception” in the conclusion of the table argument should be read in the way that “image” refers to sense-impressions and “perception” to any occurrence of the mind. This move is supported by the logic of the first profound argument. It is rather the mental nature of perceptions than the imagistic nature of sense-impressions and thoughts about them that is in opposition with Direct Realism. It is also that characteristics of them that is used in the fourth phase of the first profound argument to argue against the philosophical system that replaces Direct Realism in the third phase on the basis of Conscious Mentalism. Proposition and the conclusion of the table argument reformulated are thus as follows:

(12) nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. This (5-12) is the table argument reconstructed and unfolded.64

The counter-argument to the primary opinion is not yet, however, complete. Philosophy and reason substitute and object Direct Realism by Conscious

63 The dash-line with a special point notates inductive inference in the diagram.
Mentalism, but how are they disposed towards the belief in the former? Hume is slightly obscure on this question. As I said above, paragraph nine gives no direct answer and later Hume uses seemingly incoherent terms.

First, he writes in the beginning of paragraph 10 that “we [are] necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature”. The departure from the natural instinct is repeated in the last sentence of paragraph 14. In light of the quote, this departure means contradiction. Direct Realism seems to be contradictory to the CM of reason and philosophy.

Nevertheless, when Hume summarises the two profound arguments, he says that they are contrary:

“Thus the first philosophical objection to the evidence of sense or to the opinion of external existence consists in this, that such an opinion, if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason” (EHU 12.1.16).

In the first place, it should be noted that there is a further difficulty in interpreting this passage. Which element in the primary opinion is “contrary to reason”? Earlier Hume referred to Metaphysical Realism by the term “belief of external objects”. Since this term is close to “the opinion of external existence” in the passage, one is tempted to think that it is Metaphysical Realism that “is contrary to reason”.

However, this is not the case. As I argued above, the table argument does not openly question MR but DR. Hume must thus mean that Direct Realism is “contrary to reason”. I think that is the reason for Hume to attach “if rested on natural instinct” to “such an opinion” in the passage. If we base Metaphysical Realism on the natural instinct, we will also believe in DR and that is contrary to reason.

By contrast to this, the earlier passages speak about contradiction. This seems to be incoherent if we make the distinction between contrary and contradictory opposites (both can be false vs. either is true). First Hume appears to say that Direct Realism and Conscious Mentalism are contradictory opposites, then that they are contrary.

This apparent problem is easily solved, however, by taking Hume not to make this distinction. This assumption is supported by T 1.1.5.8 where Hume examines the “philosophical relation” (Ibid. 2) of “contrariety”. He writes

“that no two ideas are in themselves contrary, except those of existence and non-existence”.

In T 1.3.1.2, he makes the same claim and these passages tell us that at least in the Treatise, Hume means contradiction by “contrariety”. Existence of something and the negation of its existence are contradictory (A\(\land\neg A\)). The propositions stating them satisfy both (1) the law of contradiction \(\neg(A\land\neg A)\) and (2) the law of the excluded middle (A\(\lor\neg A\)): (1) it is not possible that \(x\) both exists and does not at the same time and (2) there cannot be a third possibility - \(x\) either exists or not. Thus,
Hume does not make any distinction between the different kinds of opposites but uses only the relation of contradiction that is synonymic with contrariety. If we extend this remark to the first Enquiry as well – and I think this is a reasonable assumption -, it is justified to assert that, in the point of view of philosophy and reason, Direct Realism and Conscious Mentalism are contradictory. This assertion is supported by the point that they really are; both cannot be true and the object of an sense-impression is either Real or not (there is no third possibility). Direct Realism and Conscious Mentalism exclude each other. Reason and philosophy use the table argument thus to conclude that

(2.3.1 reformulated) Direct Realism is contradictory to rational Conscious Mentalism, irrational in this sense.

This result implies that, from the philosophical, rational perspective, Direct Realism is false, for they argue that Conscious Mentalism, which is contradictory to it, is true. Paragraph 10 supports the claim that Hume endorses this or at least a weaker implication of irrationality:

“that [natural instinct] led us to a quite different system, which is acknowledged fallible and even erroneous.”

Philosophy and reason acknowledge that the “system” of the natural instinct causing the primary opinion is “fallible and even erroneous.” It is not, however, the entire system, that is, the primary opinion but one of its elements, DR, that is fallible and even erroneous from the philosophical point of view. Thus, from this perspective, the assumptive belief in Direct Realism is at least misleading – perhaps even false (c2.3.2). Since these are Hume’s explicit words, unlike Bricke, I will later use this formulation instead of the stronger “false” (Bricke 1980, 11). For some reason, Hume wants to moderate it by adding qualification “fallible and even” to it. As I will show later in the fourth phase, it is needed to stress that both 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 are conclusions drawn from the perspective of philosophy and reason. They are therefore rational and philosophical conclusions supported by the table argument. In the end, they can be united into the conclusion of the counter-argument to the primary opinion, proposition (13) in my diagram:

Direct Realism is irrational and misleading or even false.

Now the entire rational counter-argument to the primary opinion is reconstructed and it is made evident how its diagram (5-13) is formed.

Before going to the discussion of the third phase of the argument, it is needed to make further comments on the second phase. First, proposition (7) tells us an
First Profound Argument against the Senses

interesting thing about the table argument and the structure of the first profound argument in its entirety. Since it follows from Metaphysical Realism, MR is not directly questioned in them. Actually, MR is used as a reason to argue Conscious Mentalism, which is opposed to the other belief in the primary opinion, Direct Realism. The primary opinion is challenged partly on the basis of its own premises.

The second point to be made concerns the nature of the table argument. As Bricke, for example, observes, it is a causal argument (Bricke 1980, 10). This is important for two reasons. First, one of Reid’s criticisms of it that it is not a valid syllogism is challenged since Reid misunderstands the nature of the argument (Reid 2002, 182). Second, as I will demonstrate later, it has implications for the questions what kind of conception of reason is at work here and how Hume sees the table argument.

In the third place, as Bricke does, it is tempting to think that Conscious Mentalism involves reification of perceptions - that they are distinct spiritual or material things existing between Real entities and the mind (Bricke 1980, 13). As Yolton’s and Ayers’ work on the notion of idea in the 17th century philosophy shows, this does not need to be the case, perhaps only Malebranche reified ideas and Berkeley followed closely in his footsteps (see Yolton 1984 and Ayers 1998b). Besides, at this point of the first profound argument, there is not even a hint of that in the text. It is only at the end of 12.9, as I will argue below, that the reification is made. The only distinction made at this point is the ontological distinction in kind between two modes of existence: what is Real and what is mental. The claim made is that the objects of our thinking and sense-impressions are latter in their nature.

Another tempting thought is that Conscious Mentalism inevitably leads to ‘the veil of ideas scepticism’. Yolton’s and Ayers’ work is again helpful at this point: further arguments are needed, Conscious Mentalism as such leaves room for indirect Realist theories of perception. Ayers, for instance, interprets Locke to hold a causal theory of perception. Although Locke accepts Conscious Mentalism, he still claims that simple sensory ideas are signs of their Real causes, not only of their existence but also of “different ratios between motions in the object and motions” in the sense-perceiving being. Simple sensory ideas are true signs of their Real causes. (Ayers 1998b, 1093, 1090, and 1091). For example, if the same water “feels hot to one hand and cold to the other”, the difference between these two simple sensory ideas signifies different ratios between motions in the water and motions in the hand.

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66 Yolton goes so far as to claim that Descartes and Locke held more or less Direct Realism (Yolton 1984, 38 and 102). Ayers denies this (Ayers 1998b, 1068 and 1093).
3.3.4 Philosophical System

As Bricke observes, in the last third of paragraph nine, Hume proceeds to the third phase, the philosophical system of Representative Realism (Bricke 1980, 14):

“These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent.” (EHU 12.1.9)

Other formulations of it are:

“So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature, and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses.” (Ibid. 10)

“By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them” (Ibid. 11).

“So you disclaim this principle, in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only representations of something external?” (Ibid. 14)

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In phase two, philosophy and reason have argued against the perception-theoretical doctrine of Direct Realism in the primary opinion. They have shown that (10) nothing but mental and imagistic in the broad sense can be present to the mind in sense-perception and that, more generally, (12) the only objects of the understanding are mental perceptions. But philosophy and reason have not openly argued against
the belief in the existence of Real entities, Metaphysical Realism. On the one hand, we do not perceive Real entities with the senses but mental perceptions. On the other, there is Reality beyond mental perceptions, that is, the mind-independent realm of being. In phase three, philosophy and reason try to explain this rising tension by establishing “a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses”: the “pretended philosophical system” (Ibid. 10). The philosophical system is thus a new theory of perception. The metaphysical presumption underlying it is identical with the primary opinion.

Like the primary opinion, the philosophical system consists in two elements. Since the ontological element does not change, the first element is identical with the primary opinion (2.1 = 1.1 in the outline) as the end of the paragraph confirms: there are external (“other”) entities that exist uniformly and independently of the mind. This assertion is identical to proposition (1), Metaphysical Realism.

It is the second element of the philosophical system that makes the difference to the primary opinion. When the words “this house and that tree” are used, the reference is not made to Real entities but to entities (“existences”) characterised as, in the first place, “perceptions in the mind”, and secondly, “fleeting copies or representations of other existences”. As Hume’s term “existence” suggest, it is here where the reification of sense-impressions happen, they are the third entities standing between the mind and Real entities. Whether Hume uses “perception” here in the common or his technical sense does not make any difference. Its context is a concrete sense-perception situation and thus a theory of perception. The point of reference is therefore to what is present to the mind in sense-perception. The general formulation of the second element is thus that certain special entities are present to the mind in sense-perception. It involves two propositions that qualify these entities: ontological (2.2.1 in the outline) and perception-theoretical (2.2.2). First, their temporal mode of existence is momentary (fleeting); they do not have continued existence. For example, when seeing the sun today and tomorrow, one has two numerically distinct sense-perceptions. Today’s sense-impressions annihilates almost as soon as one’s eyes are turned away from the sun. Secondly, there is a copy or representation relation between sense-impressions and their putative Real objects. Using the same illustration, the sense-impression of the sun represents or copies the Real sun.

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67 This does not necessarily mean that Hume takes sense-impressions and perceptions to form a distinct category of entities. His attitude towards the third phase is an open question at this point of the book.
The philosophical system comprises thus two propositions, (14) and (15) in my structure diagram. The former is identical with proposition (1), that is, Metaphysical Realism. The latter consists of three propositions: 1) what is present to the mind in sense-perception, 2) the ontological status of these distinct entities, and 3) their relation to their possible Real objects - the latter two qualify the first. For future reference, I call proposition (15) “Representative Realism” (RR) since it claims that only representations of Real entities can be present to the mind in sense-perception. As I am going to refer back to its element-propositions, I use abbreviations (RR-ME) of the second and (RR-R) of the third. The philosophical system can therefore be summarised as follows:

(14 = 1: MR) there are Real entities that exist 
continuously
independently of and
externally to the mind (ontological).

(15: RR) nothing can be present to the mind in sense-perception but sense-impressions (perception-theoretical) that are
(RR-ME) momentary distinct entities (ontological) and
(RR-R) representations of their possible Real objects (perception-theoretical).

In paragraph 11, Hume makes known what he means by the copy or representation relation here. It involves two relations: causality and resemblance. Real entities cause sense-impressions, which resemble them. Thus, RR-R is qualified by two further propositions as the outline in Hume’s words makes clear:

(2.2.2.1) sense-impressions are caused by their possible Real objects
(2.2.2.2) sense-impressions resemble their possible Real objects.

In this context, Hume does not say what he means by these relations. Since this is Hume’s philosophical analysis of the philosophical system, it is a reasonable assumption that the notion of causality in play is Humean causation of EHU 7.2.29, and resemblance, Humean “philosophical” “resemblance” of T 1.1.5.3. I will come back to what Hume means by these relations below when I discuss the second profound argument.

All the qualifications of the philosophical system now in place, it is possible to present its second element in another way, where the representation component (RR-R) is analysed into two further propositions. Since the relations of resemblance and similarity are synonyms (EHU 11.30), I can use the latter instead of the former.

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68 Representative Realism – sense-perceptions, representations, are Momentary Entities
69 Representative Realism - Representation relation between sense-impressions and their possible Real objects
In that way, I can distinguish the abbreviation of the resemblance proposition from that of the representation proposition.

(15: RR) nothing can be present to the mind in sense-perception but sense-impressions that are

(RR-O) momentary distinct entities (ontological)
(RR-C) caused by and
(RR-S) similar to their possible Real objects.70

So far, I have wrote that “philosophy and reason” argue against the primary opinion of the natural instinct and substitute it by their philosophical system. But I have not addressed the question, what does this “reason” precisely mean? Nor does Hume in EHU 12. He just opposes it with the unreflective following of a natural instinct. The question is nevertheless relevant since the opposition is significant for both profound arguments in EHU 12. Reason is clearly the faculty of reflection here, but can we say anything more about it?

If we reflect on the table argument in phase two and the philosophical system in the third, we can say something of this complicated issue. In the second phase, reason denies that anything Real in nature is present to the mind on the basis of an argument - as Hume says himself in paragraph 10: “So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature”. So reason must here be the faculty of inference and argument. Moreover, in phase three, it attempts to explain their relation by causality and similarity. The denial of Direct Realism does not necessarily imply rejecting Metaphysical Realism. The seeming tension between an indirect theory of perception and Realist ontology can be explained. So reason is also the faculty of explanation. According to Hume, explanations are inferences (EHU 4.1.12) and therefore the faculty of explanation can be subsumed under the faculty of inference. Again, how Hume proceeds with the last quote supports this conclusion: “and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses.” It is reason as a faculty of inference that “necessitates us” to accept Representative Realism as a replacement of Direct Realism. It should be kept in mind, however, that reason does not justify Representative Realism but only postulates it as an explanation. So it does not necessitate us by virtue of an argument but obliges us first to contradict to DR and then explains how we still can hold Metaphysical Realism in the face of Conscious Mentalism.

If we take into consideration my observation in the previous part of this Chapter that the table argument is causal and inductive, we can see that it is the faculty of

70 Here I disagree with Bricke, who accounts the philosophical system as involving only causal representation (Bricke 1980, 10).
inductive and causal inference that is at work here. In this context, reason is thus the faculty of what Millican calls Hume’s inductive inference, which is the other form of reasoning in Hume’s framework (vs. demonstration). Hence, it is justified to speak about ‘inductive reason’ here in the previously specified sense. This fits also well with the nature of reason as an explanatory faculty. (EHU 4.1.12) For that reason as well, Representative Realism is rather postulated than justified by this reason, there is no comprehensive argument for proposition (17) in the diagram:

(17) inductive reason makes us to accept Representative Realism (RR).

Still Hume thinks, as the last two citations show, that it is supposed to follow from proposition (16) that

(16) the table argument (5-12) is formed by inductive reason.

We need to make two further points before proceeding to phase four of the argument. The first point is that while perceptions are not reified in the second phase, it is in the third phase that that happens. According to Representative Realism, there are three distinct categories of things: minds, sense-impressions (whatever is present to the mind in thinking if we generalise using the Copy Principle), and Real entities. Now the mind, the subject is separated from Real objects by sense-impressions, things which mediate the sense-perception of Real entities. Using later metaphor by Jonathan Bennett, “a veil of” sense-perceptions falls between the perceiver, the subject, and Real entities, the world (Bennett 1971, 69). After Bennett, Michael Ayers has spoken of “an ontological wedge – between subject and object, a thinking self and an ‘external’ world.” (Ayers 1998a, 1003)

Lastly, it is to be realised that in the table argument philosophy and reason have justified only Conscious Mentalism but not Representative Realism (RR) with its qualifications RR-ME (momentary entities), RR-R (representation) and its explications RR-S (similarity) and RR-C (causality). They are merely postulated in order to explain the tension between momentary sense-impressions and their possible Real objects - Metaphysical Realism. Metaphysical and Representative Realism are entirely without justification at this point. That is what Hume’s Pyrrhonist can avail himself of in phase four where the philosophical system is challenged by showing that the “system” of the veil of sense-impressions, Representative Realism, leads to troubles.

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71 Before Bennett, John Dewey has spoken about “a veil or screen” of experience “which shuts us off from nature, unless in some way it can be “transcended.”” (Dewey 1929, 1)
3.3.5 Counter-Argument to the Philosophical System

“So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature, and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses. But here philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed, when she would justify this new system, and obviate the cavils and objections of the sceptics. She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature: For that led us to a quite different system, which is acknowledged fallible and even erroneous. And to justify this pretended philosophical system, by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity.

By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them (if that be possible) and could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself, or from the suggestion of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us? It is acknowledged, that, in fact, many of these perceptions arise not from any thing external, as in dreams, madness, and other diseases. And nothing can be more inexplicable than the manner, in which body should so operate upon mind as ever to convey an image of itself to a substance, supposed of so different, and even contrary a nature.

It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them: How shall this question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.

To have recourse to the veracity of the supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit. If his veracity were at all concerned in this matter, our senses would be entirely infallible; because it is not possible that he can ever deceive. Not to mention, that, if the external world be once called in question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments, by which we may prove the existence of that Being or any of his attributes.

This is a topic, therefore, in which the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph, when they endeavour to introduce an universal doubt into all subjects of human knowledge and enquiry. Do you follow the instincts and propensities of nature, may they say, in assenting to the veracity of sense? But these lead you to believe, that the very perception or sensible image is the external object. Do you disclaim this principle, in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only representations of something external? You here depart from your natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy your reason, which can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove, that the perceptions are connected with any external objects.” (EHU 12.1.10-4)

“Thus the first philosophical objection to the evidence of sense or to the opinion of external existence consists in this, that such an opinion, if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason, and if referred to reason, is contrary to natural instinct, and at the same time carries no rational evidence with it, to convince an impartial enquirer.” (Ibid. 16)
The presentation of the counter-argument to the philosophical system takes four paragraphs (10-13). As I indicate in the last line of the outline, there is a terminological problem in them that must be tackled before we can reconstruct this counter-argument. In paragraph 10, which discusses the conclusion of the counter-argument, Hume’s terminology is coherent: the possibility to justify the philosophical system is denied. He uses verbs “to justify” and “to plead.” In contrast, the next three paragraphs and paragraph 14 speak about proving that system and they seem to be the denials of proving it metaphysically, factually, and theologically.

The problem here is that proving is more restricted in scope than, to use a contemporary term, epistemic justification. Epistemic justification is giving reasons that support the truth of proposition $p$ (making it more probable, for example). Proving is providing reasons establishing that $p$ is true (if the premises are true, $p$ must be true as well). Hence, if proposition $p$ is proved true, it is also epistemically justified.

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72 Bricke does not seem to realise this problem (1980, 15-6).

73 Here I refer rather to the branch of *metaphysica specialis* (cosmology, psychology, theology) that studies God than to the traditional science of theology.

74 Here I am affected by Markus Lammennanta’s argumentation (Lammennanta 1993, 131-34). Corresponding discussion in English is Audi 2003 (245-6). I distinguish epistemic justification, which concerns truth, from the practical, which concerns usefulness and agreeableness in life, for instance. I will suggest that this distinction is a good heuristic tool for understanding Hume although he does not use it.
justified, but if \( p \) is epistemically justified, it is not proved. From this it seems to follow that there is a gap between the denials of the metaphysical, factual, and theological proofs\(^{75}\) and the denial of epistemic justification. If the philosophical system cannot be proven, it is still in principle epistemically justifiable. There still can be reason or reasons that support its truth – that \( p \) is the best possible explanation of \( q \), for instance.

One might respond to this by saying that Hume does not make this distinction between epistemic justifying and proving. This suggestion, however, does not seem very plausible to me since it is a peculiar thought that Hume does not distinguish supporting reasons from establishing premises.\(^{76}\) Although he does not make the 20\(^{th}\) century terminological distinction between proving and epistemic justification, he still can make the substantial distinction. Another point is that this kind of epistemic justification can be called rational in the sense that it provides reasons to support the veracity of a proposition. So when I speak about rational, epistemic justification it should be taken in this sense.

To me, there occurs to be only one possible solution of making the argument coherent here and below I will defend the following reading. Actually, the denials of the metaphysical and theological proofs are \textit{ad hominem} arguments against those philosophers who advance these proofs of Representative Realism. Regarding the denial of proving it factually, my suggestion is that, in fact, it is not only a denial of that proof but also of a form of the rational epistemic justification for RR. This denial works on the premises that the proponent of the counterargument also endorses and is not therefore \textit{ad hominem} in the stipulated sense. According to this suggestion, there is no gap between denying proof and rejecting rational, epistemic justification in the counter-argument.

The conclusion of the counter-argument to the philosophical system is in Hume’s words as follows (c4):

“philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed, when she would justify this new system”

(EHU 12.1.10).

Here Hume evidently writes about justifying the philosophical system rationally and epistemically; philosophy is not able to provide reasons supporting the truth of its rational system. This conclusion can be therefore reformulated for my diagram as follows:

\(^{75}\) Here I do not use “proof” in the Humean sense of EHU 6.n.10, according to which a proof is an inductive argument based on experience without any exceptions.
(46) Representative Realism (RR) cannot be rationally and epistemically justified.\footnote{In fact, one possible reading of Hume distinction between “proofs” and “probabilities” in EHU 6.n.10 is just this.}

There are two reasons for this conclusion:

(c4.1) “She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature”.

(c4.2) “And to justify this pretended philosophical system by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity.”

(EHU 12.1.10)

It is quite clear that Hume speaks here of two different kinds of justification that can be called rational and epistemic. These two premises therefore deny two kinds of rational epistemic justification for Representative Realism. What is the difference between them? Alvin I. Goldman gives two notions in passing that are useful in making this distinction. These notions are “diachronic” and “synchronic” justification, which I apply in the following way (Goldman 1979, 15).\footnote{Cf. Bricke’s close account (1980, 11 and 14-5).}

Both synchronic and diachronic forms of justification belong to the rational epistemic type since they support \( p \)’s truth by an argument. This can be contended by saying that the two last quotes make a difference between an argument and referring to the cause(s) of a belief. In one sense, it is so, but in the other, it is not. Even referring to the causal origin of a belief is providing reasons for it since the first quote speaks about the explicit act of pleading. One refers to the causes of the belief as the reasons for its truth. So Hume’s sense of “argument” is different from and more specific than mine and below it will turn out what it is. Nonetheless, in the broader sense of providing reasons, the difference between the two forms of rational epistemic justification is in the content of the reasons in the argument\footnote{I am not claiming anything about Goldman’s views.} (the difference is informal).

Diachronic justification argues that the cause or causes of the belief held of \( p \) are reliable. They are like a good guide. If I have a good guide, proposition “my guide is reliable” supports the truth of the proposition “soon I will be in the place where I want to be.” My guide is a possible cause of me being in the place that I am looking for and a reliable guide leads me to the place in most of the cases. Analogically, proposition “the cause of \( B(p) \) is reliable” supports proposition “\( p \) is true.”\footnote{I will use it in this broader sense unless otherwise noted.} The
cause that produces my entertainment of B is reliable, in most of the cases, it has generated beliefs that were later perceived to be true. Thus, diachronic justification refers to the propensities of the causal origin of a belief. The temporal perspective must be taken into account and it is therefore called “diachronic” (Greek dia+chronos: along time) and also “Historical” or “Genetic” (Goldman 1979, 14­5). In the synchronic justification, this temporal dimension is parenthesized and that is the reason to term it so (Greek syn+chronos: at the same time). It is defined negatively: reasons in the argument supporting p’s truth do not refer to the causal origin of the belief that p.81

Hume’s formulations of the reasons above make a difference between two kinds of rational, epistemic justification. The first denies that philosophy could still refer to the infallibility and irresistibility of the natural instinct. If the natural instinct were infallible, we would say that it is reliable: it leads us to true beliefs. It is therefore justified description of Hume’s first claim (c4.1) that the natural instinct cannot be a reliable cause. Hence it is justified to call the object of the denial diachronic rational epistemic justification. The first formulation denies the possibility of this form of justification for Representative Realism. The second (c4.2) rejects the possibility of providing an argument supporting RR’s truth without any reference to its causal origin in time. It therefore denies the possibility of synchronic, rational epistemic justification for RR.

With these specifications in place, it is possible to reformulate the two reasons (c4.1 and 2) for the conclusion of the counter-argument as follows:

(21) Representative Realism cannot be given diachronic, rational epistemic justification
(45) Representative Realism cannot be given synchronic, rational epistemic justification.

reductivistic accounts of human phenomena. As such, they may subject a writer to misunderstood allegations.

81 In principle, there are two forms of both diachronic and synchronic rational justification: foundationalism and coherentism. If the argument supporting p’s truth is allowed to be circular, p itself may occur in the reasons, justification is coherential. If it is not, justification is foundationalist. Another possibility of classifying different forms of diachronic and synchronic justification is the contemporary distinction between internalistic and externalist justification. These terms are not nowadays used coherently between different epistemologists, but for our purposes here Audi’s definitions are sufficient. Internalistic justification is the view that the subject can become conscious of the reasons for p. Externalist justification is defined by the negation of the internalistic: the subject does not need to become conscious of the reasons. (Audi 2003, 238) For example, an externalist may accept the unreflective following of a natural instinct as the justification of the primary opinion. One does not need to be even aware that one is following the instinct and still justified in believing what one believes.
The diagram of the argument for proposition (21) is the following:

(21) Representative Realism cannot be given diachronic rational epistemic justification.

(20) RR cannot be justified by referring to this natural instinct as reliable.

(19) this natural instinct cannot be a reliable cause to the belief that sense-impressions represent existing Real entities.

(18) the natural instinct causing DR is fallible, i.e. unreliable.

(13) Direct Realism is irrational and misleading or even false.

(5) B(MR) and B(DR) are caused by a natural instinct.

Propositions (21) and (45) are actually conclusions of two sub-arguments, the first of which must be reconstructed on the basis of scarce textual materials. Fortunately, it is not hard to see since it follows from the counter-argument to the primary opinion with some extra premises. Its first premise is stated by Hume in paragraph 10 (c.2.3.2): the natural instinct “led us to a quite different system, which is acknowledged fallible and even erroneous.” (EHU 12.1.10) In my diagram, the first reason is the conclusion of the counter-argument to the primary opinion, proposition (13): Direct Realism is irrational and misleading or even false. In phase two, philosophy and reason argued that DR is misleading or even false because, by the table argument, Conscious Mentalism (proposition 12), which is contradictory to Direct Realism, is true. The second reason of the first sub-argument is also explicit in the text of phase one: the belief in Direct Realism is caused by a natural instinct (proposition 3). These two reasons imply the unstated proposition (18) that the natural instinct causing DR is fallible, that is, unreliable. This in turn entails another implicit proposition (19) that if somebody would try to justify the belief that sense-impressions represent their existing Real objects by referring to this natural instinct as reliable, it could not work. Thus, Representative Realism cannot be justified by referring to this instinct as reliable (20). Hence by the definition of diachronic
justification, proposition (21) follows: Representative Realism cannot be given diachronic, rational epistemic justification.\(^{82}\)

The second sub-argument supports proposition (45), that is, the denial of the possibility of synchronic, rational epistemic justification for RR:

![Diagram showing the relationships between propositions](image)

However, if consider it closely, we see that actually this argument argues against an elementary proposition of Representative Realism and that element is RR-R: sense-impressions are representations of their Real objects. As I said above, the argument is divided in three further lower level arguments that are (1) metaphysical, (2) factual, and (3) theological in nature. It is clear from Hume’s terminology that the first and third deny the possibility of a metaphysical and theological proof of RR-R.\(^{83}\) In paragraph 12, where Hume presents the factual argument, his term is “foundation”, but paragraph 14\(^ {84}\) confirms that Hume takes the factual argument to deny proving, too. So there is a line in the second sub-argument that rejects any proof of RR-R when it is presumed that

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\(^{82}\) This counter-argument seems to contain a gap since it does not discuss the possibility to justify RR by another natural instinct that the one causing B(DR). I will come back to this issue when discussing Hume’s attitude to the first profound argument in Chapter 4.2.1.

\(^{83}\) “By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects [RR-C] […] resembling them [RR-S]” (EHU 12.1.11). “To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses [, i.e. that impressions are representations]” (EHU 12.1.13).

\(^{84}\) “reason […] can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove, that the perceptions are connected with any external objects [RR-R].”
(43) there are only three possibilities of proving RR-R: (1) metaphysical, (2) factual, (3) theological.

All the three lower level arguments support therefore the proposition that
(44) it cannot be proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.

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**argument option 1: metaphysical**

p4.2.1.2.1: "mind [is] a substance, supposed of so different, and even contrary a nature" than "body"

p4.2.1.1/c4.2.1.2: "nothing can be more inexplicable than the manner, in which body should so operate upon mind as ever to convey [2.2.2.1] an image of itself" [2.2.2.2]

p4.2.1.2: "It is acknowledged, that, in fact, many of these perceptions arise not from any thing external, as in dreams, madness, and other diseases"

c4.2.1: there is no argument to prove 2.2.2: "the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects [2.2.2.1], entirely different from them, though resembling them [2.2.2.2]"
The presentation of the argument for proposition (44) (RR-R cannot be proven) begins by questioning the possibility of the metaphysical proof in paragraph 11. The counter-argument to the metaphysical proof consists of four lines of argumentation. First, it is required of the metaphysical argument that it proves not only the truth of RR-R but also its necessity:

“By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects [RR-C], entirely different from them, though resembling them [RR-S] (if that be possible)”. (EHU 12.1.11; emphasis added)

The reason for this necessity condition is that the argument should rule out the metaphysical alternatives to RR-R:

“the perceptions of the mind […] could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself, or from the suggestion of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us”. (Ibid.)

Representing Real entities is just one possible account of the origin of sense-perceptions. It is entirely possible that they are caused by “the mind itself”, “spirit” outside of human knowledge like the Christian God, or “some other cause still more unknown to” human beings. It is thus possible that RR-R stands for a false metaphysical picture. The metaphysical argument ought to rule out the other possibilities and to prove that the representation relation between sense-impressions and their Real objects is necessary. Thus we get proposition (29) following from (28) and the first line in the diagram:

(28) a metaphysical proof of RR-R must rule out the metaphysical alternatives to it
(29) if there is a metaphysical proof of RR-R, it must prove RR-R’s necessity.

The rest of the counter-argument to the metaphysical proof argues that there is no argument satisfying this condition. Although I have presented it as one line in the outline, my reconstruction of it, the diagram, consists of three lines. The first of them is what philosophy and reason themselves acknowledge (p4.2.1.2 in the outline):

“in fact, many of these perceptions arise not from any thing external, as in dreams, madness, and other diseases.”

There are some senses-impressions (perceptions), apparently of Real entities, that are not actually of them. For example, one can dream that one meets Mr. Hume himself at a Hume conference. Philosophy and reason acknowledge that there is no relation of representation between this dream and some Real entity. Thus,

(22) people are conscious of sense-impressions in dreams and diseases.

Therefore,

(23) some sense-impressions are not representations of any Real objects.

This does not, however, mean that the proper sense-impressions, other perceptions than the dreams and hallucinations of a fool or sick person, are not representations of Real objects. The third line consists of one implicit proposition that
(24) there are sense-impressions that represent their Real objects.

The fourth line argues against the necessity form of this proposition. Its premise is presented at the end of paragraph 11: (p4.2.1.2.1) “the mind [is] a substance, supposed of so different, and even contrary a nature” than “body”. The premise and proposition (25) is thus dualistic metaphysics:

essences of the spiritual and material substances are different or even contrary.

It implies that

(c4.2.1.2) “nothing can be more inexplicable than the manner, in which body should so operate upon the mind as ever to convey an image of itself”.

The conclusion of the fourth line is thus proposition (26):

the representation relation between sense-impressions (perceptions) and Real or material entities is inexplicable.

Now we have all the four lines at place and the conclusion can be drawn from them. But before that, it is needed to tie the three last lines together. The first of them concludes that (23) some sense-impressions are not representations of any Real entities. The penultimate states the premise that (24) there are proper sense-impressions that represent their Real objects. But the last line concludes with the claim that this representation relation is inexplicable because of dualistic metaphysics. Thus c4.2.1 in the outline and proposition number (27) follows from the last three lines of argumentation:

it cannot be proven that sense-impressions must represent their Real objects (that RR-R is necessary).

As proposition (29) in the first line requires that the metaphysical proof of RR-R must prove its necessity, the conclusion of the counter-argument to the metaphysical proof follows:

(30) it cannot be metaphysically proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their Real objects.

It is important to appreciate that this counter-argument is ad hominem. It takes the presuppositions of a form of the philosophical rational system – dualism, some sense-impressions are representations, metaphysical proof establishes necessity - and argues that the implications of the presuppositions rule out any metaphysical proof of RR-R. It is purely internal critique of a type of the philosophical system. It is another question, however, whether that system must be subject to this critique. Must it involve dualistic metaphysics or can it be construed on monistic presuppositions, for example?85

85 Unfortunately it is beyond the constraints of this dissertation to discuss the interesting question to whose philosophical system Hume is alluding here. That topic must be ruled out also for the
12 **argument option 2: factual**

| p4.2.2.1.1: "The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions" |
| p4.2.2.1/c4.2.2.1: the mind "cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects" |
| c4.2.2.1 reformulated: "here experience is, and must be entirely silent" |
| p4.2.2.2.1: "It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them" |
| p4.2.2.2.2: "as all other questions of a like nature" |
| p4.2.2.2: c4.2.2.2: "this question ["of fact" "shall"] be determined … By experience surely" |
| c4.2.2: "The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning" |
| 14 c4.2.2 reformulated: "reason … can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove, that the perceptions are connected with any external objects [2.2.2]" |

The next move in the argument-supporting proposition (44) that RR-R cannot be proven is the denial of the factual proof. The argument for this denial in paragraph 12 has a two-part structure and in order to see this, let us consider the entire paragraph:

“It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them: How shall this question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any reason that the denial of the metaphysical proof is not central to the questions of Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism and to the core of the two profound arguments, as we will see.
experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.”

The counter-argument to the factual proof consists of two sub-arguments. The first sub-argument (p4.2.2.1.1 and c4.2.2.1) is presented in the section consisting of two sentences, the first one of which starts as “But here”. The second sub-argument (p4.2.2.2.1-c4.2.2.2) is brought forward in the beginning of the paragraph and the counter-argument to the factual proof is concluded in the last sentence (c4.2.2).

The stated premise of the first sub-argument (p4.2.2.1.1) is put forward in the clause that

“[t]he the mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions”.

It is easy to see that this premise is taken from the table argument, which again shows how significant that argument is. It is proposition (12) in my diagram, Conscious Mentalism and the conclusion of the table argument. Therefore there should be an arrow in the diagram from that proposition to the counter-argument under discussion. This point also justifies my earlier, general reading of the conclusion of the table argument that Hume uses “perception” in his technical sense and the conclusion concerns the theory of the understanding and not solely the theory of perception.

This sentence in the passage continues with a formulation of the conclusion of the first sub-argument (c4.2.2.1):

the mind “cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects.”

Here Hume seems to speak about “connexion” in general and the premise indeed supports this formulation. But in order to make the argument easier to understand, I draw on the particular formulation that speaks about the representation relation between perceptions and their Real objects. The conclusion put in other terms is thus a proposition in the diagram:

(32) it is impossible that the human mind has any experience of the representation relation between perceptions and their possible Real objects.

Hume’s other formulation of it is brought forward in the sentence starting the first sub-argument: (c4.2.2.1 reformulated) “But here experience is, and must be entirely silent.” Here he just changes the modal affirmation concerning impossibility to necessity and factuality. Since having experience of the representation is impossible, experience cannot tell us anything about it. Moreover, experience factually tells us nothing about the representation because of its impossibility (impossibility implies factual negation).

The first sub-argument is not, however, complete. There is a hidden step in it. The hidden conclusion follows from proposition (12). If only mental perceptions can be present to the mind, the only possible way for experience to be present with the
mind is in the form of mental perceptions. In order to conclude proposition (32), it must be concluded first that a subject cannot have any experience that is not presented to him as mental perceptions. Then it follows that we cannot have any experience of the representation relation between mental perceptions and their possible Real objects. The implicit step following from the table argument is therefore proposition:

(31) experience can be present to the mind only as mental perceptions.

In other words, according to Conscious Mentalism, supported by the table argument, human beings are locked up in the world of mental perceptions. Thus, experience can be present to them only as mental perceptions. Consequently, they cannot have any experience of the representation relation between mental perceptions and something else.

Paragraph 12 begins with the indirect factual question whether sense-perceptions represent their possible Real objects. The beginning of the paragraph is at the same time the starting point of the second sub-argument. It takes the factual nature of the question as its first premise (p4.2.2.2.1):

(34) the existence of the representation relation between sense-impressions and their possible Real objects is a factual question.

Its other premise (p4.2.2.2.2) is present in the emphasised clause of the following two sentences:

“[…] How shall this question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like nature.”

My formulation of the second premise is accordingly that

(33) all factual questions ought to be determined by experience.

The second sub-argument concludes (c4.2.2.2) with the second clause of this passage from the above explained premises. The existence of the representation relation is a factual question. All factual questions ought to be answered by experience. Thus,

(35) the existence of the representation relation between sense-impressions and their possible Real objects ought to be determined by experience.

The counter-argument to the factual proof of RR-R uses these conclusions of the two sub-arguments as its premises. First, it is impossible that the human mind has any experience of the representation relation between perceptions and their possible Real objects (32). Second, the existence of the representation relation ought to be determined by experience (35). On these grounds, it draws the conclusion (c4.2.2) in the last sentence of the paragraph:

“The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.”

The conclusion of the counter-argument to the factual proof is thus that

(36) it cannot be factually proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.
I have claimed above that the counter-argument to the possibility of the factual proof of RR-R fills the gap between the denial of proving and rational epistemic justification. My main reason for this claim is that this counter-argument works - at least partly - on the premises that are not accepted by all the proponents of Representative Realism. There are also intellectualistic forms of it and (33) would not work against them. So this counter-argument is not *ad hominem* like the metaphysical and theological. It involves premises which imply that any argument supporting the existence of the representation relation ought to be based on experience. Experience is the criterion of factual questions. Within this framework, it is therefore justified to generalise the conclusion to concern the rational, factual epistemic justification of RR-R as well and, as the temporal dimension is parenthesized here, we are speaking about synchronic justification. So actually, we may draw another arrow from propositions (32) and (35) to the following statement:

(37) the representation relation between sense-perceptions and their possible Real objects (RR-R) cannot be given synchronic (rational) factual (epistemic) justification.\(^{86}\)

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86 One might argue that this proposition is not enough for establishing the second sub-conclusion of the counter-argument to the justification of RR, proposition (45), that Representative Realism cannot be given any synchronic rational epistemic justification. It denies only the possibility of supporting it by a synchronic factual argument but not by every possible argument. I will come back to this issue in Chapter 4.2.1 when I consider Hume’s attitude to this argument.
At this point of the counter-argument, two possibilities of proving that sense-impressions represent their Real objects are ruled out, the metaphysical and factual. The final part of phase four concerns the last possibility, the theological proof, that is, referring to God as our creator. Paragraph 13 challenging this possibility is a bit frustrating since it is rather obscure, its structure is hard to understand, and the argument advanced in it is problematic. Hume is not at his strongest here and therefore there is a real interpretative problem in reading EHU 12.13. Therefore it is justified to quote the paragraph in its entirety:

“To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit. If his veracity were at all concerned in this matter, our senses would be entirely infallible; because it is not possible that he can ever deceive. Not to mention, that, if the external world be once called in question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments, by which we may prove the existence of that Being or any of his attributes.”

The paragraph begins with the affirmation that proving RR-R by referring to God’s veracity is circular. Then it presents an argument in the next sentence that does not argue for any circularity. The argument contained in the last sentence seems to do so but it starts with phrase, “Not to mention”. This phrase seems to indicate that the last sentence is an addition to the second, or even to both the first and the second. It does not indicate that the argument for the circularity is presented right there - rather, it seems to undermine that reading.

Nevertheless, I follow Norton and take the alleged argument for the circularity to be found in the last sentence (Norton 2002, 374 n.3). Despite the fact that there are weak points in his reading, the first of which is that then one has to forget the phrase “Not to mention”. But, as far as I can see, the following reading is the only one that makes some sense of what is going on in paragraph 13.
The second sentence of the paragraph, which seems to argue for a false implication, presents the proposed theological proof that some sense-impressions represent their Real objects (RR-R). God is veracious and it follows from his essence that he cannot deceive. Moreover, God has created the senses. Thus, the senses are entirely infallible: when they really present to us something, we are conscious of a sense-impression that represents its Real object. The only problem is to determine when the senses really present something and when not. In any case, the argument still implies that RR-R is true and thus Metaphysical Realism, too.

According to the reading of the paragraph advanced here, the problem in this pretended proof is however that it is circular. The last sentence reminds us of the supposition that “the external world [...] is called in question” (the premise 4.2.3.1 in the outline). The truth of Metaphysical Realism is supposed to be an open question. On that assumption, “we shall be at a loss to find arguments, by which we may prove the existence of that Being or any of his attributes.” (c4.2.3.1) This implies the conclusion of the counter-argument to the theological proof of RR-R in the first sentence (c4.2.3):

“To have recourse to the veracity of the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit.”

In order to reconstruct this argument in the diagram form, we have to contemplate first the second weak point of this reading. It is that it is hard to see how proving RR-R in this way would be circular. For that, let us suppose that proving Metaphysical Realism in that manner would be circular. The first premise of this pretended proof is that God is veracious. As God is, by definition, a human perception-independent, continuously existing entity, this premise presupposes that there are at least perception-independent and continuous entities. This, in turn, seems to imply that there are independent, continuous and external entities. In that case, Metaphysical Realism would be true. However, this is contradictory to the presupposition of the first profound argument that Metaphysical Realism is in question (it is not justified at any point). Thus, any proof of MR with the premise that God is veracious appears to be circular.

The problem with regard to proving Representative Realism is that this does not imply that any proof of RR-R with the same premises is also circular. It is true that RR-R presupposes MR: sense-impressions cannot be representations of the Real objects if there are no Real entities. However, presupposing does not work in the other direction. The veracity of Metaphysical Realism does not presuppose the truth of RR-R: it is still possible that sense-impressions do not represent the existing Real objects. Thus, God’s existence does not presuppose that RR-R is true although it
would presuppose the truth of MR. Proving RR-R by referring to God’s veracity is not a circular argument.

It would be remarkable if Hume did not see this. We are therefore justified in believing that he must refer to proving Metaphysical Realism in the circularity allegation. There also seems to be something in the counter-argument to proving MR by means of referring to God’s veracity. It appears to rule out the theological answer to the problem of the truth of Metaphysical Realism and thus to the entire first profound argument.

If this is true, there seems to be a possibility to save Hume from the problem regarding Representative Realism. That refuge is to add to the text of paragraph the conclusion that refutes the theological proof of RR-R:

(41) any proof of RR-R with the premise that God is veracious is contradictory to the assumption that MR is in question.

It follows from the premises that

(38) God’s veracity presupposes that MR is true
(39) MR is in question.

In this way, the needed conclusion is entailed:

(42) it cannot be theologically proven that sense-impressions represent their Real objects (RR-R).

These propositions also imply the conclusion rounded with dash lines that

(40) any proof of MR with the premise that God is veracious is circular.

The philosophical problem with this reconstruction is that even it does not make the argument valid. In order to see that, let us reflect on the ontological statuses of God and Real entities. God is by definition a human perception independent, continuous entity. But He having a spatial location is dubious. Therefore God does not seem to be a Real entity, the necessary condition of which is externality to the perceiver. From this, it follows that God’s veracity does not presuppose that Metaphysical Realism is true. If there is a human perception independent, continuous entity, it does mean that there are perception-independent, continuous, and external entities. Thus, proving Metaphysical Realism by means of referring to God’s veracity, which presupposes His existence, is not circular.

In the end, I have to acknowledge that I cannot find any reading of EHU 12.13 that makes the argument in it valid. The reconstructed argument is the best that I can offer and even it is not valid. However, the counter-argument to the theological proof is neither central to my dissertation nor essential, as we will see, to Hume’s counter-argument to the possibility of the rational epistemic justification of Representative Realism; it is more of a detail. Besides, it is possible that Hume does not see the problems of the counter-argument to the theological proof and its
reconstruction may be a correct interpretation. Therefore we can entertain relative
careless attitude to these interpretative problems in this work.

Yet they would call for more attention in Hume scholarship; the last point to be
made of the counter-argument to the theological proof is that it is ad hominem and
determining Hume’s targets, which presumably are Descartes and Malebranche,
would require more study of paragraph 13. For our purposes, nevertheless, justifying
that it is ad hominem is enough. We can see this by means of paying attention to the
point that Hume could refute the theological proof with his own premises that
matters of fact like RR-R cannot be proven a priori and the theological proof would
be a priori. But he does not do that and then we have good grounds to believe that
the argument against it is ad hominem as well as the counter-argument to the
pretended metaphysical proof.

According to the argument against proving RR-R, none of the possibilities is
successful. It can be neither metaphysically, factually, nor theologically proven that
sense-impressions represent their Real objects. Referring to God’s veracity is rejected
since it seem to lead to a contradiction to a presupposition of the first profound
argument and appears to be circular. The factual argument resting on experience
cannot prove the representation relation between sense-perceptions and their
possible Real objects because experience can be present to the mind only as mental
perceptions. The metaphysical proof fails because of the dualistic metaphysics of a
form of the philosophical system. Together with the supposition (43) that there are
only these three possibilities of proving, they support proposition (44) that it cannot
be proven that sense-impressions represent their Real objects. This is the first line of
arguing that Representative Realism cannot be given synchronic rational epistemic
justification. The second consists of generalising the counter-argument to the factual
proof: it also refutes the possibility to justify RR-R epistemically, factually, rationally,
and synchronically. These two lines thus support the second sub-conclusion of the
counter-argument to the philosophical system, that is, proposition (45) that
Representative Realism cannot be given synchronic rational epistemic justification.
Since it cannot be given the diachronic type of this justification either (21), the
conclusion of the counter-argument to the philosophical system follows:
Representative Realism cannot be rationally and epistemically justified (proposition
46).

3.3.6 Diagram of the First Profound Argument

At this point, we are able to present the diagram of the entire first profound
argument:
Representative Realism (RR) cannot be rationally and epistemically justified.

Representative Realism (RR) cannot be given diachronic rational epistemic justification.

Representative Realism (RR) cannot be given synchronic rational epistemic justification.

the natural instinct causing DR is fallible, i.e. unreliable.

this natural instinct cannot be a reliable cause to the belief that RR.

Representative Realism cannot be given synchronic rational epistemic justification.

Representative Realism (RR-R) cannot be given synchronic (rational) factual (epistemic) justification.

it cannot be proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.

it cannot be factually proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.

it cannot be metaphysically proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their Real objects.

there are only three possibilities of proving RR-R: (1) metaphysical, (2) factual, (3) theological.

any proof of RR-R with the premise that God is veracious is contradictory to the assumption that MR is in question.

God’s veracity presupposes that MR is true.

God’s veracity presupposes that MR is true.

MR is in question.

Metaphysical Realism (MR): there are Real entities that exist causally independently of and externally to the mind

Direct Realism (DR): what is present to the mind in sense-perception is Real (sense-impression and the Real entity are identical).

all ideas are ultimately copies of impressions (Copy Principle).

Direct Realism is irrational and misleading or even false.

Nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions.

every sense-impression present to the mind is mental and imagistic in nature.

the sense-perceived table present to the mind is a mental image.

the sense-perceived table present to the mind is not the Real table.

the table argument (5-12) is formed by inductive reason.

reason is not the cause of B(MR).

B(MR) and B(DR) are caused by a natural instinct.

B(MR) and B(DR) are caused by a natural instinct.

it cannot be proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.

it cannot be metaphysically proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their Real objects.

it cannot be factually proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects.

it cannot be metaphysically proven that (RR-R) sense-impressions represent their Real objects.

the existence of the representation relation between sense-impressions and their possible Real objects ought to be determined by experience.

the existence of the representation relation between sense-impressions and their possible Real objects is a factual question.

the representation relation between sense-impressions and Real entities, is inexplicable.

some sense-impressions are not representations of any Real objects.

people are conscious of sense-impressions in dreams and diseases.

the representation relation between sense-impressions and Real entities are different or even contrary.
3.4 Second Profound Argument

3.4.1 Structure

When Hume introduces the second profound argument to the reader, he connects it with the first. As the first is an argument of “the profounder and more philosophical sceptics”, the second is “derived from the most profound philosophy” (EHU 12.1.14 and 15). This comparison is repeated one paragraph later by the words: “The second objection goes farther” (Ibid. 16). These introductions tell us that the second argument is connected to the first. I will defend the view that it is an addition to the first argument, which means that the second argument takes its conclusion further. This time philosophers are not merely unable to justify their rational system rationally and epistemically. Nor is the problem that the unphilosophical Direct Realism involves irrationality and even falsehood. It is the fundamental belief in Metaphysical Realism (MR), shared by the philosophical position and the primary opinion, that is argued to be “contrary to reason” (Ibid. 16). As Bricke notes, the target of the second profound argument is the belief that there are Real entities (Bricke 1980, 16). No wonder Hume takes the second argument to be the profoundest. He, however, sets a condition for this conclusion: “at least, if it be a principle of reason, that all sensible qualities are in the mind, not in the object.” (EHU 12.1.16)

The structure of the second profound argument has five dialectical phases. In the first phase, Hume presents a formulation of the early modern distinction between primary (PMQ) and sensible qualities (SNQ), which is a corollary of the well-known distinction between primary (PMQ) and secondary qualities (SCQ). The perception-analytical second phase argues against the distinction between PMQ and SNQ aiming at its collapse. The dialectic movement continues with an objection to this counter-argument made by an imagined supporter of the distinction. Next turn is to object to this objection and give reasons for it. The movement finishes by the concluding fifth phase that builds up on the collapse of the distinction between primary and sensible qualities in phase two. The second argument terminates with conclusions concerning the belief in Metaphysical Realism and the notion of the matter as substance.

The second argument is brought forward in paragraphs 15 and 16. The former is composed of seven sentences, the first of which introduces the argument and connects it with the first. Phase one, the distinction between PMQ and SNQ, takes the second sentence and phase two, the argument against it, two next ones. The fifth sentence is shared by phases three (objection to the counter-argument) and four
(objection to this objection), the latter of which continues to the end of the paragraph. The last two sentences of paragraph 16 are devoted to the concluding fifth phase.

As the distinctions between primary and sensible qualities and between primary and secondary qualities form the starting point of the second profound argument, in order to understand it properly, it is needed to take the history of these distinctions into consideration. In this Chapter, I follow therefore more contextual approach than in the previous, in which it was not so necessary. As the distinctions have a complex history and there has been a lot written about it starting from ancient atomism until Thomas Reid, my intention is not go into the full discussion of the history. For our purposes, it is enough to highlight certain points of it in early modern philosophy before Hume. Philosophers surfacing here are mainly Descartes, Malebranche, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), Locke, and Berkeley. Although it is common knowledge that Boyle is the first to use the terms “primary” and “secondary qualities”, I will use them, for the sake of simplicity, in the case of Descartes and Malebranche as well, who speak about “sensible qualities” distinguished from the essence and modifications of the matter.

After this historical approach to the first phase of the second profound argument, I proceed to the reconstruction of the counter-argument to it in phase two. The third phase discusses the objection to this counter-argument, which is again replied in phase four. I finish the analysis of the second profound argument by reconstructing the two lines of argument that form its concluding fifth phase. The first concerns the belief in Metaphysical Realism and the conclusion consisted only in it in the editions of the first *Enquiry* before the last 1777 posthumous edition. In to that edition, Hume inserted another strand of argument to the conclusion that considers the notion of the material substance and its alleged, so-called relative idea.

The second philosophical argument against the senses outlined in Hume’s words is as follows:
"all the sensible qualities [SNQ] of objects [...] are merely secondary, and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind without any external archetype or model, which they represent."
"all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind, not in the object"
"all sensible qualities are in the mind, not in the object"

1. "the sensible qualities of objects"
   1.1: "the qualities, perceived by the senses"
   e.g. "hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, & c."

2. "primary qualities" [PMQ]
   2.1: "exist [...] in the objects themselves"
   2.2: "external archetype or model, which they represent"
   2.3: "extension and solidity" fundamental PMQ

"If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity; nor can the latter be more entitled to that denomination than the former."

"the idea of extension [...] is wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities."

"if all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind, not in the object"

"the same conclusion must reach the idea of extension" as SNQ

"the same conclusion must reach" the perceptions of extension and solidity as SNQ

"the same conclusion must reach" the perceptions of all supposed PMQ as SNQ

"an opinion, which, if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be uninterpretable, and even absurd."

"a tangible or visible extension, which is neither hard nor soft, black nor white, is equally beyond the reach of human conception."

"if it be a principle of reason, that" SNQ

"this opinion [is...] contrary to reason"

"Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it, and leave only a certain unknown, inexplicable something, as the cause of our perceptions a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it."
3.4.2 Distinction between Primary and Sensible Qualities

Of the History of the Distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities

The philosophy-historical context of the second profound argument is the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. In some form and described by different terms, it has a long history beginning at the latest from the ancient Atomists Leucippus (first half of 5th century BC.) and Democritus (ca. 460 - ca. 370). Still today, one of the best accounts of its history is by the 19th century Scottish philosopher Sir William Hamilton (1788-1856). Hamilton traces it from the Atomists through Aristotle, Epicureans and Aristotelians to Galileo (1564-1642), Descartes, Cartesians, Boyle, and Locke. Although he repudiates the view that Locke (or Descartes) was the first to establish the distinction as it is known by his successors, I use mainly Locke in providing historical background for the second profound argument (Hamilton 1983/1895, 836-37, and 839). There are two reasons for this choice. (1) In Hume’s letter to Hugh Blair (1718-1800) on 4 July 1762, we have evidence that Hume took Locke and Malebranche to be the first philosophers who really had established the distinction. In his view, there were “but obscure Traces of it among the Antients viz in the Epicurean School. The Peripatetics maintaind opposite Principles.” (Hume 1986, 416) (2) Of Malebranche and Locke, the latter philosopher provides the clearer presentation of the distinction. Locke also uses, unlike Malebranche, the very terms “primary and secondary qualities” (this does not, of course, prevent me from quoting Malebranche as well).

Locke’s criterion for his distinction between primary and secondary qualities has been subject to a debate in Locke scholarship. In general, there are two main interpretations of it. The first is that the basis for the distinction is in natural philosophy, in the corpuscularian hypothesis, and it is endorsed by, among others, Maurice Mandelbaum (1908-1987), Peter Alexander, and John Mackie (1917-1984) (Mandelbaum 1964, Mackie 1976, Alexander 1977/1974). Edwin McCann has

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87 Hamilton edited Reid’s philosophical works (several editions in the 19th century). The peculiarity of this edition is the extensive amount of Hamilton’s editorial material. It includes a long article, “Note D”, which studies the history of the primary secondary qualities distinction (Hamilton 1983/1895, 823-45).

88 The context of the letter is Reid composing his first work An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense (1764). Reid sent most of his manuscript to Hume via Blair (a common friend) in order to get comments. Hume’s very short letter is penned in order to pass his comments to Reid through Blair. (Wood 1986, 411-15)

89 If we believe Hamilton, concerning Aristotle, this is historically incorrect (Hamilton 1983/1895, 826-30).
defended the other reading, according to which the criterion is our common-sensical conception of body and its causation (McCann 1994). For our purposes here, it is not, however, necessary to take a stance in this discussion. It is enough to outline Locke’s way of making the distinction without asking the question of the real ground of the criterion.

Locke presents the distinction in Chapter VIII of the second Book of his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Some farther Considerations concerning our simple Ideas) (1689). He approaches the distinction between primary and secondary qualities by making another distinction between “Ideas” and “Qualities” (Essay 2.8.8). Ideas are “[w]hatsoever the Mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of Perception, Thought, or Understanding”. The “Power to produce any Idea in our mind” is “Quality of the Subject wherein that power is.” He gives an example of this distinction that “a Snow-ball having the Powers to produce in us the Ideas of White, Cold, and Round, the Powers to produce those Ideas in us, as they are in the Snow-ball, I call Qualities; and as they are Sensations, or Perceptions, in our Understandings, I call them Ideas”. (Ibid.) So, initially, ideas are something that are in the mind and qualities belong to the things themselves.

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities is a distinction rather on the level of the substantial bodies than ideas. Primary qualities are “such as are utterly inseparable from the Body, in what estate soever it be”. What this inseparability amounts to is an important point for understanding the second profound argument. It is perceptual inseparability, both with the senses and by thinking. However the mind contemplates any body, or to be precise, “every particle of Matter”, it cannot conceive it without primary qualities. (Ibid. 9) So it is this perceptual inseparability that is the defining characteristic of primary qualities according to Locke. I will not go into the discussion whether this is based on the corpuscularian hypothesis or our common sense conception of body. This level of analysis is enough for our purposes.

Instead, Locke’s list of primary qualities is relevant and consists of “Solidity, Extension, Figure [shape], Motion, or Rest [i.e. kinetic status], and Number” (and perhaps “Situation” (position in relation to other bodies), “Bulk, Texture [the surface composition of a complex body], Motion of its insensible parts”) (Ibid. 23, 9, and

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90 For a mediate view between these, see Campbell 1998/1980.
91 For a recent review of the debate, see Jacovides 2007.
92 According to Chappell, this is Locke’s self-conscious definition of the term (Chappell 1994, 27). See also Essay 1.1.8.
It is relevant because we see that apart from solidity, perhaps, that is, that two bodies are impenetrable and resist each other,\textsuperscript{94} primary qualities are quantitative properties of the material entities. Primary qualities are thus powers of the substantial bodies to produce ideas of these qualities in us.

Why Locke’s definition of qualities is relevant for understanding his primary secondary qualities distinction comes especially evident from his definition of the secondary. It is sometimes thought that they are nothing existing in the bodies themselves but that is a misunderstanding. Locke says that they “are nothing in the Objects themselves, but Powers to produce various Sensations in us by their primary Qualities, \textit{i.e.} by the Bulk, Figure, Texture, and Motion of their insensible parts” (Ibid. 10). So, according to Locke, secondary qualities are in the bodies themselves; they are not ideas in the mind, which is an important point to be appreciated. Another relevant matter is that secondary qualities are not powers to produce any ideas in the perceiver but those to cause the ideas of “sensible qualities”, a term Locke uses first time in the Chapter at §14. “Sensible qualities” are properties that we perceive by our five senses: colours, tactile, sounds, smells, tastes (Ibid. 10, 14, 23, 24).\textsuperscript{95} Although Locke does not say it explicitly in this context, we see rather easily that sensible qualities are qualities not only in the sense of properties or attributes but also in the narrower sense of qualities as distinguished from quantities. For Locke, secondary qualities are therefore powers of bodies to cause the ideas of sensible qualitative properties in us (excluding passions, feelings, and emotions).\textsuperscript{96}

It is not self-evident what Locke means by “power” in this connection. A plausible suggestion is that they are dispositions of bodies, which are causal factors working in the production of sensations in perceivers. For example, the colour of a particular substantial body is its disposition to reflect light in a certain way. This is also coherent with what Descartes, possibly Malebranche, and especially Locke’s main

\textsuperscript{93} McCann includes the parenthesized properties but Alexander does not (McCann 1994, 60 and 86).
\textsuperscript{94} In his Chapter on Solidity, Locke refrains from defining it because it is a simple idea and simple ideas are indefinable. They can be known only by having them. (Essay. 2.4.6)
\textsuperscript{95} It must be admitted that Locke’s attitude to tactile qualities is slightly ambiguous in 2.8. He does not explicitly list them into sensible qualities. Still in two places, he treats feeling temperature by hand as a sensible quality (Essay 2.8.21 and 24).
\textsuperscript{96} Term “sensible quality” is also a translation of Aristotle’s term “\textit{pathétikê poiôtêis}”, which means ‘affective suchness’. This term is equivocal since it can signify the circumstance in the entity that has the power to cause an affection in the senses or the affection itself. Aristotle’s examples are from the categories of taste, temperature, and colour. (\textit{Categ.} 9a28-10a10 and Hamilton 1983/1895, 826-7)
influence on the problem, Boyle think (Princ. 4.199; CMS I 285; Search 6.2.2; LO, 441; and Alexander 1977, 70). However it is, it seems to be clear that secondary qualities are causally dependent on the primary (that is one of the reasons why they are called “secondary”, that is, ‘derivative’); there is plenty of textual evidence for this in Chapter 2.8 (Ibid. 10, 13, 22-4). But how we should exactly understand this is not material for our purposes.

Locke’s distinction between primary and secondary qualities is thus made rather in terms of the substantial bodies than in our ideas of them. Their perceptually inseparable properties are primary qualities and their powers to produce the ideas of sensible qualities in the perceiver are secondary qualities. Secondary qualities are causally dependent on the primary as they are powers caused by the primary qualities and their combinations of a particular body.

One of the most obvious dangers in understanding Locke’s distinction of primary and secondary qualities is to think that he makes it in terms of resemblance or representation between qualities and their ideas. That is not, however, the case. Locke is quite explicit that the difference in resemblance between the ideas of primary qualities and the ideas caused by the secondary is an implication of his real criterion of the distinction in terms of the qualities of the substantial bodies. He writes that

“[f]rom whence I think it is easy to draw this Observation, That the Ideas of primary Qualities of Bodies, are Resemblances of them and their Patterns do really exist in the Bodies themselves; but the Ideas, produced in us by these Secondary Qualities, have no resemblance of them at all. There is nothing like our Ideas, existing in the Bodies themselves.” (Essay 2.8.15; first emphasis added)

Now we are in one of the most important points of Locke’s distinction in relation to the second profound argument. We have ideas of mainly quantitative primary qualities and there are also, Locke claims, quantitative properties in the bodies themselves, that is, properties of the same kind. Therefore our ideas of primary qualities may resemble their supposed objects in bodies. In contrast, though we have also ideas of qualitative sensible qualities, the substantial bodies do not have,

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97 In their so-called Port-Royal logic (1662), Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694) and Pierre Nicole (1625-1695) also classify habits or dispositions and natural powers (puissance) under the category of qualities in their presentation of the Aristotelian ten categories (Arnauld and Nicole 1996, 33). In Aristotle, the corresponding terms are beksis and dynamis physikê. For example, virtue is a beksis and healtiness a dynamis physikê (Categ. 8b25-9a27).

98 Actually, Locke says that they “are Resemblances of” their objects “in the Bodies themselves”. But for our purposes, the possibility of resemblance is enough.
according to Locke, any qualitative properties. In other words, they do not have properties of the same kind as sensible qualities at all. Thus, the ideas of sensible qualities cannot and do not resemble the substantial bodies.\(^9^9\) For example, a colour is not and cannot be similar to the composition of the material particles on the surface of a complex body.

Another danger is to think that Locke denies the resemblance between secondary qualities and their ideas. To be precise, he does not say that here or in any other place in Chapter 2.8. He speaks about ideas or sensations that these secondary qualities of the substantial bodies, that is, powers, cause in us. This corollary distinction is, therefore, rather the distinction between primary and sensible qualities than between the primary and secondary. The ideas of primary qualities may resemble the primary qualities of the substantial bodies, whereas the ideas of sensible qualities cannot be similar to anything in the bodies themselves. This distinction is actually more relevant for understanding the second profound argument properly because it is close to the categorical difference between quantitative and qualitative properties. Almost all primary qualities are quantitative and sensible qualities are exhaustively qualitative.

Primary qualities may also be termed the Real properties of the bodies themselves. They are perception-independent, external to the perceiving mind, and have continuous existence. Although the context of the primary secondary qualities distinction is philosophy of body, it is also justified to say that primary qualities are the Real properties of Real entities, while the sensible are not. Substantial bodies belong to the category of the independent and continuous entities; they are also extended and thus may be external to the mind.

This is a good point to move from Locke to a more general feature of early modern philosophy. Every ‘new philosopher’ who included the material substance and substantial bodies into his system, dualistic or materialistic philosophers with mechanistic leanings, for instance, maintained what I call for the sake of the repeated reference “the Sensible Qualities Principle” (SNQP).\(^1^0^0\) This principle is material for the second profound argument and can be initially formulated as follows:

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\(^9^9\) It is also to be realised that this does not rule out the possibility that the ideas of sensible qualities cannot represent something in the substantial bodies if we do not identify representation with resemblance.

\(^1^0^0\) Naturally, it is not possible or reasonable to go through all mechanistic philosophers in the early modern period and to show that they really hold SNQP. It is enough to point out that one of the most prominent did. Besides, here “a Humean challenge” is appropriate argument. So I would like to ask anyone disagreeing with me on this issue to establish that this is not the case.
sensible qualities (visual, tactile, sounds, smells, tastes) are not the Real properties of Real entities.

Among mechanistic philosophers, Descartes and Malebranche are the clearest proponents of SNQP. Descartes thinks that there are only quantitative properties in the material entities. The material substance and its essence extension are numerically identical and all other properties of the substantial bodies are modifications of extension. In fact, it is impossible that qualitative sensible qualities would be properties of the substantial bodies because they are modifications of the thinking substance, which is distinct from the corporeal. (Cottingham 1993, 149 and Garber 1992, 292-298; see also Princ. 4.199; CSM I, 285) In Malebranche, there are many passages that put forward a closely similar view (Search 1.10.1; LO, 49; Elucidation 6; LO, 569-70, and 573-4). Actually, Descartes and Malebranche are more helpful than Locke on the Sensible Qualities Principle as they do not use term ‘primary and secondary qualities’ but rather make the distinction between the ‘essence’ and ‘modifications’ of the matter and ‘sensible’ or ‘sense qualities’ (Ibid.; Cottingham 1993, 149; and Garber 1992, 292-298).

Corpuscularians differ from Descartes in the point that they take the substantial bodies to consist of those indivisible atoms with primary qualities, that they call “corpuscles”, while Descartes thinks that the matter (extension) is infinitely divisible (McCann 1994, 56-57). Another difference between them is that, as mentioned above, Boyle and Locke include solidity into primary qualities. This has significant implications for the possibility of vacuum (see Ibid.), but the relevant consequence here is that solidity does not seem to be a quantitative property – or property at all. If it means that bodies resist or cannot penetrate each other, it is not clear that this is mathematically describable. It also appears to be possibly similar to sensible qualities. If we feel that two felt objects, for example, resist each other, could not this resemble their solidity as in Real bodies? In that case, solidity would be both a primary and a sensible quality. Howsoever this would be, it is at least clear that otherwise there are no sensible qualities in the bodies themselves, according to Locke and Boyle (for Boyle, see Alexander 1977, 65-70).

This is connected to the point made many times in early modern philosophy that words or terms signifying sensible qualities are equivocal. When we say that grass is green, for example, we are apt to think that attribute “green” refers to some property in Real grass. However, as Malebranche nicely points out, philosophers show that “green” is ambiguous. It can refer to “a movement of insensible parts” of Real grass or to “what I see when I see grass”, that is, to the sensation of green. (Search 6.2.2;
In the Lockean framework, this means that the terms of sensible qualities can refer to secondary qualities or to the sensible – the former being the sole Real referent.

Starting Point of the Second Profound Argument

After introducing the second profound argument in the first sentence of paragraph 15, Hume starts it in the second:

“It is universally allowed by modern enquirers, that all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, &c. are merely secondary, and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind, without any external archetype or model, which they represent.” (Ibid. 15)

Considered against the historical background I have outlined above, this dense sentence of Hume seems to miss the criterion of the primary secondary qualities distinction completely. Hume appears to say that secondary qualities are nothing in Real entities. As we have seen, that is incorrect because Locke takes secondary qualities to be the Real powers of the bodies themselves and Descartes and Boyle understand them as the dispositions of the Real material entities. Should we then conclude that the second profound argument is on the wrong path right from the start? I think we ought not to as it is rather this way of describing Hume than his view of the secondary qualities that is a misunderstanding.

If we read the passage carefully together with its historical background, we come to realise that in it, Hume actually states the Sensible Qualities Principle (SNQP). None of the sensible qualitative properties (qualities) is a Real property of Real entities and therefore cannot resemble anything in them. Sensible qualities are merely perceptions in the mind. Moreover, it is this principle and not mere mentality of secondary qualities that Hume claims to be “universally allowed by modern enquirers”. As we have seen, in this assertion he is not absolutely on the wrong path. At least every early modern philosopher with mechanistic leanings whose ontology is dualistic or materialistic endorses this principle. In fact, it is one of the central features of modern physics that colours, for example, as we perceive them, are mere effects on the perceiver whereas in the physical objects themselves there is nothing like them – the proper physical referents of colour terms are the distinct wavelengths of light.

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101 Hamilton cites also “the celebrated Cartesian” Pierre-Sylvain Regis (1632–1707) on this issue (Hamilton 1983/1895, 836–7).
102 It might be claimed that even Berkeley would accept it. As he does not accept the material substance, no sensible quality can exist in the material entities.
It must be granted that Hume’s use of terms in this passage is somehow unfortunate as he speaks about “secondary qualities”. However, as I have made evident in the outline of the argument in Hume’s words, when he repeats the SNQP, he speaks about “the qualities, perceived by the senses” and in the conclusion, about “sensible qualities” (EHU 12.1.15, and 16). So, when we take all these passages into consideration, we realise that Hume’s point is the Sensible Qualities Principle.

This reading gets more support from Hume’s letter to Blair, which I cited above. It is written after the first publication of the first Enquiry and Hume did not alter this passage in the editions later than the letter. So the letter cannot represent Hume’s later, different view of the matter (as the Enquiries can do in relation to the Treatise). It is also coherent with the passage. Consequently, it does not present Hume as momentarily disagreeing with the first Enquiry. Therefore it is justified to use the letter as evidence for interpreting the first Enquiry. As we recall, the context of the letter is Hume commenting Reid’s draft of his first work An Inquiry into the Human Mind. One of his criticisms of Reid is the following:

“The Author supposes, that the Vulgar do not believe the sensible Qualities of Heat, Smell, Sound, probably Colour to be really in the Bodies, but only their Causes or something capable of producing them in the Mind.” (Hume 1986, 416)

Later he gives the examples of the philosophers’ view after Malebranche and Locke “that Snow is neither cold nor white: Fire hot nor Red.” (Ibid.)

Let us take into consideration that the letter is criticism of Reid’s view of the everyday belief of sensible qualities. Therefore we are justified in negating what Hume says in the quotation. If we do that, he thinks that it is the view of philosophers that sensible qualities, including tactile temperature, are not really in the matter. So, actually, he is stating the Sensible Qualities Principle here and also the view that it is modern philosophers’ view. The subtle difference is that in the first Enquiry he says that it is universally maintained by modern philosophers. Here he qualifies it to the philosophers of the time between the letter and that of Malebranche and Locke.

My interpretation of Hume’s exact point in the first phase of the second argument gets just more support from one thing Hume says in the letter that he does not say in the first Enquiry. It is modern philosophers’ belief, and that of the vulgar according to Reid, that sensible qualities are in the substantial bodies really nothing but causal factors to cause their perceptions in the mind. As we have seen, this is actually Locke’s view of secondary qualities. So Hume is not ignorant of the circumstance that Locke does not deny the existence of secondary qualities in the material entities - actually, they are in the bodies themselves. He knows that but his point is the Sensible Qualities Principle.
Primary qualities are a topic that Hume does not say much about in EHU 12.1.15-6. His only explicit words are “the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity” in the third sentence of paragraph 15. Hence we have to reconstruct Hume’s interpretation of the alleged primary qualities by comparing what he says about the sensible with the philosophical-historical context. The Sensible Qualities Principle states that sensible qualities do not exist in Real entities and their perceptions do not resemble anything in them. Vice versa then, primary qualities are the Real properties of Real entities and perceptions may resemble them. The next natural question is why Hume’s list of primary qualities here is so short in comparison with Locke. Its likely explanation is that it is presumed in the argument that extension and solidity are somehow fundamental of the supposed primary qualities. Later I will show that it is so; at this point, we just have to take this for granted.

The structure diagram of the first phase of the second profound argument, that is, the distinction between primary and sensible qualities is thus the following:\(^{103}\):

\(^{103}\) Cf. Bricke 1980, 10-11.
3.4.3 Argument against the Distinction between Primary and Sensible Qualities

As I have said above, the second phase of the second profound argument is brought forward in two sentences, the third and fourth:

“If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity; nor can the latter be more entitled to that denomination than the former. The idea of extension is entirely acquired from the senses of sight and feeling; and if all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind, not in the object, the same conclusion must reach the idea of extension, which is wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities.” (EHU 12.1.15)

For the analysis of this passage, the first thing to do is to present it in an outline form:

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<td>o1</td>
<td>“If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity; nor can the latter be more entitled to that denomination than the former.”</td>
<td>counter-argument to the distinction between PMQ and SNQ</td>
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<td>“the same conclusion must reach” the perceptions of extension and solidity as SNQ</td>
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As I make evident in the outline, I read the passage in the way that first Hume presents an objection (o1) to the distinction between primary and sensible qualities and then completes it into an argument (p1-c3).

The objection to the distinction between primary and sensible qualities is the following. If sensible qualities do not resemble anything in the supposed Real entities, we cannot have any ground to claim that the perceptions of the alleged primary qualities do. So the objection is the implication that the Sensible Qualities Principle entails the collapse of the distinction between sensible and primary qualities in terms of our perceptions.

Why it is so will be explained next when some of the hidden premises of this implication is made explicit. It starts with the idea of extension that is asserted to be “wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities.” This is
the first premise of the counter-argument and it supports my view that the second profound argument starts with the Sensible Qualities Principles rather than with secondary qualities. It is said that the idea of extension depends entirely on the ideas of sensible qualities, that is, on the ideas produced by the alleged secondary qualities. From this, it is concluded that the idea of extension is an idea of sensible qualities. When we add the SNQP to this as another premise, as the text does, “the same conclusion” as that regarding the non-resemblance of sensible qualities “must reach the idea of extension”. The idea of extension does not resemble anything in the supposed Real entities. So there is no reason to include the idea of extension into the perceptions of primary qualities. It is a perception of sensible qualities.

From this it does not follow, however, that none of our perceptions of the alleged primary qualities resembles any Real property of Real entities. First, the perception of solidity is not argued to be a perception of sensible qualities. Second, Locke’s list of primary qualities covers more than just extension and solidity. Despite of these complications, the objection makes it evident that the counter-argument is meant to conclude with the exclusion of the perceptions of primary qualities. Therefore we are justified in adding some implicit premises to it in order to complete the argument.

Before that, it is needed, however, to explain why the argument considers only the ideas of extension and solidity without taking notice of their impressions. Could their impressions be the perceptions of the alleged primary qualities? This possibility is ruled out, though, by the point that the same argument works in the case of the impressions of the supposed primary qualities as regarding their ideas. Therefore it is justified to focus on the ideas of extension and solidity.

The first implicit premise is that the idea of solidity depends entirely on that of extension. Then, if the idea of extension is a perception of sensible qualities, the idea of solidity is as well. Accordingly, it does not resemble any Real property of Real entities. However, in the apparently corresponding argument in the Treatise (Of the modern philosophy), it seems to be the other way around: extension depends on solidity (T 1.4.4.8). But this is only an appearance and in fact, the argument in the Treatise is not identical with the one in the first Enquiry. Hume begins it by asking the Reality of motion, which is concluded to depend on the Reality of either extension or solidity (Ibid. 7). After that he argues that the Reality of extension turn to that of solidity because coloured extension is already established to be non-Real (Ibid. 8). So it is the Reality of extension rather than the idea of extension that is dependent on solidity, and indeed, on the Reality of solidity in this argument of the Treatise. By contrast, in the first Enquiry, it is presumed that the idea of solidity relies upon that of extension. Regarding the Treatise, this is closer to the argument some paragraphs
later in 1.4.4.10. It is also this argument that explains why the idea of solidity depends on that of extension:

“In order to form an idea of solidity, we must conceive two bodies pressing each other without any penetration” (emphasis added).

Though Hume does not say it explicitly in this occasion and his argument moves on to a slightly different direction, it follows from the idea of solidity that we cannot conceive solidity without extension. The idea of solidity presupposes the idea of two bodies pressing each other without penetration. Two bodies could not penetrate into each other, were they not extended. Thus, solidity cannot be conceived without any idea of extended bodies and thus without any idea of extension. The idea of solidity depends entirely on that of extension; that is the first hidden premise initially formulated.

Here we are able to employ Hume’s terminology that comes from the philosophical context of his times. We may put the ultimate premise and the first hidden premise in terms of “real” or “necessary connexion”. The general description of these terms is the following. The first thing to be noted is that here “necessary connexion” should be taken in its non-associative sense, which is distinct from Hume’s positive account of it and the source of its idea in the context of causality (EHU 7.2.28-9 and 8.1.22). In general, these terms mean that when A is really or necessarily connected with B, A cannot be conceived without B at the same time. If it is not, it can be conceived without B. (T I.4.6.16, 3.App.20-21, and I.3.14.27, cf. EHU 4.1.9-11, 7.1.6-8, and 12.3.27) An illustrating instance of real or necessary connection is the relation between whole and its parts. The whole cannot be conceived without any conception of its parts because parts are included in and constitute the whole. For example, if the perception of a red circle consists of smaller perceptions of red, the circle cannot be conceived without these smaller perceptions of red.

When we apply these terms into the propositions under consideration, we may formulate them as follows. Extension cannot be conceived without some conception of sensible qualities and solidity is incomprehensible without conceiving extension. Thus, the idea of extension is necessarily connected with some idea of sensible qualities (proposition 4) and the idea of solidity to that of extension (proposition 6). It is significant for understanding the second profound argument that this implies that these propositions can also be put in terms of numerical identity. Any idea of extension is numerically identical with some idea of sensible qualities; they are the same, which also holds of any idea of solidity in relation some idea of extension.

Here the later terms “sufficient condition” and “necessary condition” may also prove to be helpful in describing these propositions to the reader in the 21st century.
Conceiving solidity is the sufficient condition for comprehending extension as well as having an idea of extension is for entertaining an idea of sensible qualities, but not the other way around. Instead, conceiving sensible qualities is the necessary condition for apprehending extension, whereas the ideas of solidity are necessary conditioned on the ideas of extension. In order to illustrate the point to oneself, one can imagine that sensible qualities, extension, and solidity form circles within themselves (SNQ being the biggest and solidity the smallest).

It is more support to this interpretation that Locke, who is the obvious target of the counter-argument, seems to share the first hidden premise. While criticising the *materia prima* of the Scholastics, matter without any form, he asserts that “Solidity cannot exist without Extension” (Essay 3.10.15). Moreover, Locke does not deny the existence of vacuum and therefore there can be extension without solidity (empty space) (McCann 1994, 57-8). So for him, solidity is necessarily connected with or the sufficient condition of extension, there cannot be solid unextended entities, but not the other way around, there can be extension without solidity.

The second hidden premise of the counter-argument is actually proposition (2.3) from the definition of the alleged primary qualities. Extension and solidity are fundamental primary qualities. Then, if the perceptions of extension and solidity are perceptions of sensible qualities, all the perceptions of the supposed primary qualities are as well and none of them is similar to Real properties. As proposition (2.3) was just taken for granted in the first phase of the second profound argument, it requires justification here.

So far, it is observed that extension is the most fundamental of the supposed primary qualities. It is also explained how and why it is so. How about all the others from the different early modern lists of primary qualities? For that purpose, let us suppose that we exclude extension and solidity from the properties of the material substance and substantial bodies. What does this entail in either Descartes’ or Locke’s conception of body? It implies that they are not bodies anymore. For Descartes, extension is the essence of the material substance (*Princ.* 2.4). For Locke, both extension and solidity are (Essay 2.13.11, and 3.10.15). Therefore, if there were not extended or solid entities, there would not be bodies at all. Thus, extension and solidity are the fundamental (alleged) primary qualities in the sense that they are essential for, that is, the necessary conditions of the other alleged primary qualities to exist as the properties of the material entities. For example, without extended entities there would not be any with shape, magnitude, texture or bulk. Conversely, this means that the other alleged primary qualities are necessarily connected to or the sufficient
Second Profound Argument against the Senses

conditions of solidity and extension. Every idea of them is numerically identical with some idea of solidity and ultimately of extension.

After making the implicit premises of the counter-argument explicit, we are in the position to reconstruct it in its entirety. It begins with the proposition that the idea of extension is really or necessarily connected to the ideas of sensible qualities (proposition 4). This proposition implies that the idea of extension is a perception of sensible qualities (proposition 5), which has a further implication. When we add the implicit premise that the idea of solidity is necessarily connected to that of extension (proposition 6), we conclude that the idea of solidity is also a perception of sensible qualities (proposition 7). Thus, together with the Sensible Qualities Principle, it follows that the ideas of extension and solidity do not resemble any Real property of Real entities (proposition 8). As this does not entail that none of our perceptions of the alleged primary qualities does, it is needed to insert another implicit premise from the definition of primary qualities that extension and solidity are fundamental in the sense that the others are necessarily connected to them. Then we can conclude the needed proposition (9) that none of our perceptions of the supposed primary qualities resembles any Real property of Real entities.

As it will turn out, this is not yet enough for the concluding fifth phase of the second profound argument. That phase starts with the second and the collapse of the distinction between primary and sensible qualities and it requires that not only our perceptions of the listed primary qualities but our perceptions exhaustively do not resemble any Real property of Real entities. Hume does not present the argument between these. How is it then supposed to follow?

For that, we just need to consider the first phase of the second profound argument. According to the primary sensible qualities distinction, the only perceptions that may resemble the Real properties of Real entities are perceptions of the alleged primary qualities. The modern doctrine of body involves that the matter and substantial bodies do not have any qualitative properties. But the counter-argument to the distinction between PMQ and SNQ terminates with the denial that the perceptions of PMQ do not resemble anything in Real entities and they are the only candidates for Reality-resembling perceptions. It is thus concluded that none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities. Let that be proposition (11) and the “candidate premise” number 10.

104 Ultimately they are so with extension. Here we can see thus that necessary connection can be a transitive relation.
As a result, the second phase in the diagram form is the following:

Before proceeding to the next phase, this is the right place to observe that the second phase is perception-analytical in nature. It consists of an analysis of the perceptions and ideas of the alleged primary qualities.\(^{105}\) This will turn out to have some implications in the fifth phase. Then it is concluded that the conclusion of the second phase is a premise for a proposition, the rationality of which it is relevant to establish.

### 3.4.4 Objection to the Counter-Argument

At least for the proponents of the primary secondary qualities distinction whose natural philosophy is also founded on the existence of the matter, this argument may have worrying implications. Accordingly, in the next third phase of the second

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profound argument, Hume pretends to be fair for them. He brings out a possible objection to the counter-argument:

“Nothing can save us from this conclusion, but the asserting, that the ideas of those primary qualities are attained by Abstraction”. (EHU 12.1.15)

The last clause of this sentence presents the objection to the argument against the primary sensible qualities distinction (o2). It consists of the proposition that the ideas of extension and solidity are abstract ideas. This means that their origin is in the alleged operation of the mind whose technical term, deriving from Latin, is abstraction (drawn off, separated). Traditionally, abstraction was connected to general conception, sorting objects into kinds and therefore proper abstraction was seen as terminating with apprehending universals. Despite of this history, my claim is that in this context, the point is that abstraction is separation in thought in general – whether it results in particular or universal conception. The mental separation may be understood both in literal and metaphorical sense. Here it is essential that abstraction involves literal separation in our thinking. Accordingly, the alleged abstract ideas of extension and solidity are literally separate from the ideas of sensible qualities. This means that we can conceive the former without any conception of the latter at the same time.

As the reader may observe, the objection is made to the fundamental premises of the second phase. It denies that the ideas of solidity and extension are necessarily connected to the ideas of sensible qualities. In addition to this, the objection can be stated by using the common philosophical distinction of Hume’s times between “real” and “rational distinction” (distinctio realis vs. distinctio rationis), which Descartes and the Port-Royal logic, for instance, apply in relation to Real entities. In the Cartesian framework, the distinction can be illustrated by the material substance and its essential property extension. Although they are not really distinct from each other, still there can be made a rational distinction between them. From its non-essential modes, by contrast, the material substance is really distinct. For example, the corporeal substance is really distinct from a particular figure, but not the other way around. The determinate figure of a particular body is only rationally distinct from this body and the material substance. (Princ. 1.60, and 62; CMS I 213-5; and Arnauld and Nicole 1996, 31-2, and 37-8)

For our purposes, the distinction between real and rational distinction is useful on the level of ideas and perceptions, too. As I will show, it can give an insight into the

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106 This distinction is made by Stewart (1996, 123-5).

107 This last point tells us that real and rational distinctions are not necessarily symmetrical.
nature of the objection and the later objection to it in the third phase. It is also justified to use the distinction in Hume’s case. Although it does not surface in the text of the first *Enquiry*, on the basis of the *Treatise*, it is clear that Hume knows it. He implies the distinction when he explains “*distinction of reason*” at the end of *Of abstract ideas* (T 1.1.7.17-8) and his so-called Separability Principle\(^{108}\) obviously works on the notion of (mental) real distinction (T 1.1.3.4, 1.1.7.3, and 1.4.5.5).\(^{109}\)

In terms of perceptions at least, the distinction between real and rational distinction is founded on the possibility of literally separate conception. If idea A is really distinct from idea B, A can be conceived with no conception of B at the same time. If A is merely rationally distinct from B, it cannot be conceived without B. In that case, to be precise, A is numerically identical with idea B. (Princ. 1.60, and 62; CMS I 213-5; Arnauld and Nicole 1996, 31-2, and 37-8) So the distinction between real and rational distinction is also connected with the traditional notions of numerical identity and distinctness. Rationally distinct aspects of an idea are numerically identical with the idea and really distinct ideas are numerically distinct (cf. T 1.1.5.10, and 1.1.7.18). Another connection is to real or necessary connection. Rational distinction is between an idea and its aspects that are really or necessarily connected to it, or between necessarily connected aspects, whereas real distinction holds between ideas that are not necessarily connected.

Terms “sufficient” and “necessary condition” and imagining circles can again be illustrating for the contemporary reader. If A is only rationally distinct from B, it is the sufficient condition for B and B its necessary condition (but not necessarily the other way around). A is, for instance, a circle inside the larger circle B. However, for the objection, real distinction is more relevant. Using the same general case, it can be put in the way that even if A is rationally distinct from B, B may be really distinct from A. In terms of the diagrams of extent, this means that there are members of B that are not A. The circle B is larger than the circle A. Yet, B is the necessary condition of A. For instance, not every woman is blonde although all blonde women are female.

In these terms, the abstractness of the ideas of extension and solidity means that they are really or numerically distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities; they can be conceived with no conception of SNQ, that is, in literal mental separation of any idea

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\(^{108}\) What is distinct is distinguishable and what is distinguishable is separable by the thought and imagination. For discussion, see Garrett 1997 (ch. 3).

\(^{109}\) Actually, at 1.4.5.27, Hume uses the term “really different” in stating the Separability Principle. See also his use of “really different” in the case of the so-called missing shade of blue (T 1.1.1.10).
of sensible qualities. The ideas of extension and solidity are not really or necessarily connected with the idea of sensible qualities. Regarding necessary and sufficient conditions, it may be said that the objection can incorporate positions in which the ideas of extension and solidity are the necessary conditions for the ideas of sensible qualities and the latter are the sufficient conditions for the former (circle of extension and solidity larger than that of SNQ). In order to conceive sensible qualities, it is necessary to conceive extension and solidity, and for the ideas of extension and solidity it suffices to have ideas of sensible qualities. Yet, even in this position, there can be conception of extension and solidity with no conception of SNQ at all. The ideas of extension and solidity are not the sufficient condition for the ideas of sensible qualities.

The argument in the second phase implies that in the objection, it is possible to focus on the idea of extension. The argument works on the premise that extension is the most fundamental primary quality. So the objection is, in fact, to proposition (4) of the second phase: the idea of extension is necessarily connected to the ideas of SNQ, with the ideas of colours, for instance. The objection denies this by the proposition (12) that the idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities. In abstraction, we can conceive extension in literal separation of sensible qualities. In other words, the idea of extension is not really or necessarily connected nor numerically identical with the ideas of sensible qualities. It may be their necessary but not sufficient condition.

The diagrammatic presentation of the objection to the argument against the primary sensible qualities distinction is therefore as follows:

*The idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of sensible qualities.*

*The idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities.*

I have two reasons to interpret abstraction in this context involving literal separation in thought, that is, mental real distinction, numerical distinctness or denial of real connection and sufficient condition. The first reason is the logic of the second profound argument: it will be established that the argument presupposes abstraction regarded as real distinction. Secondly, in his corresponding argument, Berkeley understands proper abstraction in this way. This bears evidence on the second profound argument because Hume confesses in the footnote attached to it that “[t]his argument is drawn from Dr. BERKELEY” (EHU 12.n.32). Berkeley has an argument similar to the second profound argument both in his *A Treatise concerning
the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710) and in Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous (1713).

Both of these arguments treat abstraction as literal separation in thought. In the Principles, Berkeley writes that

“If it be certain, that those original [i.e. primary] qualities are inseparably united with the other sensible qualities, and not, even in thought, capable of being abstracted from them […] I desire any one to reflect and try; whether he can by any abstraction of thought, conceive the extension and motion of a body, without all other sensible qualities.” (PHK 10; emphases added)

Near to the end of the First Dialogue, while putting the similar argument, Berkeley is even clearer of the conception of abstraction. First Philonous, Berkeley’s representative, challenges Hylas:

“If you can frame in your thoughts a distinct abstract idea of motion or extension, divested of all those sensible modes, […] I will then yield the point you contended for.” (DHP 79; Works II, 193; emphases added)

Then he goes on to push Hylas:

“Can you even separate the ideas of extension and motion, from the ideas of all those qualities which they make the distinction, term secondary?” (Ibid; first two emphases added)

Hylas tries to answer:

“What! is it not an easy matter, to consider extension and motion by themselves, abstracted from all other sensible qualities?” (Ibid.; emphases added)

But in the end, Berkeley has Philonous to draw the conclusion:

“therefore it is impossible even for the mind to disunite the ideas of extension and motion from all other sensible qualities.” (Ibid. 80; Works II, 194; emphases added)

The second reason for reading abstraction as mental real distinction can be further supported by Berkeley’s general case against abstract (general) ideas, which he brings forward in the Introduction to the Principles, having Locke openly as his target.110 Throughout the argument, Berkeley is explicitly treating proper abstraction involving literal separation in thought, especially in sections 7-10. Actually, in the last of them, he summarises what we can and should understand by abstraction and in what sense it could be said that abstraction is possible for the human mind:

“To be plain, I own my self able to abstract in one sense, as when I consider some particular parts or qualities separated from others, with which though they are united in some object, yet, it is possible they may really exist without them. But that I can abstract one from another, or conceive separately, those qualities which it is impossible should exist so separated; or that I can frame a general notion by abstracting from particulars in the manner aforesaid.” (PHK intro.10; emphases added)

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110 The places in Locke’s Essay from which Berkeley quotes are 2.11.10-11, 3.3.6, and 4.7.9.
It is important that this is Berkeley’s general typology of the meanings of “abstraction”. So it is reasonable to expect that he also follows these senses in the *Principles* at least. All of them involve real distinction in thought. The first is separating what is really distinct. In that sense, Berkeley thinks abstraction is entirely possible and permitted (when we think, for example, one arm of a human body without the other). It is not, however, the proper meaning of abstraction. The second is and it involves separating only rationally distinct properties; in other words, making a real distinction between merely rationally distinct (distinguishing a sufficient condition from its object). The last third is given most space in the previous sections and Berkeley does not present it here - presumably because it is the most complicated of the three. It begins by considering several particular complex ideas. The process continues with picking up the similar qualities of the complex ideas and eliminating the distinguishing (PHK intro.9). The end result is a new complex idea really distinct from with which we started.

I take these passages from Berkeley to establish that he presumes, especially in the argument, but also in general, that abstraction is literally mental separation, making mental real distinctions. According to my knowledge, no contemporary Berkeley scholar contends this interpretation either. As Hume claims that he has borrowed the argument from Berkeley, it is most likely that the second profound argument also works on the premise that abstraction involves real distinction between ideas, that is, between the idea of extension and the ideas of sensible qualities.

For our purposes, it is also relevant that Berkeley’s second and third conception of abstraction allude to a certain passages in Locke’s *Essay* where Locke discusses abstraction. Those places are 2.11.9 and 3.3.6-9. Locke is also Berkeley’s explicit target. Therefore we have good reasons to think that in the second and third phase of the second profound argument, Hume is also alluding to Locke. His letter to Blair, which I have quoted above, also supports this. Naturally, this does not show that Locke is the only target of Berkeley and the second profound argument. I am not going to discuss this matter because it is not required, but it is still helpful to pause for a moment and consider the historical correctness of this conception of abstraction in Berkeley’s and Hume’s philosophical context. That will broaden our

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philosophical perspective to the issue and has some relevance for understanding the second profound argument.

From the intellectualist camp, the Port-Royal logic affords us perhaps the clearest discussion of abstraction. The discussion is also valuable for us because it provides a contrast to Berkeley’s view. It explicitly denies that abstraction involves real distinction:

“Some things are composed of really distinct parts, called integral parts, such as the human body and different parts of a number. In this case it is easy to conceive how the mind [esprit] can be applied so as to consider one part independently of another, because the parts are really distinct. This is not what we mean by “abstraction.”” (Arnauld and Nicole 1996, 37; 1981, 55)

This invites the obvious question what Arnauld and Nicole mean by “abstraction”. The Port-Royal logic is accordingly helpful in introducing the so-called selective attention conception of abstraction. Before denying that abstraction involves real distinction, they characterise abstraction in general as follows:

“Because of its small scope, the mind [esprit] cannot perfectly understand [comprendre] things that are even slightly composite unless it considers them a part at a time [par parties], as if by the different faces they can assume [& comme par les diverses faces qu'elles peuvent recevoir].” (Ibid.; emphasis added)

When this passage is read in light of the previous, the consideration of things “a part” about which it talks does not involve making a real distinction. That is also supported by the italicised clause at the end, which speaks about “the different faces” of a thing, which it allows. This is an allusion to the rationally distinct aspects of a thing. So in the Port-Royal logic, abstraction is considered involving merely rational distinction between what is numerically identical.

Arnauld and Nicole give two illustrations of this conception of abstraction. The second is better for our purposes as it explicitly speaks about rational distinction. Abstraction

“takes place when, in the case of a single thing having different attributes [divers attributs], we think of one attribute without the other even though they differ only by a distinction of reason. Here is how this happens. Suppose, for example, I reflect that I am thinking, and, in consequence, that I am the I who thinks. In my idea of the I who thinks, I can consider a thinking thing without noticing [sans faire attention] that it is I, although in me the I and the one who thinks are one and the same thing. The idea I thereby conceive of a person who thinks can represent not only me but all other thinking persons.” (Ibid. 38; 1981, 56)

In the Cartesian framework, the I who thinks and thinking are numerically identical with each other. Therefore they are not really distinct from each other. Still it is possible to abstract thinking, for instance, from the I who thinks. This means making a rational distinction between them. It happens by what can be called selective attention or partial consideration. If I focus on thinking and do not attend to the fact
that it is me who thinks, I form an abstract idea of thinking thing. This abstract idea has a general representation and therefore it is also a general idea.\footnote{This generality is what we are interested in abstraction. That is the reason why we can ignore the selective attention the other way around, that is, focusing on the I who thinks.}

It is nevertheless essential that in the process, ‘the I who thinks’ does not completely escape our conception. We conceive both ‘the I who thinks’ and thinking because we cannot separate them (they are identical), but focus on thinking. So it is an important point regarding the selective attention conception of abstraction that in it, we also conceive that on which we are not focusing. It is not thinking the one without the other. We are thinking both and merely focus our attention on the other.

Descartes makes similar remarks on abstraction in \textit{Principia Philosophia} (1644), which supports therefore the interpretation that his conception of abstraction is also selective attention.\footnote{“These universals [which are “considered in the abstract or in general”] arise solely from the fact that we make use of one and the same idea for thinking of all individual items which resemble each other: we apply one and the same term to all the things which are represented by the idea in question, and this is the universal term. When we see two stones, for example, and direct our attention not to their nature but merely to the fact that there are two of them, we form the idea of the number which we call ‘two’; and when we later see two birds or two trees, and consider not their nature but merely the fact that there are two of them, we go back to the same idea as before. This, then, is the universal idea; and we always designate the number in question by the same universal term ‘two’. In the same way, when we see a figure made up of three lines, we form an} Based on these passages, abstraction as partial consideration may be outlined as follows. Let us suppose that \(Q_1\) and \(Q_2\) are numerically identical qualities of a thing \(T\). This means that they cannot be really distinguished from each other; we cannot conceive \(Q_1\) without \(Q_2\) nor the other way around. There is a real or necessary connection between them (they are each other’s sufficient conditions). Still it is possible that we can focus on, say, \(Q_1\) while conceiving both. In that case, we selectively attend to or partially consider \(Q_1\) and form an abstract idea of it. It is crucial that this abstract idea of \(Q_1\) includes conceiving \(Q_2\). It is an idea of both with highlighting, so to speak, \(Q_1\). So the abstract ideas that concern one aspect of things do not form a class of ideas distinct from the ideas of these things.

Selective attention can be illustrated by visual perception while it is kept in mind that it does not necessarily imply the literally imagistic conception of ideas. Let us suppose that I look at an aerial photo of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. Let us also suppose that I am especially interested in Holyrood Palace at the Eastern end of the street. Accordingly, I focus my gaze on it and scrutinize its exterior features. If the
picture is not too big, I can still see Edinburgh Castle at the other end of the Royal Mile. It does not escape my gaze. In that case, we see both but focus on Holyrood Palace and this can be called selective attention to it or partial consideration of the picture.

There are many interpretations of Locke’s “abstract general ideas” but for our purposes, it is sufficient to classify them into two types in terms of abstraction. According to the first type, Lockean abstraction involves literal mental separation. When we have an abstract idea of a quality $Q_1$, for instance, we entertain an idea that is really and numerically distinct from the idea of the thing whose quality it originally is. The second type reads Locke in the way that abstraction is only selective attention or partial consideration. Abstract general ideas are only rationally distinct from the particular; actually, they are numerically identical with the particular: they are particular ideas considered in a certain way. The first type of interpretation has been defended by Vere Chappell and E. Jonathan Lowe, for instance (Chappell 1994, 38-44; and Lowe 1995, 154-65). The foremost champion of the partial attention reading is Ayers. In his view, Lockean abstraction is just selective attention to some aspects of a particular idea that are numerically identical and not really distinct from the idea itself. (Ayers 1991 (vol. 1), 248-53)

For the interpretation of the second profound argument, these brief considerations have certain implications. The objection to the counter-argument to the primary and sensible qualities distinction clearly works on the assumption that abstraction involves mental real distinction. It states that the idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities. As such, it is possible that it resembles a Real property of Real entities. As we have seen, however, this was not the only way in which abstraction was understood in Hume’s philosophical context. If abstraction is merely selective attention, the abstract idea of extension is an idea that may involve conception of sensible qualities. It is just that in this abstract idea, we focus on extension without paying attention to sensible qualities. For example, we focus on the extensionality of a triangle without paying attention to the colour of its lines. But still we are thinking the same idea and as a result, we conceive both extension and colour. It follows, therefore, that the idea we are having is an idea of colours, that is, of sensible qualities.

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114 In fact, Ayers claims that Locke’s theory of abstraction is identical with Berkeley’s explanation of selective attention.
This point is of some significance if we presume that the target of the counter-argument to the primary sensible qualities distinction is Locke and it is he who is presumed to state the objection. If Locke’s abstraction involves real distinction, the objection is genuinely Lockean. If Locke holds a selective attention theory of abstraction, the objection is not his and we have to conclude that Berkeley and Hume either misread or misrepresent Locke’s view of abstraction. However, in the next third phase of the argument, we see that this does not save Locke from the counter-argument to his distinction between primary and sensible qualities. Actually, it just makes things worse for him since then, as we will see, he has to endorse the objection to the abstraction objection. This would also imply that he must accept the ultimate premise of the argument against the distinction between primary and sensible qualities.

### 3.4.5 Objection to the Objection

As I have noted, the objection to the abstraction objection is put forward at the end of paragraph 15. It takes its last two sentences and the two last clauses of the third last:

“an opinion, which, if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be unintelligible, and even absurd. An extension, that is neither tangible nor visible, cannot possibly be conceived: And a tangible or visible extension, which is neither hard nor soft, black nor white, is equally beyond the reach of human conception. Let any man try to conceive a triangle in general, which is neither Isosceles nor Scalenum, nor has any particular length or proportion of sides; and he will soon perceive the absurdity of all the scholastic notions with regard to abstraction and general ideas.” (EHU 12.1.15)

The first thing to note about this passage is that it really presents an objection to the abstraction objection. The “opinion” to which the beginning of the passage refers is proposition (12) that the (abstract) idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities. The objection claims that this opinion is “unintelligible, and even absurd.” The passage continues by giving reasons for this objection in two sentences. The first of them states the propositions that it is not possible to conceive intangible or invisible extension and that extension with no colour or tactile quality is out of the reach of the human understanding. The logical structure of this first sentence is that the first proposition is founded on the second. If every conceivable extension is conceived as coloured or tactile, no conceivable extension is invisible or intangible. So it is justified to take the last proposition as the ultimate reason for the objection.

The last sentence brings into play the notion of generality as speaking about the abstract, general idea of triangle. So far, in the second profound argument, it has been merely concentrated on abstraction, which admittedly has traditionally been
seen as being connected to general thinking and apprehending universals. However, as I have shown, this aspect of abstraction is not needed in the argument and it is enough to focus on abstraction as a process that involves mental separation. My claim is that this will be sufficient for the rest of the second profound argument as well, which will be justified by the reconstruction of the argument. Besides, it has the advantage of not going into the discussion of a difficult Locke quotation. Most likely, the last sentence is namely an allusion to a notorious passage by Locke that Berkeley ridicules in his critique of abstraction.\footnote{That passage says that the abstract general idea of triangle “must be neither Oblique, nor Rectangle, neither Equilateral, Equiangular, nor Scalene, but all and none of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect, that cannot exist; and Idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent Ideas are put together.” (Essay 4.7.9; cf. PHK intro.13)} In addition to the alleged absurdity of that passage, the point in the last sentence is the indeterminacy of abstract general ideas. For instance, the general idea of triangle must not have any determinate length and proportion of sides because it should represent all particular lengths and proportions. However, as these two points are irrelevant for the reconstruction of the second profound argument, these possible problems can be set aside in my reconstruction of it. The relevant point concerns the literal separability of the idea of extension from the ideas of sensible qualities.

The structure of the argument for the objection to the abstraction objection in Hume’s words is therefore as follows:

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15  4  o3  "an opinion, which, if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be unintelligible, and even absurd."

p1.o3  "a tangible or visible extension, which is neither hard nor soft, black nor white, is equally beyond the reach of human conception."
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The objection to the abstraction objection is thus founded on the proposition that extension without any colour or tactile quality is beyond human comprehension. Using Humean and early modern philosophical terminology, this means that the idea of extension is really or necessarily connected with the ideas of colours and tactile qualities. This is proposition (13) and the ultimate foundation of the objection. As we remember, real or necessary connection implies impossibility of literal separate conception in mind. Accordingly, if A and B are necessarily connected, it is impossible to conceive A without B (but not necessarily other way around). Let this proposition be number 14. Together with proposition (13) it entails that extension
cannot be conceived without some conception of colours or tactile qualities. According to the primary sensible qualities distinction, colours and tactile qualities are sensible qualities. So it follows that we cannot frame any idea of extension that is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities. That would amount to conceiving extension without any idea of colours or tactile qualities, which the previous premises rule out. In other words, this means that the idea of extension as really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities is unintelligible for us. Let this proposition be proposition (15). It is quite easy to see how it implies the objection, proposition (16) that the abstraction objection, proposition (12) is unintelligible. If proposition (12) is that the idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities and according to proposition (15), that is unintelligible, proposition (12) is unintelligible.

It is of some significance for understanding Hume’s view of the second profound argument that proposition (13) can also be stated in terms of numerical identity. It entails that any idea (perception) of extension is numerically identical with some idea (perception) of colours or tactile qualities; it is the same with some representation of colours or tactile qualities.

The reconstruction of the fourth phase is therefore as follows:

116 This does not necessarily mean that the idea itself is coloured because this question depends on what we mean by ‘being coloured’.
3.4.6 Conclusion

There is an interpretative problem in reconstructing the conclusion of the second profound argument: we have two different versions of paragraph 16 in the editions of the first Enquiry. In the posthumous 1777 edition, Hume inserted a sentence in the earlier editions, this paragraph was slightly shorter (Beauchamp 2000b, 268). It is not the length of the paragraph, however, that is significant here but the content of the addition. Accordingly, I have to reconstruct two strands of argument in phase five:

| 16 | p7 “if it be a principle of reason, that” SNQ |
| 16 | c4 “this opinion [is …] contrary to reason” |
| 16 | c5&p8 “Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it, and” |
| 16 | c6&p9 “leave only a certain unknown, inexplicable something, as the cause of our perceptions” |
| 16 | c7 “a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it.” |

Pre-1777 Conclusion

As a full sentence, the conclusion of the second profound argument in the pre-1777 editions is the following:

“The second objection goes farther, and represents this opinion as contrary to reason; at least, if it be a principle of reason, that all the sensible qualities are in the mind, not in the object.”

(EHU 12.1.16)

This sentence has a two-part structure. First it states the conclusion and then a new premise to the argument. The premise is that the now familiar Sensible Qualities Principle (SNQP) is a rational tenet. This is a new premise to the second profound argument because it qualifies an earlier one. Above, it was claimed that the perceptions of sensible qualities do not resemble anything in the alleged Real entities. Now it is stated that this is a rational position. About the conclusion, it may be initially remarked that it consists of the proposition that “this opinion” is “contrary to reason”. This naturally raises two questions. (1) What does this contrariety to reason amount to? (2) What is the reference point of “this opinion”? Let us start with the second question.

Grammatically, “this opinion” refers back to “the opinion of external existence” in the beginning of the paragraph. As the context of the paragraph shows, the reference

117 It was printed in September 1777 and published in January or early February 1778. In the title page, the year of publication is nonetheless 1777. (Beauchamp 2000a, lvii)
point is not merely the belief of the external world but the belief in Metaphysical Realism (MR). Paragraph 16 finishes the discussion of the two profound arguments and their starting point is, as we remember, the belief that there are mind-independent, external, and continuously existing entities, that is, Metaphysical Realism. This reading might be challenged by what is said about the first profound argument in the same paragraph as I noted in the previous Chapter. In that context, the same phrase “the opinion of external existence” refers to Direct or Representative Realism. Is Hume’s use of this phrase then equivocal? In the end, we have to conclude that it is not. By contrast with the first profound argument, Hume does not qualify the term in the second in any way. In the previous Chapter, I argued that the qualifications “if rested on natural instinct” and “if referred to reason” in the case of the first argument change the point of reference of “the opinion of external existence” to Direct and Representative Realism instead of Metaphysical Realism. These qualifications are absent in relation to the second profound argument and therefore it is well-grounded, when the context is taken into account, to read “the opinion of external existence” as referring to Metaphysical Realism. The initial reformulation of the conclusion in the pre-1777 editions is thus that the belief in Metaphysical Realism B(MR) is contrary to reason.

The first question about the contrariety to reason is intertwined with the problem how the conclusion is supposed to follow from the conclusion of the second phase, that is, from the collapse of the primary and sensible qualities distinction in terms of our perceptions (proposition 11). Therefore it is not possible to discuss the one in separation of the other; they have to be considered together. Unfortunately, the only textual evidence for the argumentative relation and the interpretation of the contrariety in the pre-1777 editions is the added premise of the rationality of the SNQP. As a result, we have to approach this crucial question from three other directions: (1) Berkeley’s corresponding argument, (2) the posthumous edition and Hume’s other relevant texts, especially Treatise 1.4.4, (3) the logic of the argument.

As I have noted above, Berkeley advances an argument similar to the second profound argument in both the Principles and the Three Dialogues. Hume also confesses in the footnote that the second profound argument or the counter-argument to abstraction “is drawn from DR. BERKELEY”. For our purposes, the argument in the Three Dialogues proves to be more useful. It explicitly states that the distinction between primary and sensible qualities “implies a repugnancy”, that is, a contradiction. However, here it is not necessary to go into an extensive discussion of how we should understand this conclusion of Berkeley and why he thinks so. It is sufficient that one of its reasonable readings is the following.
In the beginning of the last third of the First Dialogue, after advancing the sense-variation based arguments against the Reality of the putative primary qualities and observing that extension is the fundamental primary quality, Berkeley puts forward what can be called his abstraction argument against the distinction between primary and sensible qualities. The argument, paraphrased briefly, goes as follows.

Berkeley begins the argument with Philonous asking whether Hylas can separate the ideas of extension and motion from the ideas of sensible qualities. Hylas replies that the example of mathematicians shows that it is easy to make an abstraction like this. Philonous’ long answer is that the fact that there are mathematical, general propositions and inferences without mentioning any sensible qualities does not establish that we can conceive extension without framing any idea of sensible qualities, that is, to form an abstract idea of extension. Next Hylas suggests that perhaps the Cartesian faculty of pure intellect can do the needed job, but Philonous brings it down very quickly. As there are no abstract ideas, possible pure intellect does not help us in any way. At the end of this speech by Philonous, Berkeley has Philonous asking again whether Hylas can conceive figure in abstraction of any sensible qualities. Hylas concedes that he cannot and then Philonous brings forward the premise that what implies contradiction in its conception is impossible, that is, it cannot exist in Nature. Hylas admits this as well immediately. Then Philonous goes on to conclude that primary qualities must exist where sensible qualities do because the mind cannot separate the ideas of extension and motion from those of sensible qualities. At this point, Hylas is at defence and Philonous is able to conclude that the arguments that Hylas acknowledged against the Reality of sensible qualities hold equally for that of the putative primary qualities. (DHP 80; Works II, 194)

More systematically, we have thus an argument that begins with the premise that the idea of extension is necessarily connected to some idea of sensible qualities. In other words, it is not possible to conceive extension without some conception of sensible qualities. As Flage has observed, this is so – whether extension is visible or tangible - because of Berkeley’s doctrine in An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709) (Flage 1987, 88). It follows from this premise that every idea of the supposed primary qualities is necessarily connected to some idea of sensible qualities for the reason that Berkeley has earlier established: extension is the fundamental putative primary quality. This is also the reason why Berkeley may focus on extension.

118 Just before this, he also argues against absolute extension and motion, but they are more or less irrelevant for our purposes.
Next Berkeley incorporates the premise that what implies contradiction in its conception is impossible. How is this supposed to work in our case? What implies contradiction and which contradiction? This we can see by reflecting on Berkeley’s target in the context, the early modern notion of the material substance and substantial bodies, and an implication of it.

According to this notion, the matter and bodies have only primary qualities with no qualitative properties whatsoever. They are entities that can be exhaustively described in mathematical terms. An implication of this notion is the distinction between primary qualities and sensible qualities because the very term “primary quality” entails it. However, if we take this notion and add the Berkeleyan premise to it that the idea of extension is necessarily connected to some idea of sensible qualities, the distinction between primary qualities and sensible qualities, that is, the implication of the notion, collapses. The further implication of the early modern notion of the matter together with Berkeley’s premise is that it is impossible to conceive primary qualities and sensible qualities in total separation. The problem is, however, that this is contradictory with the notion itself that primary qualities exist in complete separation of sensible qualities in the matter and bodies. We have thus two contradictory propositions. (1) Primary qualities are not necessarily connected to sensible qualities (conception of the matter). (2) Primary qualities are necessarily connected to the sensible (Berkeley’s theory of vision). The early modern notion of the matter and bodies entails then a proposition that is contradictory with itself when Berkeley’s premise is inserted.

Berkeley’s talk about implying a repugnancy in its conception can be thus read in the way that the early modern notion of the matter and bodies is self-contradictory. It is inconsistent when it is subjected to critical examination. If we considered this conclusion together with the general principle that what implies a contradiction is impossible, it would follow that the matter and bodies according to the early modern conception are impossible entities. They cannot and therefore do not exist.

On the ground of Berkeley’s abstraction argument, it might be suggested that the belief in the existence of Real entities is contrary to reason in the sense that when the very notion “Real entity” excludes all sensible qualities, it implies a contradiction. Therefore it can be called “the contradiction interpretation”. It is significant that if this interpretation is correct, the conclusion of the second profound argument has a further implication – in the case we incorporate an extra premise into it. If nothing self-contradictory can exist, Real entities, according to the presumed concept of them, cannot and do not exist. In the end, the second profound argument would then conclude by denying the existence of Real entities.
Second Profound Argument against the Senses

This interpretation is also close to Garrett’s reading, according to which Hume’s argument shows that we cannot conceive bodies as having specific qualities without conceiving them as having sensible qualities. This is however contradictory to the presumed concept of body with no sensible qualities whatsoever (Garrett speaks about secondary qualities meaning what I call the sensible). (Garrett 1997, 218)

Let us next ask whether the contradiction interpretation and Garrett’s reading have any textual evidence in Hume’s works apart from the possible support from the philosophical context of the second profound argument in Berkeley. In my primary source text, the first Enquiry, there is nothing in any edition that explicitly supports the contradiction reading. As far as I can see, nor is there anything that would suggest it - even when read together with Berkeley’s argument. Of course, this does not rule out the possibility that Berkeley’s argument is meant to fill the argumentative gap that the text of the first Enquiry leaves for the reader. Therefore we are justified in looking at Hume’s other works if there is any textual evidence for this reading. The natural place for that is the Treatise and especially the Section Of the modern philosophy (1.4.4).

On the basis of the Treatise, there seems to be something in this interpretation. When Hume begins the Section on the immateriality of the soul (1.4.5), he compares the mind with the matter by reporting that he has

“found such contradictions and difficulties in every system concerning external objects, and in the idea of matter” (T 1.4.5.1).

He repeats this claim at the end of the same paragraph and it resurfaces in the Appendix when Hume begins to reflect his explanation of personal identity critically:

“I had entertain’d some hopes, that however deficient our theory of the intellectual world might be, it wou’d be free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world.” (T 3.App.10)119

The Appendix passage clearly refers back to 1.4.5.1 and it, in turn, comments on the previous sections Of the modern philosophy, Of the antient philosophy, and Of scepticism with regard to the senses. Those sections discuss our natural and philosophical belief in the existence of Real entities, the Aristotelian notions of primary matter (materia prima), substantial forms and accidents, and the modern mechanistic concept of body. As the Aristotelian notions are not relevant here, our interest lies in the question what could be contradictory in the modern concept of body on the ground of Hume’s arguments in Of the modern philosophy.

119 Consider also Philo’s words at the beginning of the Dialogues: “[T]he contradictions, which adhere to the very ideas of matter, cause and effect, extension, space, time, motion” (DNR 1, 34).
From this perspective, it is somewhat surprising that no explicit terminology referring to contradiction can be found in those parts of the Section where Hume discusses two arguments against the modern notion of body (T 1.4.4.7-10 and 12-14). Without going to the details of the arguments, it is sufficient to remark the following. The first concludes 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.” (Ibid. 10) Although this seems to suggest inconsistency, the reason for this conclusion does not support it. It states that the concept of body with no sensible qualities whatsoever leads either to an infinite regress or to a circle (Ibid. 9 and 10). The first possibility is that the Reality of extension depends on solidity, which relies on the idea of body, which, in turn, turns to solidity, and so on in infinitum (Ibid. 9-10). The other possibility is that the dependence of the Reality of the fundamental primary qualities of extension and solidity is circular: they rely upon each other. The Reality of extension depends on the Reality of solidity, which turns to the notion of body, which cannot be framed without the idea of extension, the Reality of which depends on the Reality of solidity (Ibid.).

The second argument is supposed to respond to the suggestion that touch is the sense that conveys us the idea of Real solidity and therefore some conception of primary qualities (Ibid. 12). It concludes that “this method of thinking is more popular than philosophical” (Ibid. and 13-14). For our purposes, it is not relevant how the argument grounds this conclusion. Suffice it to note that it does so without any indication of contradiction. Hume’s arguments in T 1.4.4, therefore, do not support the reading that the contradiction passages at T 1.4.5.1 and the Appendix refer back to these arguments. What can then be their reference point?

As far as I can see, the only place in T 1.4.4 to which they can refer is its last paragraph and final conclusion:

“This 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 continued and independent existence of body.” (T 1.4.4.15)

This passage is from a highly significant paragraph for the interpretation of the second profound argument. At this point, the relevant part is that there is “a direct and total opposition” between at least some conclusions of our causal reasoning, that is, inductive inference, and the belief in the existence of Real entities. In the Conclusion of the first Book of the Treatise, Hume refers back to this passage as his a

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120 I read paragraph 11 to be a supplement to the first argument.
footnote at that place shows. There he uses terms “directly contrary” and “contradiction” (twice) (T 1.4.7.4-5). Based on this textual evidence, Hume’s reference point of “contradiction” in T 1.4.5.1 and the Appendix is this opposition between inductive inference and the belief in Real entities or at least its implications.\(^{121}\) However, this is not a contradiction within the modern notion of body or belief in Real entities, which the contradiction interpretation and Garrett’s reading would require.

Thus, not even does the Treatise support the contradiction interpretation of the contrariety to reason in the conclusion of the second profound argument and the Berkeleyan reconstruction of the argument from the collapse of the distinction between primary and sensible qualities to the conclusion. According to my knowledge, evidence cannot be found from Hume’s other works either. In the end, we have to conclude that the contradiction reading and Garrett’s interpretation are not satisfactory because they do not have positive textual support.

The next question is naturally thus whether there can be any other interpretation of the conclusion (contrary to reason) and the argument to it. If it were supported by the text, that interpretation would be preferable to the contradiction reading and Garrett’s account. As I have noted, the evidence provided by the pre-1777 editions of the first Enquiry is minimal. We have only the extra premise that the Sensible Qualities Principle is rational. Therefore we have to make an exception to our procedure to use the first Enquiry as our almost exclusive textual evidence and to focus on the Treatise for a while. In the crucial points, we will be, however, able to rely on EHU 12.

The relevant passages in the Treatise are the initial conclusion of Of the modern philosophy at T 1.4.4.6, its last paragraph (1.4.4.15), and the back references to this paragraph at T 1.4.5.1, 3.App.10, and 1.4.7.4-5. I have quoted the last paragraph of 1.4.4 and it claims that there is “a direct and total opposition” between inductive inference and the belief in the existence of Real entities. As I have also remarked that

\(^{121}\) He might also refer back to the concluding part of T 1.4.2: “And as to our philosophical one [system of RR], ’tis liable to the same difficulties; and is over-and-above loaded with this absurdity, that it at once denies and establishes the vulgar supposition. Philosophers deny our resembling perceptions to be exactly the same, and uninterrupted; and yet have so great a propensity to believe them such, that they arbitrarily invent a new set of perceptions, to which they attribute these qualities. I say, a new set of perceptions: For we may well suppose in general, but ’tis impossible for us distinctly to conceive, objects to be in their nature any thing but exactly the same with perceptions.” (T 1.4.2.56) Section on ancient philosophy does not seem to speak about any contradictions in the Aristotelian system but merely of fictions.
when referring back to it, T 1.4.7.4 employs the term “contrary” instead of opposition:

“But tho’ these two operations [inductive inference and the belief in Real entities] be equally natural and necessary in the human mind, yet in some circumstances they are directly contrary, nor is it possible for us to reason justly and regularly from causes and effects, and at the same time believe the continu’d existence of matter.”

This passage brings some significant qualifications of the opposition into play. First, it is not any kind of inductive inference that is opposite or contrary to the belief in Real entities; rather, it is consistent inductive inference. Second, this regular or methodical inductive reasoning concludes with something together with which it is not possible to believe in the existence of Real entities at the same time. The first Enquiry is completely coherent with this in the place where the belief in Real entities is claimed to be contrary to reason. So the contrariety to reason of which the both works speak means this, impossibility to believe in Real entities and to use consistent inductive inference at the same time.

The passage continues in the following way:

“How then shall we adjust those principles [just regular inductive inference and the belief in Real entities] together? Which of them shall we prefer? Or in case we prefer neither of them, but successively assent to both, [...] we thus knowingly embrace a manifest contradiction?”

This is one of the Hume passages that really require careful reading. On the first look, it seems to say that consistent inductive inference and the belief in Real entities are contradictory. If we read it more carefully however, it says that when we assent to both of them, we come to “embrace a manifest contradiction”. The contradiction is thus implied by the simultaneous assent to methodical inductive inference and to the existence of Real entities. The Appendix supports this reading as it speaks about “those contradictions [...] which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world.” (T 3.App.10; emphasis added) Initially, therefore, the conclusion of the second profound argument may be reformulated as follows. Consistent inductive reasoning and the belief in the existence of Real entities are contrary because simultaneous assent to both implies a contradiction.

The next question is obviously what are the members of this contradiction? It is clear that one member is the belief in Real entities, that is, the belief in Metaphysical Realism [B(MR)]. The other member of the pair is something inductively rational. It would be expected that it is the proposition that there are no Real entities. In that case, we would have a contradiction between propositions “there are Real entities” and “there are no Real entities”. The belief in Metaphysical Realism would be assent to the former and the consistent use of inductive inference would imply the endorsement of the latter.
Whether Hume means this contradiction is an important issue for determining his view of the existence of Real entities. If the contradiction is between these two propositions and he endorses it, this supports the reading that Hume denies the existence of Real entities. He would be an Idealist, for example. Let us therefore assess the textual evidence on the issue. It must be granted that the last paragraph of T 1.4.4 may support this interpretation of the contradiction. In its last sentence, it seems to deny the existence of Real entities as a rational conclusion:

“When we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such an existence.” (T 1.4.4.15)

However, there is nothing in the first Enquiry that would even suggest that the second profound argument concludes by denying the existence of Real entities. So this interpretation does not have any support in our primary reference text. It might be speculated that with this respect the first Enquiry and the Treatise differ from each other. Perhaps in the earlier work the argument really terminates with denying the existence of Real entities, but for some reason, Hume changed it into the latter work. Whatever the case, Hume’s intellectual development regarding this question is not so relevant for our purposes. Based on the first Enquiry, we do not have any reason to maintain this interpretation; it is not satisfactory from the point of view of positive textual evidence, which has consequences in relation to the question whether Hume is a Metaphysical Realist or not. The first Enquiry is more coherent with the initial conclusion of T 1.4.4 in the middle of the Section and that conclusion is stated rather in terms of perceptibility than in those of existence.

Let us compare this point in the Treatise with the 1777 addition to Section 12. The latter begins as thus:

“Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it” (EHU 12.1.16).

The initial conclusion of T 1.4.4 is that

“by its means [the modern system involving the distinction between primary and sensible quality], we utterly annihilate all these objects” (T 1.4.4.6).

This proposition is further explained by the next sentence:

“If colours, sounds, tastes, and smells be merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive is possess of a real, continu’d, and independent existence” (Ibid.).

The first thing that strikes one’s eyes of these three quotations is that the first two speak about the annihilation of the matter, substantial bodies and Real entities. In this context, annihilation means, as the third passage makes evident, that we cannot perceive Real entities. In light of our conception, Real entities are annihilated because we cannot have any perception of them. In other words, their notion is void of any

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122 Here I disagree with Bricke (1980, 9 and 18-9).
content. It does not, however, mean that there are no Real entities. So, on the basis of coherent textual evidence from the 1777 edition and the Treatise, we get a new, implicit step to the pre-1777 second profound argument: we cannot have any perception of Real entities.\footnote{This is also the initial conclusion of T 1.4.4. If we presume that its final conclusion is denying the existence of the matter, it is hard to see a valid argument from the initial conclusion to the final when the contradiction in the concept of the matter is ruled out. That argument seems to infer \( x \)'s non-existence from having no perception of \( x \), which, without very specific further presumptions, is not very plausible implication (analogically, does it follow that an entity does not exist because we cannot see it). Thus, this point also bears evidence against the reading that the contradiction is between the existence and non-existence of Real entities.}

Before going to the question how the contradiction follows from this proposition and where it actually lies, let us first consider the argument to this proposition from the second phase and collapse of the distinction between primary and sensible qualities. Although we do not have any textual evidence, the argument is not difficult to see. The second phase terminated with proposition (11) that none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities. Whatever property we pretend to conceive the supposed Real entities to have, there is nothing in them that would be similar to the property we are conceiving. From this, it follows that we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties (proposition 17). Their notion is a “skeleton concept” because we cannot describe them by virtue of any properties whatsoever. At the best, we can perceive Real entities as bare entities, that is, entities with no properties whatsoever. If we presume that we cannot perceive “bare” entities (proposition 18), we get the conclusion and proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. In other words, this means that we are not able to represent Real entities to ourselves or that they cannot be represented to us.

That this conclusion follows rather easily from the second phase of the second profound argument provides additional support for the view that it really is one of the steps in the argument. The logic of the argument corroborates textual support. However, our reconstruction of the pre-1777 second profound argument is not yet completed because we still have to find the contradiction that is supposed to follow from proposition (19) and from the simultaneous assent to consistent inductive inference and to the existence of Real entities.

Here our only help in the first Enquiry is the premise that the Sensible Qualities Principle is rational. Let us first discuss in what sense it is rational. With regard to this question, the first Enquiry is almost completely silent. As I have made clear
before, Section 12 treats reason explicitly only as an opposite to the unreflective following of a natural instinct. Nevertheless, I have argued that the notion of reason at play in the first profound argument is Humean, inductive causal reason. So it is a reasonable assumption that Hume means inductive reason in the case of the SNQP as well. At this point, the Treatise provides strong textual corroboration when it is taken into account that causal reasoning is involved in the Humean inductive reason. As we have seen, both 1.4.4.3-4, the concluding paragraph of 1.4.4 and Hume’s back reference to it in 1.4.7.4 explicitly speak about causal reasoning in this context. The second even claim that the SNQP is grounded on valid causal reasoning: “When we reason from cause and effect, we conclude, that neither colour, sound, taste, nor smell have a continu’ld and independent existence.” (T 1.4.4.15) The first extra premise is thus that the Sensible Qualities Principle is inductively rational. Let this be the initial formulation of proposition (20). If we use our inductive causal reason consistently, we conclude with the SNQP. It is therefore well grounded on inductive inference.

I am going to show that proposition (20) is one of the most crucial premises of the second profound argument for determining Hume’s view of the argument. Let us also recall that the argument giving grounds for proposition (19) “we cannot have any perception of Real entities” is mainly perception-analytical. Analysing perceptions is also one the functions of the Humean faculty of reason. I follow Owen’s reading that it includes intuition and perception analysis is intuitional because it involves conceiving relations of ideas (Owen 1999, 85). If we incorporate this to proposition (20) and consider it together with proposition (19), we see that they entail that proposition (19) is a rational tenet. In other words, it is well grounded on inductive inference and perception analysis. Among the premises in the argument for it, the SNQP has strong foundation on inductive reasoning. The rest are perception-analytical. The next step in the argument is thus proposition (21): it is a rational proposition that we cannot have any perception of Real entities.

This proposition is not yet contradictory either with the belief in Real entities or with their existence. At this point when we do not have any textual evidence on which to rely, we just have to use rational reconstruction and to form a way how the argument could work nicely. A fruitful suggestion is that the belief in Metaphysical Realism would be contradictory to a rational attitude. This rational attitude cannot be that belief because then no contradiction would arise. So the contradiction must be between believing in the existence of Real entities and refraining from the belief (suspension or rejection) at the same time. That is a contradiction. Let us see how this could be argued from the rationality of the imperceptibility of Real entities, proposition (21).
Let us incorporate two further premises into the argument. The first is that perceptions provide content for beliefs (proposition 22). The second is that it is a rational requirement that all beliefs ought to have content (23). When we use our reason as perception analysis and inductive inference on certain issues, we come to conclude that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. When we also realise that perceptions give content for beliefs and that it is rational to require content of beliefs, we conclude that it is rational to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities (proposition 24). If it is further presumed that we can at least momentarily refrain from this belief (25), that is, it is not absolutely involuntary, this refraining is both rational and possible. As one of the constituents of being rational is doing consistently what is rational, it follows ultimately that in our rational moments, we actually refrain from the belief in Real entities. That is proposition (26) and what reason commands us to do.

As T 1.4.7.4 makes evident, it is at least hypothetically presumed, for the sake of the argument, that at the same time we hold the belief in Metaphysical Realism (proposition 27), that is, we assent to the proposition that there are Real entities. But this and refraining from that belief (proposition 26) are contradictory. Thus, if we held that belief in our rational moments, we would simultaneously believe and refrain from believing (suspension or disbelief) that there are Real entities. We would “embrace a manifest contradiction” (proposition 28).

Though this is a construction of the concluding phase of the second profound argument in the pre-1777 editions with scarce textual evidence, it at least explains the relevant text in the first Enquiry and the Treatise nicely. It is also preferable to the other accounts that I have been able to imagine. Therefore, I take the second profound argument to conclude with the following proposition (29): the belief in the existence of Real entities, that is, the belief in Metaphysical Realism is contradictory to a rational attitude and contrary to a rational proposition. It is contradictory to the rational attitude of refraining from believing in the existence of Real entities. It is contrary to the rational proposition that we cannot have any perception of Real entities, from which refraining from believing in their existence follows with some presuppositions concerning rational beliefs. As such, it is also contrary to consistent inductive reasoning.

The diagram of the reconstructed pre-1777 second profound argument is therefore as follows:

124 This line of argument will be further described when Hume’s attitude to it is discussed in 4.2.2.
(11) None of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities.

(17) We cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties.

(19) We cannot have any perception of Real entities.

(21) It is a rational proposition that (19) we cannot have any perception of Real entities.

(22) Perceptions provide content for beliefs.

(23) It is a rational requirement that all beliefs should have content.

(25) We can at least momentarily refrain from believing in Real entities.

(26) When rational, we refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities.

(28) We manifest a contradiction.

(27) We believe in the existence of Real entities.

(29) B(MR) is contradictory with a rational attitude and contrary to a rational proposition.

(18) We cannot perceive entities without qualities (bare entities).

(20) SNQP is inductively rational and the other premises for perception-analytically rational.
The reconstruction of the additional conclusion and argument to it - the second strand of the fifth phase of the second profound argument - is slightly easier. The second strand of the argument is not so complex as the first and we can cash in some of the work done in reconstructing the first; there is also a little bit more textual evidence on which to rely.

Hume’s supplement from the last days of his life, in its entirety, goes as follows:

“Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it, and leave only a certain unknown, inexplicable something, as the cause of our perceptions; a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it.”

If we consider the word of the first Part of EHU 12, the addition brings a new “notion” into play, “matter”. As the outline in Hume’s words makes evident, initially it can be said that the 1777 supplement concludes with three propositions in relation to matter. First, matter is annihilated (c5&p8). Second, it is unknown and inexplicable (c6). The ultimate conclusion is that the notion of matter is imperfect (c7).

I have used the first proposition, the annihilation of matter, to reconstruct proposition (19) in the pre-1777 concluding phase of the second profound argument. Therefore we can begin the reformulation of the 1777 addition with that proposition. As we remember, it states that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. How are we supposed to infer from this that the matter is unknown and inexplicable (c6)?

The first obvious implicit step is that the matter is a Real entity. Consequently, we cannot have any perception of it and it is inexplicable and unknown, and its notion imperfect. This is a natural presupposition of the second profound argument as in its philosophical context, the matter was regarded as a substance in the sense of a human mind-independent entity. On the most general level, it was seen as such entity that is fundamental for particular bodies (if there are any). For example, according to Cottingham, Descartes sees corpus, body, in the sense of the corporeal or material substance as the stuff of which the material entities are formed (Cottingham 1993, 22). Which specific conception of the material substance Hume has in mind here does not play so much role. In any case, the material substance is a Real entity in the stipulated sense: a (human) perception-independent, external, and

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125 For the reason that will become evident in the section where I discuss Hume’s view of the 1777 supplementary conclusion, its consideration must be kept here quite simplistic.
continuous entity. So the first implicit premise in the 1777 addition is proposition (30) that the material substance is a Real entity.

From this proposition, it follows together with proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of the material substance. This sub-conclusion is therefore proposition (31). Let us next recall that the 1777 supplement says that the matter is unknown and inexplicable. In light of the reconstruction so far, it is natural to read “inexplicable” here in the sense of ‘unintelligible’, that is, something of which we cannot have any conception whatsoever (OED, inexplicable 3.). If we cannot have any perception of the material substance, we cannot apprehend it and therefore it is unintelligible for us. The supplement hence says in the first place that the material substance is unintelligible for us (in the sense of incomprehensible). This preliminary conclusion is proposition (33) and it is based on proposition (31) and the assumption that intelligibility presupposes perceivability (in the Humean sense) (proposition 32). From it, it is concluded that the material substance is also unknown for us (proposition 35). This conclusion, for one, is founded on the assumption that knowledge presupposes intelligibility (proposition 34).

The 1777 addition finishes with the clause that the concept of the material substance is “a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it.” In the view of the proponent of the second profound sceptical argument at least, the notion of the material substance is defective on the level that it is not worth of questioning anymore. The 1777 edition concludes therefore also with the proposition that the material substance is an inadequate notion (37). It is not difficult to see this conclusion on the basis that the material substance is unintelligible and unknown for us. How could not such a notion be inadequate? Anyway, in order the argument to work, we have to include the extra premise that unintelligible and unknown notion is imperfect (proposition 36).

The diagram of the concluding phase in the 1777 edition is thus the following:

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126 It is to be realised that this sense of “unintelligible” does not mean self-contradictory. The notion will be further explained in the section where I discuss Hume’s attitude to the 1777 insertion.
Second Profound Argument against the Senses

(11) none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities

(17) we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties

(19) we cannot have any perception of Real entities

(18) we cannot perceive entities without qualities (bare entities)

(20) SNQP is inductively rational and the other premises for perception analytically rational.

(22) perceptions provide content for beliefs

(23) it is a rational requirement that all beliefs should have content

(24) it is a rational to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities.

(25) we can at least momentarily refrain from believing in Real entities

(26) when rational, we refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities

(27) we believe in the existence of Real entities

(29) B(MR) is contradictory with a rational attitude and contrary to a rational proposition

(30) the material substance is an inadequate notion

(31) we cannot have any perception of the material substance

(32) intelligibility presupposes perceivability

(33) the material substance is unintelligible for us

(34) knowledge presupposes intelligibility

(35) the material substance is unknown for us

(36) unintelligible and unknown notion is inadequate

(37) the material substance is an inadequate notion

1777 addition
3.4.7 Diagram of the Second Profound Argument

(21) it is a rational proposition that (19) we cannot have any perception of Real entities.

(24) it is rational to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities.

(25) we can at least momentarily refrain from believing in Real entities.

(18) we cannot perceive entities without qualities (bare entities)

(20) SNQP is inductively rational and the other premises for (19) perception analytically rational.

(22) perceptions provide content for beliefs.

(27) we believe in the existence of Real entities.

(30) the material substance is an inadequate notion.

(28) we manifest a contradiction.

(29) B(MR) is contradictory with a rational attitude and contrary to a rational proposition.

(36) unintelligible and unknown notion is inadequate.

(35) the material substance is unknown for us.

(33) the material substance is unintelligible for us.

(31) we cannot have any perception of the material substance.

(32) intelligibility presupposes perceivability.

(34) knowledge presupposes intelligibility.

(37) the material substance is an inadequate notion.

(19) we cannot have any perception of Real entities.

(17) we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties.

(1777 addition)
Extension 

(2.3) Extension and solidity are fundamental primary qualities: all others are necessarily connected to them.

Definition of Sensible Qualities (SNQ):
(1.1) SNQ are qualitative properties perceived by the five senses: colours, tactile, sounds, smells, tastes.

(3) Sensible Qualities Principle (SNQP): Sensible qualities are not the Real properties of Real entities and their perceptions do not resemble anything in Real entities.

(16) Proposition (12) is unintelligible.

(15) The idea of extension really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities is unintelligible.

(13) The idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of colours and tactile qualities.

(11) None of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities.

(9) None of the perceptions of the supposed PMQ resembles any Real property of Real entities.

(8) The idea of extension and solidity do not resemble any Real property of Real entities.

(5) The idea of extension is a perception of SNQ.

(4) The idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of SNQ.

(7) The idea of solidity is a perception of SNQ.

(6) Solidity is necessarily connected with extension.

(12) The idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities.

(10) The only perceptions that may resemble the Real properties of Real entities are the perceptions of PMQ.

(2.2) Perceptions may resemble PMQ.

(2.1) PMQ are the Real properties of Real entities.

(2) Definition of Primary Qualities (PMQ):
(2.1) PMQ are the Real properties of Real entities.

(8) The idea of solidity is a perception of SNQ.

(4) The idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of SNQ.

(1) Definition of Sensible Qualities (SNQ):
(1.1) SNQ are qualitative properties perceived by the five senses: colours, tactile, sounds, smells, tastes.

(3) Sensible Qualities Principle (SNQP): Sensible qualities are not the Real properties of Real entities and their perceptions do not resemble anything in Real entities.

(16) Proposition (12) is unintelligible.

(15) The idea of extension really distinct from the ideas of sensible qualities is unintelligible.

(13) The idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of colours and tactile qualities.

(11) None of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities.

(9) None of the perceptions of the supposed PMQ resembles any Real property of Real entities.

(8) The idea of extension and solidity do not resemble any Real property of Real entities.

(5) The idea of extension is a perception of SNQ.
4 Hume’s Attitude to the Profound Arguments

In this part of the work, I discuss Hume’s view of the two profound arguments against the senses. First I consider the textual evidence that concerns both of them. On that ground, it is concluded that Hume takes the arguments to be irrefutable. From this result, it follows that we are able to apply a test on his attitude to them. The irrefutability implies that Hume must endorse the links in the arguments at the minimum. Thus, by considering their premises one-by-one, we can judge whether Hume endorses their conclusions as well; it is not reasonable to suppose that Hume subscribes to the premises and takes the arguments as valid but does not assent to their conclusions.

In order to show by means of this test that both profound arguments against the senses are genuinely Humean, the reconstructions of the arguments will prove to be useful. The main part of this section of the work consists therefore in going through the reconstructed arguments and in considering his view of them. The second argument takes more room although Hume’s exposition of it is shorter. His endorsement of it is, however, more controversial in Hume scholarship and as Hume says, it covers deeper philosophical topics. There are, however, some points in the first argument as well, which have not been seen so problematic as they should be. This will also be established.

4.1 Textual Evidence

In the preliminary Chapter, I have claimed that Hume rejects almost totally Pyrrhonism. Instead, his view of the two profound arguments against the senses is not so clear. I have argued that this distinction is possible because the relation between Pyrrhonian universal suspension of belief and its arguments is causal and they are therefore logically distinct. The problem with regard to the arguments arises from the way Hume presents these arguments in the first Enquiry. His discussion of them is detached and impersonal and after them he just moves on first to the Pyrrhonian arguments against reason, then to his counter-argument to Pyrrhonism, and finally to Academical philosophy. So Hume is almost completely silent about his attitude to the profound arguments, there are only some fragmentary remarks over Section 12. Still it seems to me that we should take his silence and remarks seriously for two reasons. First, Hume’s silence suggests more his endorsement of the arguments than his rejection of them. If he has a criticism of them, why does not he present it? Second, even though Hume’s remarks are fragmentary, they repeat a claim, which we have to dig out first. That thesis is that the profound arguments against the senses are irrefutable in his view.
Let us start the justification of this proposition by considering Hume’s introduction to the summary of the first profound argument by saying:

“This is a topic, therefore, in which the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph, when they endeavour to introduce an universal doubt into all subjects of human knowledge and enquiry.” (EHU 12.1.14)

In the preliminary Chapter, I have referred to the interpretation of this passage that its final half is an allusion to Pyrrhonism, universal suspension of belief. For our present purposes, it is rather the first half that is relevant. In it, Hume writes that the first profound argument concerns the topic in which Pyrrhonists will always win by that argument. This means that there is a debate where Pyrrhonists have a knockout argument. On the assumption that the words here are Hume’s own, this passage therefore supports the interpretation that he endorses the irrefutability of the first profound argument - within a certain debate at least. Since that debate concerns the justification of Representative Realism and Metaphysical Realism, Hume seems to take the first profound argument as decisive in that issue.

In Section 12, there is a similar claim made concerning the second profound argument. To paragraph 15 presenting most of that argument, Hume attached the footnote where he first confesses that the argument is taken from Berkeley. He then goes on to say that “most of the writings of that very ingenious author form the best lessons of scepticism, which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers, BAYLE not excepted.” All Berkeley’s arguments “are, in reality, merely sceptical” since they satisfy certain conditions. The first of them is relevant for our purposes in this Chapter and it runs as follows: “they admit of no answer” (EHU 12.15.n.32).

The other condition of merely sceptical arguments is that they “produce no conviction” but only “momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion”. However, I have affirmed in the context of Hume’s conception of Pyrrhonism that these conditions and properties are rather connected to Pyrrhonism and its relation to the Pyrrhonian arguments than to the arguments themselves. The causal effect of the Pyrrhonian arguments, universal suspension of belief, is only momentary and does not produce lasting conviction that I should suspend my judgement.127 So the property of

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127 Hume’s introduction to the second profound argument should be read in this light as well: “There is another sceptical topic of a like nature, derived from the most profound philosophy; which might merit our attention, were it requisite to dive so deep, in order to discover arguments and reasonings, which can so little serve to any serious purpose.” (EHU 12.15)
Berkeley’s argument regarding the primary sensible qualities distinction - and therefore of the second profound argument - is that they are irrefutable.\textsuperscript{128}

There are then two passages that support the interpretation that according to Hume, the profound arguments against the senses are irrefutable. It is nevertheless a good general method that we ought to be cautious regarding every word written by Hume and not to take it as self-evident that he is presenting his own views in them. Although Hume can be a tricky writer in this respect, I think here we do not need to have reservations. Nothing in the passages or their textual context suggests that Hume is not reporting his own views here.

This reading gets more confirmation from the second Part of Section 12. First, after the popular arguments against inductive inference, Hume says that the Pyrrhonian arguments are theoretically hard or even impossible to refute: “These [Pyrrhonian] principles [in general] may flourish and triumph in the schools; where it is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible, to refute them.” (EHU 12.2.21) The stronger confirmation is found at the end of Part 2 where he reveals what the Pyrrhonian arguments show according to him:

“all his [the Pyrrhonist’s] objections […] can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections, which may be raised against them.” (EHU 12.2.23)

I will come back to the other important claims made in this passage but here its very beginning and end are relevant for us. First Hume makes a qualification that his claim concerns every Pyrrhonian argument, or taking his attitude to the trite and popular arguments into account, at least the profound and philosophical. So, when he asserts in the end that the objections to the foundations of action, reasoning and believing cannot be eliminated, he means every profound and philosophical Pyrrhonian argument presented earlier in the section. Thus, according to this passage, both profound arguments against the senses are irrefutable. This passage, it should be also realised, is not any passage whatsoever but one of the concluding claims regarding the Pyrrhonian arguments along with certain passages in Part 3. It is therefore a relevant passage and we have good reason to put much weight on it in the interpretation of Hume’s thought.

\textsuperscript{128} My reading therefore disagrees with Wright’s because he thinks “produces no conviction” implies that Hume rejects the argument (Wright 1983, 109-10 and 1995/86, 232). Wright does not, however, take into consideration the distinction between Pyrrhonism and the Pyrrhonian arguments in relation to this specific question.
To sum up the textual evidence, there is a repeated claim in Section 12 that the profound arguments against the senses are irrefutable, or at least very hard to rebut. It is not only the repetition of this claim that makes it relevant but also its place of occurrence at the end of the discussion of Pyrrhonism. In addition, I do not see any reason to doubt Hume’s acceptance of it. Therefore I think that this constitutes strong textual evidence for the interpretation that Hume takes the profound arguments to be irrefutable.\textsuperscript{129} There is no textual counter-evidence in Section 12 either, or, in fact, in the entire first Enquiry. In light of these repeated stronger assertions by Hume, his more reserved passages like the following introducing the profound arguments should be taken as cautious, initial versions of the same claim:

“There are other more profound arguments against the senses, which admit not of so easy a solution.” (EHU 12.1.6)\textsuperscript{130}

It should be acknowledged, however, that what Hume means by irrefutability here is not entirely clear. Our next task is accordingly to ask how we are to understand and explain this. When someone says that an argument is irrefutable, there are at least five possible things what he can mean. The first obvious possibility is that he really accepts the premises and the argumentative link and hence the conclusion of the argument. Another possibility concerning the import of his words is that only the argumentative link is valid but his attitude to the premises and conclusion is reserved, not clear to him, or negative. Thirdly, he can mean that he accepts the link and conclusion but not the premises – in that case we have a valid argument from false premises to a true conclusion. The fourth possibility is that he believes the link is really valid, but the premises he accepts solely for the sake of the argument. Here we have a form of argument which is often used against one’s antagonists. One takes the premises accepted by the antagonists and draws a problematic conclusion from them by a valid link. The forms of this type of argument are *reductio ad absurdum* and *ad hominem* in the sense that is used in this dissertation. In the former, the conclusion is an absurdity like a necessarily false proposition, and in the latter, it is in conflict with the antagonists’ set of beliefs. The final fifth possibility is a combination of the fourth and the first. He can take some of the propositions held by his antagonist, put in some of his own, of which he tries to convince the antagonist, and then infer via a valid link a conclusion that the antagonist should accept, and which is contrary to some of the antagonist’s beliefs.

\textsuperscript{129} So I agree, as we recall from the Introduction, with Popkin, Fogelin, and Baxter.

\textsuperscript{130} In the end, if someone contested this reading, he would be obliged to present substantial counter-evidence to overbalance the textual evidence presented here.
4.2 Argument Based on Reconstructions

These five possibilities share a common characteristic: the irrefutability of an argument must presuppose the validity of its argumentative link. Therefore, Hume has to imply at least this when he claims that the profound arguments are irrefutable – otherwise his words do not make any sense. In order to determine which one of these possibilities Hume is talking about, we are able to take advantage of my reconstructions of the profound arguments. Actually, we have a test for the first possibility, that the profound arguments are entirely accepted by him. Let us consider the relevant premises in the arguments and ask whether they are accepted by Hume or not. As he accepts their links, he cannot consistently maintain that their conclusions are unjustified, absurd or inconsistent with the premises. If he assents to the premises, he must assent to the conclusions as well – otherwise he is naively incoherent, which is not a plausible assumption in the case of a great philosopher.

By applying this test, I am going to argue below that both profound arguments are Hume’s own arguments. In the case of the first profound argument, as I have made evident in the Introduction, there is a widespread consensus among Hume scholars that it is his own argument. Most of them grant that Hume endorses the premises and the conclusion of the argument. He is a negative dogmatic (or sceptic for some) at least in the sense that he denies the possibility of rational, epistemic justification for the belief in Real entities. Annette Baier is perhaps the best-known scholar among the minority to doubt Hume’s assent to the first profound argument. She has contended that it, as well as the second, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Cartesian individualistic way of doing philosophy and the conception of pure intellect inherent in it (Baier 1991, 21 and 107). According to Baier, then, Hume endorses only the link of the argument but its premises are rather those of the Cartesians (in this broad sense) than his own. Livingston is another Hume scholar who is suspicious of Hume’s adherence to the profound arguments. Actually, he does not see them as arguments at all. Rather, they form a philosophical dialect in which philosophical self-conscious raises to another level. At the end of the dialectic, we realise that philosophy following what Livingston calls “the *autonomy principle*” is a blind alley. The principle that “philosophy has an authority to command belief and judgment independent of the unreflectively received beliefs, customs, and prejudices of common life” is shown in the dialectic to lead to the *cul-de-sac* of Pyrrhonism. Hume’s aim is thus to make us appreciate that “true philosophy” gets rid of the autonomy principle and presupposes certain common sense beliefs. (Livingston 1984, 2-4 and 9ff.)
My intention in the next Chapter will be thus to put the consensus of Hume’s endorsement of the first profound argument beyond reasonable doubt and to show, therefore, that neither Baier’s nor Livingston’s reading can be the correct interpretation – although they invite interesting perspectives to Hume. While doing this, I also raise some questions especially in the case of the first *Enquiry* that are not normally asked with regard to Hume’s view of the first profound argument. Certain steps in it are taken as Humean premises too self-evidently. In the end, we have to conclude that they are genuinely Humean but that is not clear *prima facie*.

### 4.2.1 First Profound Argument

The first set of premises in the first profound argument consists of the two propositions assented to in the primary opinion (or, more precisely, of the claim that these two propositions form people’s natural prepossession): (1) there are Real, that is, mind-independent, external, and continuous entities (Metaphysical Realism); (2) what is present to the mind in sense-impression is such an entity (Direct Realism). It should be granted that these propositions are philosophical (re)formulations of the primary opinion since Hume does not think that most of the people realise that they are assenting to the truth of these formulations. Further propositions uncovered by this philosophical analysis of the primary opinion are that (3) the primary opinion is caused by a natural instinct and that (4) reason is not its cause.

I think it is beyond reasonable doubt that Hume accepts this philosophical analysis of people’s natural attitude to the existence of Real entities, to how they are perceived, and to what factors are and are not behind it. There just is no reason to suspect it; the starting point of the argument is Humean. Later I will show that the *Treatise* also strongly supports this interpretation.

**Counter-Argument to the Primary Opinion**

Things get more complicated when we turn to the rational critique of the primary opinion, which is represented by the so-called table argument in the second phase of the first profound argument. The table argument concludes with what I have labelled “Conscious Mentalism” (CM), proposition (12) that nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. Conscious Mentalism is in obvious contradiction to Direct Realism in the form that it is held in the primary opinion for two reasons. First, one of the propositions “it is Real” and “it is not Real” must be true because of the definition of Reality. Second, CM denies what DR affirms: that what is present to the mind in sense-perception is Real. Instead of this, it affirms that perceptions are mental in nature: they depend on perceiver-dependent factors.
It is not so relevant which one, the denial or affirmation, we use in the follow-up of the first profound argument. The mode of existence of perceptions in terms of Reality is the crucial point. It is also more relevant than in what other sense they can be said to exist, and if they do, what kind of entities they are: distinct spiritual or material things, phenomenological objects (e.g. contents of the visual field), modifications of the mind, or something else. It is Hume’s attitude to Conscious Mentalism that is a relevant question for the interpretation of his philosophy.

It is natural to read the table argument as *ad hominem* against the primary opinion. One of its premises is from the first element of the primary opinion, Metaphysical Realism, and it is aimed at the rejection of the second, Direct Realism. In light of the entire first profound argument, the conclusion of that argument, Conscious Mentalism, is most relevant. Conscious Mentalism works as an important premise against the primary opinion and the possibility of rational epistemic justification for Representative Realism and Metaphysical Realism. Yet Hume’s attitude to it cannot be decided without taking his view of the argument into consideration. So let us next turn our attention to what Hume thinks about the table argument and especially its conclusion.

Since Hume has traditionally been seen as a proponent of the so-called “way of ideas”, it is somewhat surprising that the first *Enquiry* as such does not offer a self-evident answer to Hume’s view of CM. If we go through the whole work, we realise that 12.1.9 is the first place where Conscious Mentalism is explicitly stated. I think this invites interesting questions. The first point is, of course, that we should not conclude hastily that this principle is not endorsed in the work before the first profound argument - it can be implicit in some of Hume’s discussions and arguments. Still, there is a difference between the *Treatise* and the first *Enquiry* here, on the explicit level at least. As I am going to show below, Conscious Mentalism is unambiguously stated relatively early in the former work and openly assented to in the later parts. Besides, this observation is strengthened by the point that it seems to be possible to read EHU 1-11 within the framework of Direct

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131 Even in the case that perceptions are merely the contents of the acts of the mind that do not exist separately from the acts, the acts themselves are mental in their mode of existence. The same point concerns the so-called adverbialist reading of Locke, in which ideas are modes or manners of the affections of the subject (Lowe 1995, 42-7). These modes are also mental instead of Real.

132 For example, it seems to me that Hume’s theory of general ideas, or at least his nominalism, is implicit in his definition of cause in 7.2.29 although the doctrine is only summarised in the work and not until 12.2.20.n.34. The definition of the general term “cause” refers to the sets of particular causes, which is what we can expect in a nominalistic theory.
Realism, that is, without Conscious Mentalism and the distinctions involved in it. Let me explain.

It is tempting to read the distinction between Real and non-Real entities, involved in Conscious Mentalism, as the only possible distinction between appearances and things themselves. However, that is not the case. In order to see that, let us first fix two notions: (1) qualitative identity, and (2) numerical identity between things. (1) \(X\) and \(y\) are qualitatively identical if and only if they share qualities, that is, if and only if they have numerically identical properties. (see Noonan 2005) (2) \(X\) and \(y\) are numerically identical things if and only if there is total qualitative identity between them, that is, every property of \(X\) is a property of \(y\) and \textit{vice versa}. This is Hume’s notion of “perfect identity” that requires invariability, that is, unchangeability in properties (T 1.4.6.6).

We can see how the distinction between appearance and the thing itself can be made, in principle, in the framework of Direct Realism if we take it to involve qualitative identity between the sense-impression of a Real entity and the entity itself. In that case, we can in principle say that the qualities of the Real entity appear to the senses only partly. Still they are, because of qualitative identity, its Real qualities. We are operating within a form of Direct Realism here. Since there are some Real qualities of it that are not present to the senses, it is only an appearance of the Real entity that is present to the mind.

For example, let us suppose that our eyes just are not good enough for perceiving all the minutest Real qualities of a Real body although they can present some of the Real qualities to us. We see only the superficial properties of the Real entity; in a way, we do not see it in its entirety. This may be illustrated in the following way. Let us suppose that when I look at the CPU of my computer, some of the Real properties of the Real CPU are present to my mind. Even on that assumption, there are some Real properties of the Real CPU that I just cannot see; I do not and cannot see the whole Real being, its “intricate machinery or secret structure of parts” is beyond my capability to see (EHU 4.1.7). Its inside is too small for my eyes. It follows from these assumptions that my sensation of the CPU is not totally qualitatively identical to the CPU itself (hence they are not numerically identical). Still there is partial qualitative identity between them. However, what is relevant for our purposes here, this way of making the appearance \textit{versus} thing itself distinction is coherent with Direct Realism. DR does not require that all the Real properties of Real entities should be present to the mind in sense-perception, that sense-impression is totally
Hume's Attitude to the First Profound Argument

qualitatively identical with its Real object. So, when Hume employs the distinction between the sensible or superficial qualities of objects and their secret powers in EHU 4.1.6, 4.2.16, 21, 5.1.3, and 7.1.6, for example, it seems to be possible to read him writing both as a Direct Realist and as a Conscious Mentalist.

I think this holds of most of EHU 4-6 and 9-11, where Hume often writes in a way that seems to be coherent with Direct Realism. It appears that we can read Hume's arguments concerning induction, belief, probability, miracles, and natural religion from the perspective of Direct Realism. But then we have, of course, Hume's famous distinction of “the perceptions of the mind” into “impressions” and “ideas”, which he indubitably uses in the argument concerning causation, and which, therefore, serves as a basis for his view of liberty and necessity (EHU 2.3, 7.2.26-30, and 8.1.4-5). Is not that distinction self-evidently made within the framework of Conscious Mentalism or even Representative Realism?

I think the natural reading of this distinction is that perceptions are not Real entities, that is, Hume’s famous distinction involves Conscious Mentalism. Regarding Representative Realism, I would be more cautious at this point because his attitude to it has not yet been discussed. Still, he does not claim that perceptions cannot be Real entities, and perhaps we can imagine a Direct Realist reading of impressions at least. Is there anything that Hume says before 12.9 that rules this reading out?

On this ground, I think that the first Enquiry before 12.1.9 is at least apparently open to both the Direct Realistic and Conscious Mentalistic reading. Hume’s writing is common-sensical and when he employs his technical terminology, consideration is focused on ideas while impressions work as their sources without explicitly discussing the ontological status of perceptions, not to speak of impressions. I will come back to the question of what we can conclude from this interesting observation when we contrast it with the Treatise. At this point, our next task is, however, to consider whether EHU 12.9-34 can shed some light on our problem.

When we read paragraph nine where the table argument is presented, Hume’s strong rhetoric makes an immediate impression on the reader. Hume, however, is an accomplished and tricky writer and he might be taken as only building a strong position in order to undermine it in the next phase. His rhetoric should not therefore be taken prima facie as the sign of his endorsement of this paragraph and Conscious Mentalism. It must be acknowledged, though, that there is a point in the paragraph that appears to support the view that Hume accepts CM. Just before he presents it,

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133 Recall that in 3.3.2 we left it open what kind of identity CM requires.
he writes that it is something that is almost immediately taught us “by the slightest philosophy”. This point is further corroborated by the end of the paragraph where Hume writes that “no man, who reflects, ever doubted” Representative Realism – a position which involves Conscious Mentalism. Soon after we start to reflect on the immediate objects of our sense-perception, and of thinking in general, our reason concludes that “nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception”. It seems to be the case then that Hume endorses Conscious Mentalism.

There is, nevertheless, a possible objection to this: perhaps it is only in the premature reflection that we endorse CM. Hume could think that mature reflection makes us modify or reject it and adopt another position. In fact, Hume’s endorsement of “no man” passage at the end of the paragraph is suspicious because his stance on Representative Realism is not clear at all. Of course, we do not have any clear textual evidence that after mature reflection we should abandon Conscious Mentalism. Nevertheless, since Hume is a tricky writer, I think we have to conclude that EHU 12.1.9 does not give us an immediate answer either. This does not, however, mean that it cannot give an indirect answer. Next I will accordingly show that there are three arguments stemming mainly from the first Enquiry, some of them based on 12.9, that give us good grounds to conclude that Hume is a Conscious Mentalist.

For the sake of the first argument, let us assume that Hume is a Direct Realist. In that case, it would be a reasonable claim on him to explain sense-variations. He should tell us his answer to the table argument, for example, how it does not lead to Conscious Mentalism. But we do not have such an explanation; his answer to sense-variations is in the context of the trite arguments against the senses, the conclusions of which are different from those of the table argument. It is rather the other way around; as I have noted, Hume is almost completely silent about his attitude to the profound arguments against the senses. The most natural interpretation of this silence is that Hume is not a Direct Realist. If he had the answer in his pocket that makes it coherent for him to accept Direct Realism, why would not he say it? Is not his silence rather the sign of his assent to the table argument and Direct Realism? Even if it is not an immediate sign of his positive attitude, it is of his negative to Direct Realism.

In turn, this is a reason to conclude that Hume’s positive attitude is Conscious Mentalism. As I have argued before, it works on the assumption that Direct Realism

134 I thereby agree with Bricke (1980, 7).
135 Their conclusion is intended to be that we cannot distinguish true sense-impressions from the false ones (EHU 12.1.6).
and Conscious Mentalism are contradictory. It follows from this that if he rejects the one he ought to accept the other because one of them must be at least partly true (Real entities either are or are not present to the mind).

There is another argument against the assumption that Hume is a Direct Realist, which requires that we dive to the depths of Hume’s metaphysics for a while. The argument is of modus tollens type where it is shown that Hume’s conception of Direct Realism has consequences which he cannot accept. Therefore he cannot be a Direct Realist.

In Chapter 3.3.2, I have remarked that Hume considers Direct Realism to presuppose identity between sense-impressions and Real entities. What this minimally implies is that there is qualitative identity between a sense-impression and Real entity. If they are not numerically identical as things, there must be at least numerical identity between one of the properties of each. However, the crucial point here is that this implies that there is one entity, a property, that has multiple existences: in both the sense-impression and the Real entity. The problem with this implication in Hume’s case is that it violates nominalism. All forms of nominalism involve the proposition that there are no temporally or spatially multiple existences (not even properties); everything that exists is particular and nothing is universal (Loux 2002, 52). As Direct Realism presupposing identity has this consequence inconsistent with any nominalism and Hume is a nominalist (EHU 12.20.n.34), he cannot be a Direct Realist.

The possible objection to this argument is that sense-impressions do not belong to the category of what exists, that is, they are not entities. For instance, some philosophers think that nothing but material particulars exist. As sense-impressions are not material, they are not something existing. Another position having this same implication is that perceptions are apprehensions or conceptions. They are not existences; rather, they are entities as understood or sense-perceived. For example, when I have a perception of Edinburgh, it does not mean that I have an entity in mind. Rather, I understand more or less distinctly what kind of city Edinburgh is. In both these positions, which can be only mentioned here, the problem with nominalism does not rise because sense-impressions are not entities and therefore there is no problem with multiple existences.

This objection is undermined by the point that for Hume perceptions are existent. I think this is something that most of the Hume scholars would not contest. However,

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136 Below I will argue that the Treatise supports this reading.
as that is not yet decisive evidence for Hume thinking so, we need textual support. The first textual evidence is that Hume does not think that existence presupposes spatial being, the requirement of which some perceptions do not satisfy: “an object may exist, and yet be no where”. Temporal being is therefore enough. (T 1.4.5.10) In the second place, there is the famous passage in the Treatise where Hume says that perceptions are substances because they “may exist separately, and have no need of any thing else to support their existence.” (T 1.4.5.5) However, these passages are from the Treatise and we should not self-evidently extend the evidence that they bear to concern the first Enquiry. Textual support from that work is therefore needed. The strongest evidence is that he extends his nominalism into perceptions. The footnote at EHU 12.20 makes that clear (n.34). For Hume, nominalism is thus a position that makes claims also of the mental objects of the understanding. Since nominalism is a metaphysical doctrine, it concerns things that exist. Hume’s extension of nominalism into perceptions provides therefore evidence for his taking them as existences. Besides, the first Enquiry does not contain any indication that Hume abandoned the view that perceptions are existences.

The second argument for the Conscious Mentalistic interpretation is based on my reading of EHU 12.9. It has been argued in Chapter 3.3.3, on the basis of the logic of the first profound argument, that Hume describes the conclusion of the table argument with his technical term “perception”. The table argument concludes that what is present to the mind is mental, that is, non-Real. It is to these non-Real objects of thought that Hume refers by his own term. So he considers this use of “perception” to be correct. This, in turn, implies that Hume accepts this conclusion: “perceptions” are mental and non-Real. Moreover, since “perception” is Hume’s general term for the objects of thinking, for him all objects of thought are mental, non-Real.

The third and strongest argument follows from the table argument itself. We can apply my test of Hume’s acceptance to it and ask whether he endorses the premises of the argument. As he accepts the link of the argument, he ought to accept the conclusion, too. Next I will argue that this is the case about the table argument and consequently about Conscious Mentalism. This argument may be started by noticing that, according to my reconstruction, that argument contains a proposition that Hume accepts without doubt, the Copy Principle. Therefore his attitude to the whole argument relies upon its other premises. It is then the most implausible assumption that Hume would doubt the everyday phenomenon of the table changing its apparent size depending on the perceiver changing his distance to it. He must also accept the third premise that the Real table is perception-independent and exists continuously because he accepts the description of the primary opinion. That
description cannot be given in the way that it is without accepting the definition of Real entities involved in it. Hume must endorse it at least hypothetically: if there are Real entities, they are perception-independent external and continuous. It is these three premises that imply that the sense-perceived table is not the Real table (if there is any). It is a mental image.

In the table argument, this conclusion is used inductively to infer that what is present to the mind in any sense-impression is mental and imagistic (in the broad sense) in nature. According to my reconstruction, the Copy Principle is added to this in order to conclude that any object of thought is mental (Conscious Mentalism). Since CP is undoubtedly a Humean principle, whether Hume endorses CM now hangs on whether he accepts the inductive step in the argument. Would it be a valid reasoning for Hume? I think it would. As the trite arguments and the *Treatise* show (this will be explained), it is clear to him that similar cases of sense-variation can be produced regarding the other types of properties: figure, motion, solidity, colours, hardness, temperature, etc. Besides, the table argument is an instance of visual sense-impressions. Therefore it can be used inductively to support the conclusion concerning sense-impressions of the same type, that is, concerning any visual sense-impression (Hume’s fourth rule of inductive inference in T 1.3.15.6: similar causes, similar effects). For me there appears nothing in the inductive step that would violate Hume’s rules of inductive reasoning. The last premise in the table argument is also Humean.

Now we are in the position to see the third argument for Hume’s endorsement of the table argument and Conscious Mentalism. Hume accepts the link of the argument. Hume endorses its premises. Can he be rational and not to accept the conclusion of the argument? I think he cannot because then he would accept a valid argument from true premises to a false conclusion.

The third argument can be supplemented by the following consideration. In Chapter 3.3.3, I established that the table argument is a causal argument and it works on the causal meaning of independency. We know that Hume’s conception of reason is mainly causal. The other form of reasoning for him, what Millican calls inductive, is extrapolating experienced causal relations to the unobserved. For Hume, causal relations are primarily constant conjunctions. It is a constant conjunction that the perceiver varying his distance to a thing affects our sense-impression of the size of the thing. So there is a Humean causal relation between variation in the distance and the sense-impression of the size of the thing. The sense-impression is causally dependent on the perceiver. Thus, the sense-perceived thing is not a Real but non-
Real being. This is the demonstration of the fact that the table argument can be made in Humean terms. In addition, we have good reasons to think that he takes the argument to be valid (the profound arguments are irrefutable). In the end, can we have any other possibility than to conclude that the table argument is for Hume a valid argument drawn by the other, inductive form of reasoning? When we employ Humean inductive reason properly, we should accept the table argument and its conclusion Conscious Mentalism.

There is still the possible objection to this interpretation that CM is argued for only in order to criticise Locke in the next phase. It would go as follows. One of the interpretations of Locke is that he is a Conscious Mentalist. Ayers is a proponent of this reading (Ayers 1998b, 1093), there is textual evidence for it as well (see Essay 4.21.4). This might give us some ground to speculate that Hume is only setting the stage for an argument against Locke’s representative theory of perception in the fourth phase by a principle that Locke himself acknowledges. Hume would here be only reporting Locke’s views and arguments, which he will soon turn against that other great philosopher. I grant it possible that this is also what Hume does - although there is no textual evidence. We should not accept the objection, however, for the reason that there are strong enough grounds to conclude that Conscious Mentalism is Hume’s own view, too – whatever he thinks about Locke.

It is not so relevant for Hume’s attitude to the first profound argument whether his claim that CM is taught us by the slightest philosophy is true. Yet it is an interesting question how many of Hume’s fellow early modern philosophers subscribed to that view. This book is not, naturally, the right place to discuss this question extensively. We can still point out that even Yolton, who is close to interpreting Descartes and Locke in Direct Realist terms, acknowledges that Locke and Arnauld in his interpretation of Descartes denied that Real entities could be present to the mind. Ayers agrees, and both acknowledge that the problem of the external world is around the corner. (Yolton 1984, 102, and 148; Ayers 1998b, 1068, 1084, and 1093) So Hume seems to be right if we read him saying that Conscious Mentalism is something that we can learn from his fellow new philosophers.

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137 We should realise that this argument does not presuppose that the distance is Real, that it is measured in terms of absolute space (if there is any). It works also on the premise of apparent distance, how it seems to be for the perceiver.
138 Later I will show that the Treatise also supports this conclusion.
139 Yolton is more hesitant although he acknowledges the textual evidence (Yolton 1984, 88-90).
Before we go to the question of Hume’s view of the implications of Conscious Mentalism for Direct Realism, it is appropriate to remark something about the validity of the table argument as such.\textsuperscript{140} Above I have mentioned that Reid’s criticism of it as an invalid syllogism is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the argument. It is rather an inductive-causal than syllogistic argument.\textsuperscript{141} Therefore it ought to be taken as arguing for the perception-dependency of sense-impressions in the causal sense.

Another point is that the table argument works against Direct Realism as well if we formulate the latter in terms of identity. If a Direct Realist claims that the sense-impression and Real entity are numerically identical things presupposing total qualitative identity, we can answer him in the following way. The table argument shows that at least one sense-perceived property is not the Real property of the Real entity because it is perception-dependent. The size of the table changes because of the perceiver-dependent factors. Since numerical identity between things is total qualitative, the sense-perceived table and the Real table are not numerically identical. If he goes on to claim that they are only qualitatively identical, the proponent of the table argument can respond that it is possible to produce similar arguments concerning any sensible quality of the supposed Real entity. His next move might be that qualitative identity holds actually between numerically distinct qualities (entities). In that case, however, he is not talking within the Humean framework anymore; the relation at issue is not identity but similarity. It is also arguable that that move leads to an indirect theory of perception – it does so at least in Hume’s view.\textsuperscript{142} If qualities present to the mind are numerically distinct from the Real properties of the Real entity, the Real properties are not present to the mind.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{140} It would be interesting to compare Hume on the table argument and theory of perception with the 20\textsuperscript{th} century discussion of the sense-data theories and the so-called sense-datum inference (for a classic of this debate, see Chisholm 1963). However, to do that properly would require a quite extensive discussion and make a long historical work like this even longer beyond necessity. Therefore readers acquainted with this debate are asked to reflect on my interpretation of Hume in light of their knowledge.

\textsuperscript{141} That it is inductive might also be Hume’s answer to Price’s criticism of the argument in Humean terms (Price 1940, 113-4).

\textsuperscript{142} I would like to point out that I am not sure that these forms exhaust the possible types of Direct Realism.

\textsuperscript{143} Here it is perhaps appropriate to take into account an interpretation of Locke, according to which the argument against the identity form of Direct Realism does not work because one of its hidden premises is reputed. This interpretation is endorsed by Thomas M. Lennon, who has been inspired by Yolton. Lennon claims that the logic of ideas does not follow “the nonidentity of discernibles”, that is, numerically identical things can be qualitatively different. (Lennon 2007, 232)
Reid has also another criticism of the table argument that the change in the size of the seen table can be best accounted for by the scientific explanation in which Metaphysical Realism is assumed. According to it, we see the Real table, which only appears differently in terms of size depending on the distance. Besides, it appears just in the way that the scientific explanation predicts. (Reid 2002, 182-3) Replying to this Reid’s argument properly would call for an extensive discussion and it would not be justified in light of the main problems of this dissertation to devote so much room to it. It can be remarked, however, that Reid’s argument seems to imply just what the table argument is intended to show: the seen table is causally dependent on the perceiver. The seen table is rather mental than Real in nature. Reid’s counter-argument does not seem to work then because it appears to imply the conclusion of the table argument. In addition, whatever is the case regarding mind-independency, the table argument is able to establish that the seen table and the supposed Real table cannot be numerically identical. Thus, what is present to the mind in sense-perception is not a Real entity.

In Chapter 3.3.3, I have discussed the problem why Hume does not present the obvious conclusion from the truth of Conscious Mentalism and its contradictory opposition to Direct Realism that the latter is false in its second component. Instead, this conclusion, proposition (13), should be formulated as irrational and misleading or even false. Hume’s hesitation may implicate something, but what it does is speculation since we do not have any textual evidence. In any case, proposition (13) supports a conclusion that is significant for the fourth phase of the first profound argument. It is used in arguing against the possibility of diachronic (rational epistemic) justification for Representative Realism, which I will discuss in a while.

This implies that the sense-impression and Real entity can be numerically identical but still qualitatively different. The latter does not therefore imply the denial of the former as it is presumed in the argument against Direct Realism.

The interpretative reply to Lennon is that Hume thinks that perceptions satisfy the condition of the non-identity of discernibles. His discussions of identity in the Treatise show that: “perfect” or numerical identity requires invariability, that is, unchangeability in properties (total qualitative identity) (T 1.4.6.6 and 1.4.2.30). With regard to the philosophical value of Lennon’s interpretation, that is, whether it can make Direct Realism involving identity philosophically possible in the face of sense-variations, there is just no room for that discussion here.
Philosophical System

According to the first profound argument, philosophers develop a “system” as a hybrid of Metaphysical Realism and Conscious Mentalism with reified sense-impressions. I have labelled this doctrine Representative Realism (RR, proposition 15) although Hume does not use the term but calls it “pretended philosophical system” (EHU 12.1.10). It consists of the same Metaphysical Realism as in the primary opinion and the complex proposition (15) that nothing can be present to the mind in sense-perception but sense-impressions that are momentary distinct things (RR-ME) and representations of their possible Real objects (RR-R). So Representative Realism goes further than Conscious Mentalism because it involves the affirmation of the existence of the Real objects, which is taken in CM only as possible, and reifies sense-impressions (perceptions). It also triples the entities involved. Sense-impressions (perceptions) form a distinct category of beings from Real entities and the mind: things that are at least mental and momentary in their nature. But the key claim in Representative Realism is that these mental things represent their Real objects (RR-R), when the relation of representation is specified involving similarity (RR-S) and causation (RR-C).

Like Hume’s endorsement of the primary opinion as men’s natural attitude, I take it to be beyond reasonable doubt that he believes that philosophers have really formed Representative Realism in order to reconcile Metaphysical Realism with Conscious Mentalism. The natural suggestion is that Hume’s point of reference is primarily Locke in this context. One of the interpretations of Locke’s theory of perception is that it is representative (indirect). As I have mentioned before, Ayers subscribes to this reading (Ayers 1998b, 1093). There is, however, a complication here. According to Ayers, Locke’s theory is primarily stated in terms of causality and only secondly in terms of similarity or resemblance. The chief thesis is that “sensory simple ideas” are signs of the existence and ratios of their Real causes; when I have a sensory simple idea (sense-impression), it contains a sign that its Real cause really exists. (Ibid.) It is only in the corollary “observation” of Locke’s distinction between the primary and secondary qualities where the notion of resemblance comes into play (Essay 2.8.15; see also Ayers 1998b, 1091-1092). The ideas of the primary

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144 As I have remarked, Yolton’s interpretation approaches Direct Realism, which is openly endorsed by Lennon (2007).

145 When we have two different sensory simple ideas of the temperature of the water, our different ideas are signs of the different ratios of the movement between the corpuscles in the water and our hands.
qualities resemble the primary qualities, whereas those of the secondary do not resemble the secondary qualities\(^\text{146}\) (Ibid.).

Hume knows this as his letter to Hugh Blair on 4 July 1762 commenting Reid’s theory of perception makes evident. In the letter, Hume writes that sensible qualities are merely causes in the bodies capable of causing perceptions in the mind. (Hume 1986, 416) Anyway, Hume’s view of Locke’s theory of perception seems to be that some sense-impressions, the ideas of primary qualities, resemble their Real objects but some of them, the ideas of sensible qualities, do not. So he appears to think that part of Locke’s theory involves resemblance and can be criticised on that ground. It should be appreciated, however, that this is rather Locke’s corollary of the distinction of these two types of qualities than his fundamental way of putting the theory of perception. Of course, this observation as such does not save Locke’s theory from the criticism of the first profound argument - if Ayers’ interpretation is correct - because it works equally against the solely causal representative theories of perception. The survival depends on other premises like the content of sense-impressions and epistemological empiricism, as I will argue below.

**Counter-Argument to the Philosophical System**

Hume’s endorsement of Representative Realism as a correct description of at least Locke’s view does not mean that he assents to it as a true system – although he endorses Conscious Mentalism. This is a problem that we have to postpone at this point because it involves an answer to the question whether Hume is a Metaphysical Realist or not (it will be discussed in Conclusion). Meanwhile we can turn our attention to the crucial question concerning Hume’s attitude to the argument against the possibility of the rational, epistemic justification and proof of Representative Realism. Accordingly, my focus lies in propositions 18-21, 31-7, 45-6, and in their Humean implications for the justification of Metaphysical Realism. The counter-arguments to the metaphysical and theological proof of Representative Realism will be more or less bypassed.

In the reconstruction of the first profound argument, I have defended the reading that in it, Hume discusses the possibility of two different kinds of rational, epistemic justification for Representative Realism and especially its representation component (RR-R). This happens in the turn of the argument from the third to the fourth phase (paragraph 10). Using modern terms, the first kind could be called “diachronic (naturalistic) justification”, which makes reference to the causal history of a belief.

\(^{146}\) As we recall, they are “powers” in the substantial bodies to produce these ideas.
The second is “synchronic” since it does not refer to the causal origin – temporal dimension is, metaphorically speaking, parenthesized in it. Both are forms of rational epistemic justification because they support the truth of a proposition by an argument: even a naturalist expresses in words that \( x \) is justified because its causal origin is reliable, for example.

In my diagram, the argument against diachronic rational epistemic justification is presented in propositions (18-21). Its first premise is based on the propositions that (3) the belief in Direct Realism \([B(DR)]\) is caused by a natural instinct and that (13) DR is irrational and misleading or even false. The natural instinct causing \( B(DR) \) is therefore rather “fallible” than “infallible”, that is, unreliable (18). Therefore, if somebody tried to justify the belief that sense-impressions resemble their Real objects by referring to this natural instinct as reliable, it could not work as proposition (19) says. Representative Realism cannot thus be justified by referring to this natural instinct as infallible or reliable (20). From this, the argument concludes, according to my reconstruction, that (21) Representative Realism cannot be given diachronic rational, epistemic justification.

This counter-argument seems to contain a gap since it does not discuss the possibility to justify RR-R rationally and epistemically by another natural instinct that the one causing the belief in Direct Realism. It also appears to exclude the possibility of what in the contemporary discussion has been called “externalist justification” (see the reconstruction of this section of the first argument). According to that view, a person can be justified in believing a proposition although he may not be aware that the causes of this belief are reliable. Regarding the first supposed gap, it might be said that the argument could be generalised to cast a shadow at least on justification by any natural instinct. If one natural instinct is unreliable, maybe this gives some reason to claim that every natural instinct is possibly unreliable. In that case, none of the natural instincts is certainly reliable without further argument.

Whatever the case may be, it should be kept in mind that Hume does not discuss this line of argumentation in his presentation of the first profound argument.\(^{147}\) Nor does he consider the second alleged gap. Notwithstanding that his theory of belief seem to take it possible that a person is at least practically, concerning usefulness, for

\(^{147}\) In the philosophical argument against ”moral evidence” he seems to do so. It concludes with the proposition “that nothing leads us to this [inductive] inference but custom or a certain instinct of our nature; which it is indeed difficult to resist, but which, like other instincts, may be fallacious and deceitful.” (EHU 12.2.22; the latter emphasis added) So this line of argument is not entirely non-Humean.
example, justified in believing certain ideas although he is not aware of the causal mechanism, that is, custom and experience, behind his belief (EHU 4.1.21). But for some reason, if the counter-argument to diachronic justification is Hume’s argument, he does not think that it is necessary to consider externalist justification at this point. There is at least the possibility that he does not accept this form of justification in philosophy. Or perhaps the whole question of externalist justification is wholly anachronistic and not even Hume’s theory belief involves it. In any case, Hume seems to presuppose in this argument that internalistic, diachronic justification is the sole form of diachronic rational epistemic justification.

With these reservations, it is time to consider whether this counter-argument is Humean or not. Concerning its first premise, proposition (18), the answer turns to its premises: proposition (3) “B(MR) and B(DR) are caused by a natural instinct” and (13) “DR is irrational and misleading or even false”. Above I have defended the reading that they are Humean. We have therefore good reasons to think that proposition (18) is also Humean. He endorses the links, if nothing else, in the first profound argument. This, in turn, provides us good grounds to conclude that he must accept first proposition (19) and then the conclusion of this counter-argument. According to the reconstruction, they follow immediately from proposition (18). Therefore we are justified in concluding that Hume thinks that Representative Realism cannot be justified diachronically within the rational epistemic form of justification.

The other form of this type of justification for Representative Realism, synchronic, does not make any reference to its potential causal origin. This form of justification is contested by propositions (31-37) in my diagram. That counter-argument has two branches. The first of them argues that (35) the existence of the representation relation between sense-impressions and their (possible) Real objects ought to be determined by experience. It is grounded on two other propositions, the first of which (34) says that the existence of this representation relation is a factual question. The other is that (33) all factual questions ought to be determined by experience. When we ask Hume’s attitude to these premises, it is immediately obvious that the second (33) is Humean; there is no doubt that he would subscribe to it. If decisive evidence for Hume’s endorsement of it is needed, it is available at EHU 4.1.2 and 12.3.29, for instance. The first (34) is so clearly Humean as well that there is no much doubt that the conclusion of the first branch (35) would not be accepted by him, too. Experience ought to determine whether sense-impressions represent their (possible) Real objects.
The second branch of the counter-argument concludes that (32) the human mind cannot have any experience of the representation between perceptions and their (possible) Real objects. This is supported by the proposition that (31) experience can be present to the human mind only as mental perceptions. It follows from Conscious Mentalism, which affirms that nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. This important line of argumentation appears to be at first hand relatively easy. We can have experience of the relations between mental perceptions but not of those between mental perceptions and what are not mental perceptions; experience can be present to the mind only as mental perceptions. What is Real or mind-independent more generally cannot be present to the mind.

What does Hume think about this second branch of the argument? Let us first consider the immediate textual evidence. On the one hand, the text at paragraph 12 is punchy and powerful, which seems to indicate that Hume is recording his own views. On the other, in paragraph 14, Hume explicitly puts the same argument to the mouth of a Pyrrhonist. The immediate textual evidence does not then seem to provide a decisive answer. It is my test of Hume’s acceptance of the first profound argument and its sub-arguments that can. The ultimate premise in the second branch is Conscious Mentalism. Above, it has been established that Hume endorses this proposition. Since he approves the link of the argument as well, he must accept the next step (experience can be present only as perceptions) to the conclusion that (32) the human mind cannot have any experience of whether perceptions represent their possible Real objects. The second branch of the argument against the synchronic, rational epistemic justification of Representative Realism is Humean as well.

As the representation relation at issue is a factual question according to the first branch, following from Hume’s logic, it is to be concluded that experience cannot support the truth, or falsity, of the representation component of Representative Realism (RR-R). The question of its truth is, and ought to be, left open by experience. Therefore the synchronic factual (rational epistemic) justification of RR is ruled out (37), according to Hume. Since factual justification is, within Hume’s logic, the only possible form of synchronic, rational epistemic justification in this issue, Hume concludes that (45) Representative Realism cannot be given synchronic rational epistemic justification. From the perspective of experience and thus of synchronic rational epistemic justification, there is no reason to believe nor to disbelieve that some of our sense-impressions represent their Real objects.

When we unite the conclusions of the counter-arguments to the two forms of rational epistemic justification, we get proposition (46) in my diagram that denies the possibility of rational epistemic justification for Representative Realism. As Hume
endorses the conclusions, the link and supposes that the two forms of justification are exhaustive forms of rational epistemic justification, he must also accept this conclusion. We cannot have any reason to support the veracity of the proposition that some sense-impressions represent their Real objects. Hume’s position is to deny the possibility of this justification.

There are three further points to be made of this conclusion. First, it does not disprove Representative Realism. It is still possible that our sense-impressions do represent and resemble their Real objects; we just do not know it or have any reason to believe whether they do or not. Hume position at this point is not to deny Representative Realism. Secondly, despite of this, I think Hume’s acceptance of the first profound argument throws a shadow on the interpretation that he would subscribe to a representative theory of perception. There is needed textual evidence or further arguments that regardless of its unjustificatory status, Hume assents to a representative theory as an unfounded assumption, that is, as an axiom.

The third point is that Hume could not accept Locke’s theory of perception if we understand it as Ayers does. One of the most fundamental principles of Hume’s theory of causality is that “every effect is a distinct event from its cause.” (EHU 4.1.11) From this, he concludes immediately that “[i]t could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause” (Ibid.), but the same must hold conversely as well on the same ground. If we consider any effect and even know its true cause, the effect does not carry any information about its cause since they are distinct entities. According to Ayers, Locke holds the representative theory of perception that sensory simple ideas are signs of the existence and ratios of their Real causes. Now it is easy to see that Hume is in total opposition to this theory. Even if we had experience of the causation between sense-impressions and their Real objects, which he rejects, sense-impressions could not contain any sign of their Real causes. Within Humean theory of causality, Locke’s causal theory of perception is impossible.

In the first profound argument, it is not, however, settled for denying rational epistemic justification – proving Representative Realism is also contested. It is obvious that Hume’s denial of factual justification also implies the denial of the factual proof of RR-R: if we cannot support its truth, it is not possible for us to prove its truth either (proposition 36). Yet there are two counter-arguments to those philosophers who have or will try to prove a form of Representative Realism by the help of God or metaphysical reasoning. I think these two counter-arguments are Humean ad hominem arguments where Hume endorses premises only for the sake of the arguments. He himself does not need to consider these possibilities of proving since RR-R is a factual proposition and factual propositions are, in his view,
determined by experience. It is a reasonable reading that he uses these two counter-arguments only against his antagonists using their presuppositions. So, for the question whether the first profound argument is Hume’s argument, it is not needed to discuss these two arguments and they can be bypassed at this point. This procedure has also the advantage that we do not have to go to the counter-argument to the contended theological proof, which is hard to interpret. The target of the argument against the metaphysical proof would be also rather difficult question.

So far we have concluded that Hume endorses the counter-argument to the rational epistemic justification of Representative Realism. Now we are in the position to discuss the sub-problem of the main question of the dissertation, Hume’s attitude to the possibility to justify its other element, that is, Metaphysical Realism. Does Hume think it can be rationally and epistemically justified?

Let us first consider the possibility of the synchronic justification of Metaphysical Realism in the Humean framework. Conscious Mentalism entails that we cannot have any immediate evidence of the existence of Real entities and therefore their existence calls for indirect justification. Within Humean framework, this means that an argument is required and if that argument is synchronic in the contemporary terms, it must be inductive. One of the central claims in his logic is that the existence of an entity can be proven only by the causal relation between it and its cause or effect (EHU 12.3.29). This rule may be generalised to concern any kind of good, synchronic argument instead of only proving for it is based on the inductive form of argument rather than its specific content. If we want to justify the existence of Real entities synchronically and epistemically, we need to produce an argument starting from their causes or effects. As our intention is to justify the existence of a certain type of entities (the existence of that type is an open question), the inductive-causal argument cannot be between Real entities. It should be from another type of entities to the entity or entities of the Real type.

Another central point in Hume’s logic is that inductive arguments “are founded entirely on experience.” (Ibid. and 4.14) Thus we would need experience of some causal relation that obtains between the Real and some other type of entities. It is required of the argument that what we are searching for is empirical and causal in nature. The vital point is that Conscious Mentalism rules out any argument of this type in the case of Metaphysical Realism. We can have experience only of mental perceptions and their relations and not of mental perceptions and any other type of entities. Experience is limited to mental perceptions and cannot go beyond them. Therefore there cannot be any Humean synchronic, rational epistemic justification for the existence of Real entities.
As Bricke also observes, this problem is principal in nature (Bricke 1980, 16). The mode of existence of Real entities, if they exist, is different in kind from those entities of which we can have experience, that is, of what is mental. Here it is useful to introduce the distinction between actual and possible experience. Even if we did not have actual experience of Real entities, we would need at least possible; but that is not achievable, according to Conscious Mentalism. Our experiential access to Real entities, if they exist, is completely blocked by it.

This line of argumentation is reconstructed from Conscious Mentalism and certain central propositions of Hume’s logic. That Hume not only must recognise it but that he actually does is supported by what is said in EHU 11 about the so-called Design Argument, that is, about an inference from the observed regularity of the world to God’s existence:

“...In a word, I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to be known only by its effect (as you have all along supposed) or to be of so singular and particular a nature as to have no parallel and no similarity with any other cause or object, that has ever fallen under our observation. It is only when two species of objects are found to be constantly conjoined, that we can infer the one from the other; and were an effect presented, which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known species, I do not see, that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause. If experience and observation and analogy be, indeed, the only guides which we can reasonably follow in inferences of this nature; both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes, which we know, and which we have found, in many instances, to be conjoined with each other. I leave it to your own reflection to pursue the consequences of this principle. I shall just observe, that, as the antagonists of EPICURUS always suppose the universe, an effect quite singular and unparalleled, to be the proof of a Deity, a cause no less singular and unparalleled” (EHU 11.30).

Section 11 of the first Enquiry (Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State) consists of a dialogue between a narrator and his companion. The companion plays Epicurus in front of the Athenian people and criticises the Design Argument while defending his philosophy that it is not dangerous for religion. So, in fact, most of the Section consists of a monologue by this “Epicurus”; the narrator responds to him only in the last seven paragraphs. The passage is from the final paragraph where the last word is given to the narrator.

The first thing that he says is that so far it has been granted for the proponents of the Design Argument that a cause can be known by its effects. But now he would like to contest this very presupposition of the argument. It is significant that this challenge is made by referring to Hume’s famous two definitions of cause (EHU
Hume's Attitude to the First Profound Argument

7.1.29)\textsuperscript{148}, and his connected view of inductive inference (EHU 4-6, and 12.2.22). In order to infer a cause from an effect or \textit{vice versa}, both must resemble known and experienced causes and effects. They must not be totally dissimilar to the experienced entities. One problem with the Design Argument is that it is an inductive inference concluding with a supposed cause, God, who is “singular and unparalleled”, that is, totally dissimilar, in relation to the experienced entities (presumably because He is, by definition, the creator of the universe). This kind of argument does not seem to be permitted in Hume’s view.

In light of Conscious Mentalism, we can interpret the passage drawing the same conclusion with not so strict premise. For that, let us consider that God is a human perception-independent being since He is our alleged creator. So God is not the object of our possible experience because we can have experience only of mental perceptions. Any inference to His existence does not thus satisfy the condition of Humean induction for a cause to resemble experienced causes. The not so strict premise is the reason for this: we do not know whether He does or does not resemble our perceptions (because of CM). Analogically, any argument for the existence of Real entities involves the same problem. Conscious Mentalism denies the possibility of having experience of Real entities and therefore we do not know whether they resemble experienced mental perceptions. Accordingly, it seems that any inference to their existence is not permitted. As this problem is principal, it concerns impossible experience and the form of the permitted argument, there cannot be any synchronic reason to support the existence of God or Real entities within the Humean framework. I think we have to conclude that Hume denies the possibility of synchronic epistemic justification for the existence of God\textsuperscript{149} and Real entities (MR).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{148} (1) “Similar objects are always conjoined with similar. Of this we have experience. Suitably to this experience, therefore, we may define a cause to be \textit{an object, followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects similar to the second.”}
\item (2) “The appearance of a cause always conveys the mind, by a customary transition, to the idea of the effect. Of this also we have experience. We may, therefore, suitably to this experience, form another definition of cause; and call it, \textit{an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other.”}
\item \textsuperscript{149} This seems to be the case at least in the first \textit{Enquiry} (the last Part of the \textit{Dialogues} makes things more complicated). In addition, “Epicurus” of this dialogue claims a couple of paragraphs before, still presupposing that a cause may be known from its effect, that God’s existence based on the Design Argument “is uncertain”. The reason is that “the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human experience.” This might mean that we are uncertain of God’s existence because we are not able to present any synchronic reasons supporting his existence. Analogically, Real entities are equally beyond our experience according to CM and we are uncertain of their experience.
\end{itemize}
As Section 11 is a dialogue and concerns an issue that was dangerous still in the 18th century, it is problematic which claims made in it are actually Humean. Yet I think that there is no doubt that the final paragraph is genuinely Humean. It makes an explicit reference to his two definitions of cause and doctrine of inductive inference put forward earlier in the work. So there is a good reason to read it as Hume’s final blow on the Design Argument with devastating implications, in his opinion. For the sake of some prudence, however, he still pretends to conceal these implications by saying, “I leave it to your own reflection to pursue the consequences of this principle.” In the same way, the implications for Metaphysical Realism from the perspective of Conscious Mentalism is left to the reflection of Hume’s reader to pursue. Nevertheless, this passage from Section 11 gives more grounds to conclude that the counter-argument to the synchronic, rational epistemic justification of Metaphysical Realism is Humean. According to Hume, we cannot synchronically support the veracity of the proposition that there are mind-independent, external, and continuous entities.\(^{150}\)

Above I have argued that Hume is aware of a kind of diachronic justification in addition to the synchronic although the terms are not his but contemporary. Could he then accept the diachronic, rational epistemic justification of Metaphysical Realism, which refers to the causal origin of our belief in it? Hume does not provide any explicit answer, but I think that we can reconstruct his response on the basis of the first profound argument. He accepts, in the first place, the counter-argument to the diachronic (rational epistemic) justification of Representative Realism on the grounds that referring to the natural instinct causing the belief in Direct Realism as reliable is not possible because that natural instinct is unreliable. The crucial point here is that the same natural instinct makes us believe, according to Hume, in the existence of Real entities. Accordingly, it is not coherent to justify this belief by referring to the natural instinct as reliable either. If somebody referred to another natural instinct, Hume could answer that any natural instinct is not certainly reliable without further evidence.\(^{151}\) I think these reflections give us a strong reason to conclude that Hume denies the possibility of diachronic rational epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism.

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\(^{150}\) Bricke also thinks that Hume’s real target in the first profound argument is MR (Bricke 1980, 12).

\(^{151}\) As his Pyrrhonist does in EHU 12.2.22.
Conclusion of the Argument

In the end, I think that we are under some necessity to conclude that Hume denies any rational epistemic justification of Metaphysical Realism. First, there cannot be any synchronic argument, which should be causal and empiric, to the existence of Real entities because of Conscious Mentalism. Second, referring to the natural instinct causing our belief in the existence of Real entities as reliable is not coherent since that instinct is not reliable. It makes us believe in Direct Realism, which is irrational in the sense of being in opposition to inductive reason, and misleading or even false. These two forms of justification are the exhaustive types of rational, epistemic justification in Hume’s view. Thus, there is no argument to support the existence or non-existence of Real entities, according to him. Their existence is an open question in the face of truth supporting reasons.

So far I have argued that Hume subscribes to negatively dogmatic results concerning Direct, Representative, and Metaphysical Realism. The first is contradictory to Conscious Mentalism, to which Hume assents. He concludes that Direct Realism is irrational, misleading or even false. There is also a rational demand on him to say that it is simply false. It is nowhere asserted in the first profound argument that Representative Realism is false. Nor is there, according to the reconstruction, any argument leading to this conclusion implicitly. The conclusion is that we cannot support by any argument the proposition that sense-impressions represent their possible Real objects. From the point of view of rational evidence, it is left open whether they do or not. The case is the same with the very existence of Real entities; there is no reason to believe that they exist or that they do not exist.

Still it is good to keep in mind that the existence of neither the representation nor Real entities is rejected by Hume. This is negative dogmatism concerning their rational epistemic justification, not regarding their existence or any possible other forms of justification for them, like practical. Hume’s position after the first profound argument is justificatory negative dogmatism concerning a certain type of justification. Whether he extends this result to concern any type of justification or epistemic justification is discussed in Conclusion.
First Profound Argument and the Treatise

In order to make my case even stronger, I will next appeal to the Treatise and argue that this work supports the interpretation that the key premises, conclusions, and my reconstructed implications of the first profound argument are Humean. In that work, the natural point of reference is 1.4.2, Of scepticism with regard to reason, which corresponds to Section 12 in the first Enquiry. This Section is one of the longest in the whole work and its interpretation is notoriously difficult (Millican 2002d, 462-6). For that reason, and because of my restriction to study primarily the first Enquiry, I read the Section from the perspective of the question whether it is consistent with the interpretation defended above. As this is not the only Section in the Treatise that contains evidence regarding Hume’s attitude to the first profound argument, I am going to discuss passages from other places in the work, too.

It is not necessary to go through all the steps in the argument and to consider whether they are Humean. At this point, we have a clear view of the key propositions and arguments on which the first profound argument depends. The first of them is Conscious Mentalism, according to which only mental perceptions can be present to the mind. The first profound argument revolves around it and the Treatise offers strong textual evidence for the interpretation that Hume endorses this proposition. It is asserted so many times that one begins to suspect that it is one of Hume’s basic principles. It is true that sometimes Hume attributes it to philosophers and this might point to the direction that he is only reporting philosopher’s general view, which he, in the end, does not share (e.g. T 3.App.13). There are, however, so many passages where it is clear that Hume asserts it in the context where it is opposed to external or Real entities that it is, without doubt, one of Hume’s own principles.

For instance, at the end of the Section Of the idea of existence, or of external existence (1.2.6), Hume writes in relation to the external objects “that ’tis universally allow’d by philosophers, and is besides fairly obvious of itself, that nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas”, which is asserted again in the next paragraph (T 1.2.6.7-8). A similar formulation, which also closely resembles EHU 12.1.9, is found in the Section discussing the immateriality of the soul:

“The most vulgar philosophy informs us, that no external object can make itself known to the mind immediately, and without the interposition of an image or perception.” (T 1.4.5.15)

Besides, the principle of Conscious Mentalism plays a relevant role in Hume’s famous discussion of personal identity in 1.4.6 and the Appendix (T 1.4.6.3, 4, 16, 18,
Hume's Attitude to the First Profound Argument

Moreover, Hume starts the third Book of the *Treatise* by asserting this principle:

“It has been observ'd, that nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and that all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking, fall under this denomination.” (T 3.1.1.2)

We can find CM in the *Abstract* as well (*Abs*.28). But most significantly for our purposes here, it is asserted and employed in T 1.4.2. First it is used in paragraph 14 to argue that reason does not produce the opinion of the continued and distinct existence of the Real entities. Then it occurs again in an argument in paragraph 47, which is referred back in 54; below, I will show that this argument is Humean. Between these, in order to substantiate that “the philosophical system acquires all its influence on the imagination from the vulgar one”, Conscious Mentalism is claimed many times in the form that our perceptions are neither continuing nor mind-independent existences (T 1.4.2.50, 51, and 52). Thus, in general, we may conclude that Conscious Mentalism is a Humean principle, and I think there are very few who would even think to contend this interpretation concerning the *Treatise* at least.153

In the first *Enquiry*, Conscious Mentalism is based (by means of induction and the Copy Principle) on the table argument. In the *Treatise*, there are also arguments that are based on sense-variation with corresponding conclusions. This time Hume’s main illustration is not a table changing its apparent size but the double images produced by pressing one eye, which is even a better example of the perception-dependency of sense-impressions.154 It is on this ground that Hume infers Conscious Mentalism. Nonetheless, after this conclusion he says that there are many similar “experiments” like “the seeming increase and diminution of objects, according to their distance;” “the apparent alterations in their figure;” “the changes in their colour and other qualities from our sickness and distempers”. (T 1.4.2.45) The first of them is the table illustration in its general form. It is therefore justified that Hume’s view is that the arguments in this paragraph and EHU 12.9 are of the same type.

152 I am referring to the beginning of the discussion of personal identity in the *Appendix* which Hume still accepts. This is evident from the next sentence: “So far I seem to be attended with sufficient evidence.” (T 3.App.20)

153 More evidence for Hume’s endorsement of CM can be found in his letter to Blair probably in the autumn of 1761. This time Hume referees George Campbell’s (1719-1796) *Dissertation on Miracles* (1762). His comment on “Sect. II” is as follows: “No man can have any other experience but his own.” (HL 1, 349)

154 In the first *Enquiry*, this illustration occurs in the trite arguments against the senses (EHU 12.1.6).
In this important paragraph (45), Hume formulates the conclusion from these sense-variations in the way that “all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits.” Here he seems to speak about perceptions as sense-impressions solely. He also uses strikingly physiological language. The qualification but not the same terminology is present in the previous paragraph where his formulation is that “the doctrine of the independent existence of our sensible perceptions is contrary to the plainest experience.” These two passages support therefore my reading of the table argument that it is first used to substantiate a thesis concerning the theory of perception.

In addition, the next paragraph (46) confirms the follow-up of my reading that this conclusion is generalised to concern all objects of our understanding (perceptions) resulting in the proposition that they are perception-dependent. Hume’s use of “perception” in that paragraph is revealed by how it continues after the conclusion that “[t]he natural consequence of this reasoning shou’d be, that our perceptions have no more a continued than an independent existence”. Hume goes on to say that philosophers, and he himself “for the future”, make a general exhaustive distinction between

“perceptions and objects, of which the former are suppos’d to be interrupted, and perishing, and different at every different return; the latter to be uninterrupted, and to preserve a continu’d existence and identity.”

The first Enquiry and the Treatise cohere, thus, with each other regarding Conscious Mentalism – what the objects of perceptions are - and its basis in the argument of sense-variation. The juvenile work can also be useful with regard to the question which conception of reason is used in the table argument justifying Conscious Mentalism and refuting Direct Realism. Next I will accordingly show that it supports my interpretation of this question: that conception of reason is inductive.

We can start with paragraph 44, where Hume writes that

“a very little reflection and philosophy is sufficient to make us perceive the fallacy of that opinion [of “a continu’d existence to those sensible objects or perceptions, which we find to resemble each other in their interrupted appearance”].”

A couple of paragraphs later, he says that “a little reflection destroys this conclusion, that our perceptions have a continu’d existence, by showing that they have a dependent one” (T 1.4.2.50). These two utterances are close to the claim in the Enquiry that the primary opinion is destroyed “by the slightest philosophy” and reflection (12.9). This is a standard Humean opposition between the attitudes which we take instinctively, on the one hand, and by reflection, on the other. On this level, the opposition should not be philosophical because in everyday life we say many times that one should deliberate one’s doings and not to act without thinking.
However, when we go back to paragraph 44, to how Hume continues his initial formulation, we see that there is a philosophical opposition at work here:

“when we 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 suggestion is only confirmed by the details of the argument corresponding to the table argument in the next paragraph:

- p₁: “we do not attribute continu’d existence to both these perceptions” of single and double image
- p₂: “they are both of the same nature”
- q: “all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits.” (T 1.4.2.45)

When Hume speaks about reasoning upon “experiments”, he normally means his other form of reasoning, inductive causal inference. This argument shows us that his use here is consistent with this general observation. The second premise is an evident allusion to the fourth “rule” of his “logic” that like causes imply like effects (T 1.3.15.6) Therefore we may conclude that Conscious Mentalism and the argument for it and against Direct Realism are, in Hume’s view, inductively rational.¹⁵⁵

I have concluded that Hume subscribes to Conscious Mentalism in T 1.4.2, too. If he is rational, he must also accept proposition (13) that Direct Realism is against inductive reason and misleading or even false since CM and DR are, in fact, contradictory. That Hume really thinks and not only must think so is evident in a couple of places at T 1.4.2. First, in paragraph 49, Hume writes that “philosophical system” is “directly contrary” to the vulgar. That claim is repeated in paragraphs 51 and 52. The strongest formulation, however, is in the concluding phase of the Section where Hume says about the philosophical system that it “is over-and-above loaded with this absurdity, that it at once denies and establishes the vulgar supposition.” (Ibid. 56)

Yet there appears to be three complications here. In the first place, it seems to be rather the philosophical system than Conscious Mentalism that is contradictory to the vulgar. Secondly, despite of this contradiction, the philosophical system appears to be capable of integrating the vulgar into it (Ibid. 49-54). In the third place, it is not self-evident that in the Treatise, Hume takes the vulgar position to involve Direct Realism.

¹⁵⁵ For a criticism of this argument in Humean terms, see Price 1940, 107-13 and 121; and Loeb 2002, 207-11.
These seeming complications can be, however, explained away by considering where the philosophical and vulgar systems contradict. According to the latter, “sensible perceptions have [...] a continu’d and uninterrupted existence.” Although even the vulgar are conscious that sense-impressions are interrupted in their appearance, they take this only as a seeming: “the perception or object really continues to exist, even when absent from us”. By contrast, the philosophical system involves that sense-impressions have “a dependent” existence, which implies the denial of the continued existence. (Ibid. 50) Philosophers build up the “system” in which continued and mind-independent existence is ascribed to “objects” and the interrupted and mind-dependent to perceptions (Ibid. 46).

It is thus in the point of the mode of existence of the objects of our sense-perceptions where the philosophical and vulgar systems contradict. Either they are or are not Real. On the general level, this means that Conscious Mentalism and the vulgar system do, too. There is no complication at this point. Nor is there in the integration of the systems at least in the sense that philosophers do not integrate the continued existence of sense-impressions into their system. On the contrary, they reject it. It is good to point out, nonetheless, that Hume thinks that there are problems in the integration at some other point. That point is, as I will argue below, incorporating the vulgar’s Metaphysical Realism into the philosophical system without any rational epistemic justification. The point of contradiction between the vulgar and philosophers explains also why the vulgar system does involve Direct Realism in the Treatise although Hume puts the problematic in it in slightly different terms than in the Enquiry. Although the vulgar think their sense-impressions are interrupted in their appearance, they still believe that they perceive the continued, external, and mind-independent, in a word, Real entities by their senses.

The Treatise also supports my reading of the primary opinion in the first Enquiry that Hume takes its perception-theoretical element to involve numerical identity between sense-impressions and Real entities. It is many times claimed in T 1.4.2 that the vulgar position corresponding to the primary opinion in the Enquiry involves perfect numerical identity between sense-impressions and Real entities (T 1.4.2.24, 25, 31-40, 50, and 52). As numerical identity is total qualitative (the non-identity of discernibles) and symmetrical for Hume, his conception of Direct Realism states that every quality of the sense-impression is the property of the Real entity, and conversely. Above, I have argued that the distinction between appearances and the things themselves does not make any sense in this framework. I have also pointed out that Hume employs this distinction, he distinguishes sensible or superficial qualities from secret powers, for example. Thus, the Treatise also supports my conclusion that when making distinctions of this type, Hume cannot write as a Direct Realist although it appears
so. Sensible qualities are mental in their mode of existence and secret powers are Real causal powers.156

There is therefore strong evidence in the *Treatise* that Hume assents to proposition (13) that Direct Realism is in opposition to inductive causal reason and misleading or even false. In fact, he is more direct in the juvenile than the later work. The vulgar system involves a “fiction” of the continued existence of sense-impressions and this fiction is a falsehood: sense-impressions do not have continued existence, they are interrupted (T 1.4.2.37 and e.g. 50). To formulate it in the way as it is put in the first *Enquiry*, we do not perceive Real entities with our five senses.

In the *Enquiry*, proposition (13) implies Hume’s denial of the possibility of the diachronic form of rational epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism. Our next natural question is thus that how the *Treatise* relates to this interpretation. My view is that it is corroborated by that work. This is manifest in the concluding phase of T 1.4.2 where Hume reports his feelings and views after the section, from which he does not disassociate himself in any other place of the work. One of his conclusions is that it is not possible to justify “the senses”, that is, the belief that at least sometimes the senses present true sense-impressions of Real entities (presupposes MR). The strongest expression of this is that

“A [it]is impossible upon any system to defend either our understanding or senses; and we but expose them farther when we endeavour to justify them in that manner.” (T 1.4.2.57)

A more reserved formulation is just before of this passage when Hume asks rhetorically, meaning the vulgar and philosophical systems: “how can we justify to ourselves any belief we repose in them?” (Ibid. 56) Regarding diachronic, rational epistemic justification, what is relevant in these passages is that Hume denies also rational reference to the vulgar system, defending Metaphysical Realism by the natural cause of assenting to it as true, not only justifying the philosophical system. In the *Treatise* as well, he rejects the possibility to support the existence of Real entities by referring to the causes of the belief in Metaphysical Realism.

Above I have argued that if Hume assents to Conscious Mentalism in the *Treatise*, he must accept the denial of synchronic, rational epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism, too. This denial follows from CM and Hume’s logic. T 1.4.2 confirms that

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156 We should take into account the passages in T 1.4.2 where Hume writes that the vulgar are sometimes conscious of the discontinuity of sense-impressions, but they take it to be only an appearance (T 1.4.2.24). This appearance concerns, however, only their occurrence in the mind and not their qualities. They still believe that sense-impressions are numerically identical with Real entities. So they do not make a distinction between appearances and the things themselves. Sense-impressions are perfectly the same with Real entities; they just occur discontinuously.
Hume not only must but also does think so. In paragraph 54, he argues that the philosophical system, though rational, rests on the vulgar (the imagination). The first point given reasons for in the argument is that the resemblance relation between “external objects” and “perceptions” cannot be supported rationally in terms of causation. For

“the relation of cause and effect can never afford us any just conclusion from the existence or qualities of our perceptions to the existence of external continu’d objects [...] even tho’ they cou’d afford such a conclusion, we shou’d never have any reason to infer, that our objects resemble our perceptions.”

In this place, Hume refers back to paragraph 47, concerning which he comments that “I have already shown” the truth of the first part of the quote.

These words by Hume are significant because they make it evident that the argument presented in paragraph 47 is his own. One of the reasons of that argument is Conscious Mentalism (“no beings are ever present to the mind but perceptions”), which supports the conclusion 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.”

This is one branch of the argument. The other strand brings Hume’s logic into play by first claiming that it is only by means of causality that we can argue from the existence of one entity to that of the other.\(^{157}\) The other premise in the second branch is that

“[t]he 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.”

If we unite these two claims, the joined propositions states that only experience of the causal relation between types \(a\) and \(b\) can support the existence of the one from that of the other. But Conscious Mentalism implies that we cannot have any experience of the causal or any relation between Real and other type of entities. The conclusion thus is that the existence of Real entities cannot be supported by any synchronic argument.

I have to repeat again that paragraph 54 shows that Hume really accepts this conclusion. In my terminology, this means that he assents to the proposition that Metaphysical Realism cannot be given synchronic, rational epistemic justification. The conclusion of T 1.4.2, quoted above, supports this interpretation. Hume concludes that MR cannot be defended by the philosophical system. It is with the argument rejected just above that philosophers attempt to defend MR. But it is

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\(^{157}\) “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 shows, that there is a connexion betwixt them, and that the existence of one is dependent on that of the other.” (T 1.4.2.47)
bound to fail because Hume can take Conscious Mentalism, involved in the philosophical system, add his logic, and argue against the system.

In the end, we can conclude that the Treatise supports the interpretation that Hume denies any rational, epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism (and Representative Realism). The key premise for this denial is Conscious Mentalism together with Hume’s logic. I would like to emphasise again, for the closing of this Chapter, that this is only justificatory negative dogmatism and that Hume’s endorsement of CM does not necessarily mean that he accepts the triple view of the world of Representative Realism. Conscious Mentalism claims only that the objects of the understanding are perception-dependent in their mode of existence. It does not postulate them as a distinct basic category of things between the minds and Real entities. Firstly, it does not involve Representative Realism that mental perceptions are representations or effects of Real entities. Secondly, it does not include Metaphysical Realism, that is, the assertion that there are Real entities. Finally, it does not presume any view that the mind is a distinct entity in relation to perceptions. Conscious Mentalism can be maintained within the bundle theory of the mind, according to which there is no mind without perceptions, and that is a natural, though not uncontroversial, interpretation of Hume’s view of the mind in the Treatise, at least. This should not, however, blur the fact that in this interpretation, Hume’s view is in opposition to any direct theory of perception.

At this point, it is also beyond reasonable doubt that the common view in Hume scholarship that the first profound argument is genuinely Humean is the right interpretation. Baier’s reductio ad absurdum reading and Livingston’s dialectical account cannot thus deserve this honorable title.
4.2.2 Second Profound Argument

According to my reconstruction of the second profound argument, it consists of five phases. The starting point of the argument is the distinction between primary and sensible qualities, which is closely connected with the well-known early modern division between primary and secondary qualities. In the second phase, the primary sensible qualities distinction is challenged by an argument aiming at its collapse in terms of our perceptions. The third phase is an objection to this counter-argument and works on the conception of abstraction as the real distinction between perceptions. That objection is in turn objected to in the fourth phase where it is argued that the idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of sensible qualities. As such, it is actually an argument for the first premise of the second phase. After these complications, the last fifth phase cashes in on the second phase and draws two different conclusions from it. In the pre-1777 edition of the first Enquiry, it terminates with a contradiction between the belief in the existence of Real entities and the rational state of refraining from, either suspending or rejecting, that belief. This contradiction is an implication of the proposition that it is a rational stance that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. Hence the belief in Real entities is, according to the argument, contrary to reason. The posthumous 1777 edition adds another line of argument and conclusion to this against the notion of the material substance. It is concluded that the material substance is an inadequate notion as it is unknown and unintelligible for us.

It is fairly obvious that the second profound argument is more sceptical than the first. The first concludes with negative dogmatism regarding the rational epistemic justification of Metaphysical Realism, whereas the second represents conceptual negative dogmatism concerning Real entities. Hume’s view of the second is accordingly an important question for determining how we should interpret his philosophy in many respects, most notably his epistemology and metaphysics. It is also vital to our main problem of Hume’s view of Metaphysical Realism.

Our next task is therefore to discuss Hume’s attitude to the second profound argument. Whereas there is a widespread consensus among Hume scholars that the first profound argument is genuinely Humean, commentators are more reserved in the case of the second. Garrett and Morris, focusing on the Treatise, have contended that Hume uses it merely as an ad hominem argument against what he calls “modern philosophers”. Their point is thus that he only endorses the link of the argument but not its premises. Hume’s intention is then only to show what follows from the tenets of modern philosophers. Garrett challenges Hume’s adherence to the Sensible Qualities Principle and consequently the entire argument. Morris’ position is that T
1.4.4 evincing a similar argument should be read in the context of the two preceding sections, 1.4.2 and 1.4.3. It reveals that the modern Representative Realism is in Hume’s view of par with the Aristotelian hylomorphism discussed in 1.4.3 and consequently not endorsed by him. Hume’s position is to go back towards “vulgar” Direct Realism.\textsuperscript{158} (Garrett 1997, 218-20; Morris 2000, 96-102, and 106)

Another challenge to Hume’s endorsement of the second profound argument comes from the New Humean camp. Wright and Strawson maintain that although Hume accepts it up to proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of Real entities, he does not endorse the conclusion that there is a conflict between the belief in Real entities and consistent reasoning. Wright contention is that Hume is still able to believe in the existence of the material entities with only primary qualities by virtue of “inconceivable suppositions”. Strawson rests his view of the relative idea of the matter as the unknown something causing our sense-impressions. (e.g. Wright 1995/1986, 231-4; Strawson 2002, 239-40)

In what follows, I align myself with Bricke by defending the interpretation that the second profound argument is a genuinely Humean argument (Bricke 1980, 19-20). I will take Garrett’s, Wright’s and Strawson’s objections one by one and reply to them. Regarding Morris’ position, it is my entire discussion of Hume’s attitude to the second profound argument that forms my answer to him, for I propose to show that Hume accepts the relevant premises of the argument. As it is clear that he endorses at least its argumentative link, if he accepts the premises (and is consistent), he must assent to the conclusions of the second and fourth phases and ultimately, to the final two conclusions of the whole argument.

This will also be my answer to the interpretations defended by Baier and Livingston that the profound arguments are either a \textit{reductio ad absurdum} of Cartesianism or forming a philosophic dialectic in order to raise us to a higher level of philosophic self-consciousness.

There is a difference in my procedure compared with what I did in the case of the first profound argument. As the exposition of the second profound argument is so brief in the first \textit{Enquiry}, we must use broader textual evidence, using Hume’s whole corpus in considering its relevant steps. It is not possible to discuss the argument in light of the \textit{Enquiry} first and to assess it then from the point of view of Hume’s

\textsuperscript{158} Morris is especially fond of the passage in 1.4.3.9 where Hume says that “we shall find upon enquiry, that the true philosophy approaches nearer to the sentiments of the vulgar, than to those of a mistaken knowledge.” (e.g. Morris 2000, 97)
Hume’s Attitude to the Second Profound Argument

other works. There are many points where we have to use some of Hume’s essays and the *Treatise* in the first place already. The object of the enquiry places that requirement on us in this context.

Counter-Argument to the Distinction between Primary and Sensible Qualities

Let us begin by applying the test for the second phase of the argument. It starts with proposition (4) that the idea of extension is necessarily connected with the ideas of sensible qualities. As this means that any idea of extension is some idea of sensible qualities (A cannot be conceived without B)\(^{159}\), it implies that the idea of extension is a perception of sensible qualities (proposition 5). From the Lockean list of primary qualities, solidity is necessarily connected with extension (proposition 6) because it means that two bodies, that is, extended entities, do not penetrate each other. Consequently proposition (7) follows, the idea of solidity is also a perception of SNQ. The next step relies upon the Sensible Qualities Principle, according to which the perceptions of sensible qualities do not resemble anything in Real entities. Since the ideas of extension and solidity are perceptions of SNQ, they do not resemble any Real property of Real entities (proposition 8).

For the final conclusion of the second phase, we need two further premises that are propositions (2.3) and (10). Both are actually involved in the definition of primary qualities in the first phase of the argument. Proposition (2.3) states that extension and solidity are fundamental primary qualities in the sense that all others are necessarily connected to them. There would not be other primary qualities like figure, if there were not extended (and solid) entities. So, the other PMQ cannot be conceived of without conceiving extension (and solidity); ideas of the former are ideas of the latter. Thus, when the ideas of extension and solidity are shown not to resemble, proposition (9) follows: none of the perceptions of the supposed PMQ resembles any Real property of Real entities. The other extra premise, proposition (10), states that the perceptions of primary qualities are the only candidates for the perceptions that may resemble the Real properties of Real entities. It follows from the definitions that primary qualities are the Real properties of Real entities (2.1) and that perceptions may resemble PMQ (2.2). Together with proposition (9), (10) entails the conclusion of the second phase (11): none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities.

\(^{159}\) It is also good to recall that A is then the sufficient condition of B, which calls to mind the diagram formulation of this as the circles of extension.
Hume’s view of these premises and conclusions depends a great deal on his doctrine of the perception of extension and his philosophy of body. For example, does Hume think that extension without sensible qualities is beyond our comprehension? What is his view of the Sensible Qualities Principle? It must be granted that there is an interpretative problem in discussing these issues: Hume omitted his doctrine of the perception of extension and philosophy of body almost entirely from the text of the first Enquiry. In addition to this, it is not clear at all whether he actually has any philosophy of body – at least if bodies are taken to be Real material entities. As we have seen, Hume makes some sharply critical remarks on the accounts of body put before him in the last Part of Book 1 of the Treatise.

Yet I believe that Hume’s belief in the premises of the argument in the second phase can be confirmed on the basis of the Treatise. The only real problem is that Hume says so little about these issues in the first Enquiry. Therefore it might be objected to what follows that Hume no longer holds his views of body and the perception of extension in the later work. To that possible objection, my reply is the following. After testing the second phase in relation to the Treatise, I provide strong textual evidence from the first Enquiry for the view that the argument and conclusion of that phase are genuinely Humean. This happens through putting Hume’s endorsement of the fourth phase on a firm foundation. When we further take into consideration that he takes the fourth to refute the third completely and the third to be the only possible objection to the second phase argument, Hume’s endorsement of the fourth phase implies his assent to the second. It is also worth observing that this evidence supports Hume sustaining his position on the perception of extension and philosophy of body in the first Enquiry. Hume’s assent to the second-phase argument is therefore supported by his doctrine of the perception of extension, philosophy of body in the Treatise, and the text of the first Enquiry. Another reason to digress from our normal procedure to use primarily the first Enquiry is that the Treatise calls for a discussion here because it can explain why Hume assents to the second phase and the objection in the fourth phase.

In the Treatise, there is conclusive textual evidence for the assertion that Hume endorses proposition (4). This is evident in Hume’s conclusion of the Section Of the other qualities of our ideas of space and time (1.2.3), which is such a relevant passage for our purposes that it is justified to quote it in its entirety:

“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
Hume's Attitude to the Second Profound Argument

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 ideas 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; and consequently the idea of extension, which is compos'd of the ideas of these points, can never possibly exist. But if the idea of extension really can exist, as we are conscious it does, its parts must also exist; and in order to that, must be consider'd as colour'd or tangible. We have therefore no idea of space or extension, but when we regard it as an object either of our sight or feeling.” (T 1.2.3.15-16; see also 1.2.3.4-6, 1.4.5.9, and 15-6)

Here we do not need to go into all the details of these paragraphs. Suffice it to note that they yield conclusive evidence for the interpretation that in the Treatise, Hume endorses proposition (4). It is his view that extension cannot be conceived without some perception of colours or tactile qualities. As colours and tactile qualities are sensible qualities, the idea of extension is, according to Hume, necessarily connected to some complex idea of sensible qualities. This interpretation is further corroborated by T 1.4.4, where Hume puts forward a similar argument to the second profound argument and refers to this view of the idea of extension. He writes that

“[...] have shown that 'tis impossible to conceive extension, but as compos'd of parts, endow'd with colour or solidity.” (T 1.4.4.8)

As James Franklin has pointed out, Hume’s view of the perception of extension may be illustrated with how a computer produces figures on its screen (Franklin 1994, 87, 88, and 92). Let us imagine that I programme it to draw a triangle with black lines on a blank white screen. This is achieved by colouring certain pixels of the screen black and keeping the others white. The image of the triangle consists of the black pixels and the background of the white ones. For Franklin’s intentions in his paper, the relevant point is that the number of the black pixels, as well as the white, is definite and finite. But for our purposes, the most significant point is that without these black pixels, there would not be any triangle at all on the screen. The triangle is therefore necessarily connected with that aggregate of the black pixels where their organisation is also taken into account. Indeed, the triangle on the screen is


161 Note that as the passage makes it clear, this concerns impressions as well. But for the sake of simplicity, we can focus on ideas in our discussion.
numerically identical with the aggregate; it is that particular aggregate and its organisation. The triangle is the sufficient condition of the aggregate consisting of coloured pixels, that is, it is one of the members of the set of the aggregates of pixels with colour.

The analogous case in Hume’s doctrine of the perception of extension can be stated best in the case of impressions. An impression of an extended entity is a complex impression consisting fundamentally of the impressions of colours or tactile properties organised in a certain manner in our visual or tangible field.162 In other words, impressions of colours fill the space, so to in speak, in our visual field. The relevant point is that the impression of the extended entity is necessarily connected to a certain aggregate of the impressions of colours or tactile properties with a certain organisation. So the impression of the extended entity is numerically identical with that complex impression. Any impression of extended entity is some complex impression of colours or tactile properties disposed in a certain manner.

This concerns extension as a common noun, too. According to Hume’s theory of general ideas, the idea of extension in itself is any particular idea of an extended entity that has general representation: it represents all ideas of extended entities and it is thus the general idea of extension (T 1.1.7.7-16). As every particular idea of extended entities is necessarily connected to the ideas of colours or tactile properties,163 the general idea of extension is also necessarily connected to the ideas of colours or tactile properties. From this it follows that the general idea of extension is some complex idea of colours or tactile properties organised in a certain manner.

In Hume’s view, thus, the idea of extension is numerically identical with some complex idea of sensible qualities. Accordingly, proposition (5) also expresses his view: the idea of extension is a perception of SNQ. The same argument applies in the case of the idea of solidity. The next step in the argument is thus to claim that solidity cannot be conceived of without extension (proposition 6) and therefore the idea of solidity is a perception of SNQ as well (7). As I have shown on the basis of T 1.4.4, Hume understands solidity as the impenetrability of two bodies pressing each

162 Falkenstein stresses the organisation point. It entails that the impression of an extended entity is not reducible to the content of its elementary impressions because their disposition in our visual field is also significant. This has important implications for the interpretation of Hume’s philosophy of relations. (Falkenstein 2006, 69)

163 As will be shown below, it is not necessarily exclusively so. Ideas of tastes can be constitutive of an idea of an extended entity as that type of extended entity (an olive, for example). Nevertheless it is true that only the ideas of colours and tactile properties can be constitutive of the ideas of extended entities qua extended entities.
other. By definition, bodies are extended entities. Solidity is therefore the sufficient condition of extension (every solid body is an instantiation of extension). To use the Humean and early modern terminology, Hume thinks that the idea of solidity is necessarily connected and numerically identical with the idea of extension. As such, it is also a perception of sensible qualities.

If we consider this together with the Sensible Qualities Principle, we come to conclude proposition (8) that the ideas of extension and solidity do not resemble any Real property of Real entities. Hume’s attitude to this conclusion depends accordingly on his view of the SNQP. As that requires extensive discussion, the argument for it must be postponed and Hume’s endorsement of the SNQP taken for granted at this point. With this in mind, I proceed to the four remaining propositions of the second phase.

The first of them is proposition (2.3) that extension and solidity are fundamental primary qualities in the sense that all others are necessarily connected to them. T 1.4.4 is again helpful with regard to Hume’s view of this proposition, for he writes as follows: “These primary qualities are extension and solidity with their different mixtures and modifications; figure, motion, gravity, and cohesion.” (T 1.4.4.5) It is true that Hume is here reporting modern philosophers’ philosophy of body and not necessarily his own. Whether he endorses the modern notion of body is not, however, relevant here. It suffices that he thinks that the relation between extension and solidity and the other supposed primary qualities is the above-mentioned. That he does so is evident from his “decisive” “objection” to “this system” in T 1.4.4.6-15. As we recall from Chapter 3.4, arguments forming this objection are based on the premise that the other alleged primary qualities are necessarily connected with solidity and extension. It is then Hume’s view that all primary qualities other than extension and solidity are “modifications” of the latter, meaning a necessary connection between them in this direction. This implies that none of the perceptions of the supposed PMQ resembles any Real property of Real entities (proposition 9). They are fundamentally identical with the idea of extension that is an idea of sensible qualities.

The conclusion of the second phase is proposition (11) that none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities. It is clear that it does not follow from proposition (9) without the extra premise that the perceptions (ideas) of PMQ are the only candidates for the perceptions that may resemble Real entities. In my reconstruction, the definition of primary qualities is able to supply this premise. It is debatable, however, whether Hume would accept the propositions that PMQ are the Real properties of Real entities and that perceptions may resemble PMQ. Therefore
we must ask whether there is any other basis that could be substituted for the
definition of primary qualities.

For that purpose, let us consider the distinction of properties between primary and
sensible qualities involved in the SNQP. The set of the latter exhaust all sense-perceivable qualitative properties: colours, tactile, tastes, smells, and sounds. In
addition to them, moral and aesthetic qualities can be categorised as qualitative
properties. Regarding what properties are left, the obvious answer is that those that
belong to the different lists of primary qualities. Primary qualities and qualitative
properties are thus the exhaustive categories of perceivable properties. Now, since
the qualitative properties do not resemble any Real property of Real entities, the
SNQP leaves the perceptions of the supposed primary qualities as the only
candidates for Reality-resembling perceptions. Let us recall again that we suppose
that Hume endorses SNQP. Therefore he must also accept the extra premise of the
perceptions of PMQ as the only candidates. But as he endorses proposition (9) that
they do not resemble any Real property of Real entities, the conclusion of the second
phase must be genuinely Humean: none of our perceptions resembles any Real
property of Real entities.

Objection to the Counter-Argument and the Objection to It

So far I have defended Hume’s endorsement of the second-phase argument with the
Treatise. From the point of view of our principle of using the first Enquiry as the
primary textual reference, this is not yet sufficient and we need more reasons for
being justified in believing that this argument is his argument in that work, too. As
such, its exposition at the beginning of EHU 12.15 leaves completely open whether
Hume is advancing his own argument there or merely reiterates other people’s
reasoning. It is fortunate, however, that the way in which Hume brings forward the
third and fourth phases of the second profound argument is revealing in this issue.

Let us recall that he begins their exposition by saying:

“Nothing can save us from this conclusion [of the second phase], but the asserting, that the
ideas of those primary qualities are attained by Abstraction” (EHU 12.1.15).

In this place, he is speaking about the third phase of my reconstruction, the
abstraction objection that the idea of extension is really distinct from the ideas of
sensible qualities (proposition 12). Hume, however, wipes the floor with this
objection by the fourth phase, the objection to the abstraction objection.

In the first place, this is clear from his use of the first person plural, and thereby
identifying himself with those people who maintain the objection to the abstraction
objection: “an opinion, which, if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be
unintelligible, and even absurd.” After this, he goes on to describe the reasons for this assertion, which form the argument in the fourth phase. These reasons are exactly those propositions of Hume’s theory of the perception of extension in the Treatise that he claims in T 1.4.4 to have proved before. Besides, there is no Hume scholar who has so far denied that in the last sentence of EHU 12.15 Hume is evincing his own view against the possibility of abstraction in a certain sense. According to my reconstruction, that sentence affords an additional basis for the objection to the abstraction objection. Therefore it corroborates Hume’s assent to the fourth phase and his rejection of the abstraction objection. Another relevant point in its content is that Hume takes “all the scholastic notions with regard to abstraction” to be absurd. This concurs well with what he has written just above: the assertion that the abstract idea of extension is absurd. As such it is able to support Hume’s endorsement of the objection to the abstraction objection and his rejection of the latter even more.

We have then firm textual reason to believe that the argument in the fourth phase is genuinely Humean. It is also clear that Hume takes it to refute the abstraction objection completely. As he thinks that this is the only possible objection to the second-phase argument, the conclusion must be that Hume endorses that argument and its conclusion. So, if my reconstruction of the second phase is correct, it represents Hume’s view. It is Hume’s position that none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities – if he endorses the Sensible Qualities Principle, which is at this point taken for granted.

Further support for Hume’s endorsement of the argument in the second phase and its conclusion is provided by the passages where Hume maintains that fundamentally we perceive only sensible qualities. If that is the case, then every perception of the alleged primary qualities is a perception of sensible qualities. There are at least three places in the Treatise and Abstract that strongly suggests this. In T 1.2.5.26, Hume claims “that we can never pretend to know body otherwise than by those external properties, which discover themselves to the senses.” When arguing that even if power is implied by a single instance of causal relation, there is no reason to extrapolate this to other cases, Hume refers to the principle that “there being

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164 Hume’s views of abstraction and abstract ideas would be interesting topics to discuss. As this is not needed for our purposes and as this is a complex issue, it is best to omit this discussion from the context. The classic on Hume’s critical and positive views of abstraction and abstract ideas is Weinberg 1965 (esp. 3-24, and 32-41). In the more recent discussion, an insightful and illustrative paper building on Weinberg is Baxter 1997 (see also Tienson 1984, Bradshaw 1988, Pappas 1989, Sedivy 1995).
nothing but the sensible qualities present to us” (T 1.3.6.10). In the Abstract, at the
context of the argument that even after constant conjunction there is no reason to
draw this inference, one of Hume’s premises is the following: “The powers, by which
bodies operate, are entirely unknown. We perceive only their sensible qualities”
(Abs.15).

Our procedure, however, is to use the first Enquiry as the primary reference. As a
result, we have to ask whether that work can bear evidence on the issue. In that
question, Hume’s two central arguments concerning induction and causality prove to
be useful. The first is from the difficult and long third paragraph of Part 2 of Section
4 where Hume argues that all factual inferences to the unobserved are founded on
the Uniformity Principle (Millican 2002c, 127). In this circumstance, we are
interested in two things that he does in the paragraph. First, he asserts that we know
only the sensible qualities of objects. Second, he applies the term “sensible quality”
to motion and weight (of bread), which are primary qualities in the modern view.
The second point is evident in the paragraph itself, but the first requires some
argument. Hume begins the paragraph with the following statement:

“It must certainly be allowed, that nature has kept us at a great distance from all her secrets,
and has afforded us only the knowledge of a few superficial qualities of objects; while she
conceals from us those powers and principles, on which the influence of these objects entirely
depends. Our senses inform us of the colour, weight, and consistence of bread; but neither
sense nor reason can ever inform us of those qualities, which fit it for the nourishment and
support of a human body.” (EHU 4.2.16)

The relevant claim here is that we know merely “superficial qualities of objects” with
no acquaintance of causal powers at all. It should be realised that the passage is clear
that this concerns any knowledge of bodies. Not only senses but also “reason” is not
able to provide us knowledge of other than superficial properties. This also makes us
suspect that Hume’s claim concerns comprehensibility in addition to knowledge,
which is confirmed by how the passage continues:

“Sight or feeling conveys an idea of the actual motion of bodies; but as to that wonderful
force or power, which would carry on a moving body for ever in a continued change of place,
and which bodies never lose but by communicating it to others; of this we cannot form the
most distant conception.” (Ibid.)

Hume can therefore be reformulated as follows: we conceive only superficial
properties of bodies. It is in the next sentence where Hume refers to these superficial
properties using the term “sensible qualities”:

“But notwithstanding this ignorance of natural powers and principles, we always presume,
when we see like sensible qualities, that they have like secret powers, and expect, that effects,
similar to those which we have experienced, will follow from them.” (Ibid.)

He repeats the reference later in the paragraph:
“It is allowed on all hands, that there is no known connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers […] The bread, which I formerly eat, nourished me; that is, a body of such sensible qualities, was, at that time, endued with such secret powers”. (Ibid.)

It is evident from the internal connections of the text that these passages make the same distinction as the beginning of the paragraph, but there is a change in the terms. At the start, Hume distinguishes powers from superficial qualities. Later he speaks about sensible qualities by contrast to powers. It is therefore justified to take Hume to mean sensible qualities by the “superficial qualities” at the beginning. As he begins by affirming the sole comprehensibility of superficial qualities, what he actually says is to claim that of sensible qualities. EHU 4.2.16 thus supports the interpretation that Hume subscribes to the following proposition: we can fundamentally conceive only sensible qualities of bodies. Every perception of bodies is a perception of sensible qualities.

Another place where the second point, the reference to the alleged primary qualities by “sensible qualities”, surfaces is in Section 7, where Hume argues that the idea of power cannot be derived from the impressions of the single instances of the operations of bodies. His primary reason for this thesis is that “no bodies ever discover any power, which can be the original of this idea [of power].” (EHU 7.1.8)

The foundation of this proposition is that

> “the power or force, which actuates the whole machine [universe], is entirely concealed from us, and never discovers itself in any of the sensible qualities of body.”

For our intentions, the relevant point is that he specifies this reason and sensible qualities with a claim concerning three primary qualities:

> “Solidity, extension, motion; these qualities are all complete in themselves, and never point out any other event which may result from them.” (Ibid.)

So we have two places where Hume advances two of his central arguments and refers to the alleged primary qualities by the term “sensible qualities”. Does this indicate that he differs from his use of the term “sensible quality” in the case of the Sensible Qualities Principle? It does not need to be so. He can speak of the alleged primary qualities as sensible qualities because of his denial of the abstract ideas of the primary qualities. Conversely this means that the ideas of the alleged primary qualities are fundamentally nothing but the ideas of sensible qualities. Therefore these passages can yield evidence for Hume’s view of what we ultimately conceive in perceiving bodies. I would like to point out that I do not take them as decisive evidence for Hume maintaining that we can ultimately conceive only sensible

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165 In the beginning of the paragraph Hume makes the same statement: “In reality, there is no part of matter, that does ever, by its sensible qualities, discover any power or energy”.
qualities. Still I think they can provide additional support for that interpretation and thus for the reading that the second phase is Hume’s own argument.  

**Pre-1777 Conclusion of the Argument**

Before proceeding to the discussion of Hume’s attitude to the fifth phase of the second profound argument in the pre-1777 editions, it is helpful to reiterate the argument in that phase. It builds on the second phase, from which the central proposition (19) is inferred in the fifth phase: we cannot have any perception of Real entities. This happens by virtue of two propositions. The conclusion of the second phase implies proposition (17) that we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties. This works as a premise for proposition (19) with a further supposition that entities without any properties are not perceivable by us (18). These are central propositions of the second profound argument together with the next proposition (20): the SNQP is inductively rational and the other premises for proposition (19) perception-analytically rational. I ask the reader to keep propositions (19) and (20) steadily in his mind. Together they entail proposition (21) that proposition (19) is rational (no perception of Real entities). Let us also recall that rationality under consideration is of Humean type.

The next two propositions are premises that make statements concerning rational beliefs. First it is claimed that perceptions provide content for beliefs (proposition 22). In the second place, it is required that all rational beliefs should have content (23). As it is a rational position that we cannot have any perception of Real entities and for a rational belief, we would need perceptual content, it follows that refraining from believing in the existence of Real entities is a rational attitude (proposition 24). If we further presume that this refraining is at least temporarily possible (proposition 25), in our rational moments we actually refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities (proposition 26). We either suspend that belief or believe that Real entities do not exist. This happens because we come to realise that refraining is rational and in our rational moments, we (ought to) do what is rational.

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166 This is also plausible from the point of view of Hume’s strict sensibilism. According to Hume, perceptions are either impressions or ideas. Impressions are sense-perceptions, bodily feelings, emotions and passions. All these are fundamentally perceptions of qualitative properties. Ideas are ultimately copies of impressions, which they resemble. Therefore ideas cannot be different in kind from impressions (T 1.1.7.5). Ideas are also, thus, ultimately perceptions of qualitative properties, to whose category sensible qualities belong. In the end, all perceptions are fundamentally perceptions of qualitative properties because impressions and ideas exhaust the category of perceptions.
In the pre-1777 editions, the second profound argument is meant to terminate with a contradiction. My account of this is that it concerns two attitudes: the primary and rational. If we at the same time believe and refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities, we “embrace a manifest contradiction” (T 1.4.7.4). This follows from the previous section of the argument. The pre-1777 second profound argument accordingly concludes with proposition (29) that the belief in Metaphysical Realism is contradictory to a rational attitude (26) and contrary to a rational proposition (19).

Hume’s view of the fifth phase depends therefore chiefly on four issues. (1) What does he think about the perceivability of entities without any properties (bare entities) (proposition 18)? (2) Does he believe that the Sensible Qualities Principle is rational (20)? (3) What kind of requirements does his theory of belief put on beliefs and especially rational beliefs (if there is any)? (4) Does he think that it is psychologically possible to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities at least momentarily? Let us next discuss these questions and the corresponding propositions of the argument respectively.

**Perceivability of Bare Concrete Particulars**

The second phase concludes with the proposition that none of our perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities. In other words, this means that we cannot have any perception and therefore conception of the properties of the supposed Real entities. The first step in the fifth phase is thus that we cannot have any perception or conception of Real entities as having some properties. The best we can do is to conceive them as what is nowadays called “bare particulars”. They are called “bare” because they do not have any properties and they are, therefore, metaphorically speaking, naked. Here we can also reduce the question of the perceivability of bare entities to that of bare particulars because Hume is a nominalist; there are no universals. In addition to that, it is required that they are susceptible to spatial location. Real entities are external to the perceiver and non-spatial entities cannot satisfy this (necessary) condition. Our next question is thus the following. What does Hume think about the perceivability of particular entities with spatial location but without any properties whatsoever, entities which I will call “bare concrete particulars” (concreteness means spatiality)? On the first look, this question may appear almost absurd, but we will see that it is not. It depends on what Hume thinks about the substratum conception of substance.

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As far as I can see, the explicit textual evidence that the first *Enquiry* provides on this matter is minimal. It is nevertheless fortunate that the *Treatise* does and even more fortunate that we have textual evidence for the interpretation that Hume does not abandon his view of the topic during his philosophical career. If that evidence is strong enough, it will imply that he also maintains it implicitly in the first *Enquiry*.

Let us begin with the point that bare concrete particulars must have a place in space. The only particular entities that are susceptible to spatial location are points, which have location but no extension (Hume calls them mathematical points), and extended entities (T 1.4.5.9). Extended entities can be called “things” in short because one of the philosophical uses of this term is particular concrete entities. It follows from this that bare concrete particulars must be either “mathematical points” or things. The question at this point is thus what Hume thinks about the perceivability of bare “mathematical points” and things.

It will prove to be useful to consider first what Hume thinks about the perception of things. This question requires that we dive to the depths of Hume’s metaphysics for a while. For some reason, the constitution of the perceptions of things has not been subject to much discussion in the recent Hume scholarship although it is connected to Locke’s thoughts about substance and to Berkeley’s view of things, which have been discussed in Locke scholarship and noted with regard to Berkeley.

Hume’s view of the perception of things belongs to what can be called the bundle theories. As it is well known, Hume uses the term “bundle” in the case of the mind (T 1.4.6.4) and perhaps he has had influence on the fact that it is one of the central technical terms in contemporary metaphysics. For our purposes, the relevant point of the bundle theories of the perception of things is that they imply that bare things

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168 This may have something to do with the fact that the negative Reid-Green interpretation focused quite much on this issue (e.g. Reid 2002, 162). In recent times, Philip Cummins and Falkenstein are notable exceptions. Although Cummins denies Hume’s endorsement of the bundle theory with regard to Real entities (Hume’s metaphysics proper), he agrees on it on the level of perceptions (of things) (Cummins 1996, 52-4, 57-9, and n. 9). Falkenstein also comes close to the interpretation advanced here (Falkenstein 2002, 29 and 2006, 61-9). As things are extended entities, the question is connected to (but not identical with as we will see) the idea of extension, which has been on the agenda in the recent Hume scholarship quite well. For references, see the place above where I consider Hume’s view of the perception of extension.

169 For an influential article in this debate and for its bibliography, see Ayers 1977 (78).

are imperceptible. The perceptions of things are mere bundles of the perceptions of properties and therefore things without properties are imperceptible. So, if Hume holds some type of the bundle theory of the perception of things, he maintains the imperceptibility of bare things, too. But before we can draw that conclusion, we have to give reasons for Hume subscribing to the antecedent in this implication.

The second part of my argument is to provide textual evidence that Hume does not ever abandon the bundle theory of the perception of things, which implies that he also holds it while writing and editing the *Enquiry*. This is seen through his thoughts on the idea of substance. However, as this involves that Hume sometimes did maintain a bundle theory, the first part of my argument consists of the support for the reading that Hume’s endorses it in the *Treatise*.

The point in that work where this is most evident is in his critique of the Aristotelian philosophy of body (hylomorphism):

“’Tis confest by the most judicious philosophers, that our ideas of bodies are nothing but collections form’d by the mind of the ideas of the several distinct sensible qualities, of which objects are compos’d, and which we find to have a constant union with each other.” (T 1.4.3.2)

The first thing to observe of this passage is that Hume refers the presented position to “the most judicious philosophers”. This point is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests that Hume thinks that there is more than one philosopher of the highest-class who holds it. A natural interpretation is that the points of allusion are Locke and Berkeley (e.g. Essay 2.12.6, 2.23.1-4, 14, and 37; PHK 1, 3, and 37-8). Secondly and more importantly, it is clear that Hume values this view high, which supports the reading that he identifies himself with the tenet. Hume’s view of the perception of things seems to be then that the perception consists of nothing but the impressions or ideas of sensible qualities. The perception of a thing is merely a bundle of perceived sensible qualities (terms “collection” and “aggregate” may also be used). This is why the position can be called bundle theory.

For understanding Hume’s attitude to the second profound argument, there is an additional aspect in this position that has some relevance. When Hume is speaking about “sensible qualities”, he is really referring to the qualitative properties perceived by the five senses. This is evident from the point established above. According to Hume, solidity and quantitative properties, that is, the supposed primary qualities are necessarily connected to the qualitative, sensible properties. If we turn this around,

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171 On the basis of what I has said about the idea of extension above, the specific organisation of the bundle is also constitutive of the perception of a thing.
we can say that qualitative properties are fundamental in the perception of things – they are primitives of the theory. Hume’s view in the Treatise seems to be then that the perception of a thing is nothing but a bundle of the perceptions of sensible qualities in which quantitative properties and solidity consists of the primitive qualitative properties. As such, it can be called ‘the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of things’, which is a specific type of the more general bundle theory.

We have concluded – and it is evident in T 1.1.7.6 and EHU 12.n.34 - that Hume is a nominalist in the sense that whatever exists (and whatever we can conceive) is particular. At least one part of the sense of particularity here is that nothing has multiple existences in time and in the case of concrete entities, not even in space. It follows from this that not only the bundles of sensible qualities but also the qualities themselves are particular. Moreover, in T 1.1.7.3-6, Hume argues that our perceptions of qualitative properties are “determinate” (Ibid. 5). By this, he means that they have “a precise degree” (Ibid. 6). This also present in EHU 12.n.34. For example, when I have a visual impression of red, I see a certain and determinate shade of red. The sensible qualities that constitute the bundle are accordingly not only particular but also determinate (Hume seems to include this to the meaning of particularity as well).

When referring back to his bundle theory of the mind in the Abstract, Hume gives us a useful illustration of how we conceive things:

“our idea of any body, a peach, for instance, is only that of a particular taste, colour, figure, size, consistence, & c.” (Abs.28)

It ought to be realised that although this passage bears evidence on Hume holding the bundle theory of the perception of things, its relation to the sensible quality type of that theory is more problematic. Hume seems to say that the perceptions of quantitative properties are also fundamentally constitutive of the bundle. In the quotation, they appear to be on the same level with the qualitative. However, if we use the passage mainly as an illustration, the following can be said of it. The sensible

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172 Hence Hume, as Berkeley, can sometimes speak about quantitative properties as sensible.

173 That the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of things is Hume’s view in the Treatise is also supported by a passage in Of the inference from the impression to the idea where Hume treats a thing and the bundle of sensible qualities as synonyms: “the same object or collection of sensible qualities” (T 1.3.6.10).

174 According to the quotation from T 1.4.3, with which we started, it is also constitutive of the bundle that the sensible qualities are constantly united with each other. As this aspect of the theory is not relevant for our purposes here, I am not going to discuss it and the problems that it is intended to explain.
quality bundle theory applied to the perception of a peach is that it consists solely of
the perceptions of the primitive properties of colour, consistency, taste, smell, and
perhaps even sound if you knock on it. Its figure and size are derived properties in
the sense that they are composed of the qualitative properties. Moreover, right at the
start of the Treatise, Hume gives a similar example when he illustrates the distinction
between simple and complex perceptions. He writes that “a particular colour, taste,
and smell are qualities all united together in this [complex perception of] an apple”
(T 1.1.1.2). 175

More support from the Treatise for Hume holding the sensible quality bundle theory
of the perception of things is to be found in the part of the Section Of the
immateriality of the soul where he criticises the immaterialist argument that inseparable
and indivisible thought cannot exist in separable and divisible matter (T 1.4.5.7). It
appears to be plain that Hume applies the sensible quality bundle theory here. The
precise place where this happens is when Hume explains why we think that tastes,
smells, and sounds are spatially disposed even if they are not susceptible to a location
or any spatial relation (Ibid. 11-14). For example, we naturally think that there is a
distance between the tastes of a fig and of an olive at the opposite ends of a table
(Ibid. 11). We also believe that taste is spread all over the olive, which is absurd
because then taste could appear to us as figured and with a size (Ibid. 13).

For our purposes, the relevant points in the explanation are the following. First,
Hume thinks that visible and tactile qualities are essential for perceiving the fig and
olive as things. Without colours, hardness and temperature, we could not perceive
the fig and olive as extended entities. What is more, there is nothing over and above
perceiving these properties (organised in a certain manner) that constitutes the
perceptions of the fig and olive qua the perceptions of extended entities. (Ibid. 11)
Perceptions of things, the perceptions of the fig and the olive as things for example,
are nothing but the bundles of the perceptions of visible and tactile properties (the
organisation of the bundle included). For us, the crucial point here is that the
explanation is therefore against the possibility of conceiving bare things. But it is also
of some importance that at least smell and taste are essential properties of the fig and

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175 This seems to be an obvious allusion to Berkeley who begins his Treatise as follows:

“Thus, for example a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been
observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name apple;
other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things”
(PHK 1; cf. 3).
the olive. They belong to the properties that classify them to these categories of entities (Ibid. 12).  

Finally, Hume holding the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of things is quite plausible from the point of view of how he sees the nature of the idea of extension. The idea of extension is a complex idea constituting ultimately of the ideas of colours or tactile properties disposed in a certain manner. For example, the ideas of two red points located next to each other form a complex idea that is an idea of extension. The idea of extension is therefore nothing but a certain complex organisation of the ideas of colours or tactile properties. Thus, any idea of a thing qua an idea of an extended entity is nothing over and above the aggregate of the ideas of colours or tactile properties disposed in a certain manner. Whether the other possible sensible qualities like taste make any difference to the idea of the thing is irrelevant. It is still merely a bundle of the ideas of sensible qualities. Its properties belonging to the category of primary qualities are constituted of the ideas of sensible qualities and it does not contain anything in addition to them (like the separate idea of thing).

So far I have considered those parts of Treatise 1 where Hume discusses the constitution of our perceptions of things. None of them challenges the interpretation that Hume maintains the bundle theory of the perception of things in the Treatise. Indeed, they only support that reading and yield evidence for the view that in the Treatise, Hume’s specific position is the sensible quality type of the bundle theory. On this basis, we could then conclude that Hume subscribes to the proposition that we cannot perceive bare things. Any perception of things requires some perception of properties.

However, there are two complications that should guard us against this conclusion at this point. The first is that this does not show that Hume still endorses the bundle theory in the later works. The second complication emerges, in fact, from the

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176 These considerations might have relevance concerning the central theses of Hume’s moral theory and criticism that vice and virtue, beauty and deformity are not qualities of the things themselves (E, ST, 230; and T 3.1.1.26). T 1.1.6.3 hints at this direction and I will come back to this topic briefly in Conclusion. It seems to be connected also to Hume’s view of the perception of necessary connection in the associative sense. In relation to things, this necessary connection might be like tastes, smells, and sounds as T 1.3.15.25 suggests. For an insightful discussion on these topics, see Winkler 1996.

177 Despite that the passages in EHU 4.2.16 and 7.1.8 that I discussed in the context of the fourth phase seem to be coherent with the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of things. Actually, a good explanation of Hume’s confidence in the claims made in these passages might be
The connection between Hume’s views of the perception of substance and his position in the perception of things can be build by means of what Hume says in the explanation of perceiving the fig and the olive (discussed just above). He writes that their ideas are “complex ideas of these substances” (Ibid. 11). In this quotation, Hume is using the term “substance” in its basic, first Aristotelian sense that can be initially described as referring to concrete particulars (pens, tables, chairs, buildings, cats) (Loux 1978, 107; Barnes 2000, 74; see also PHK 37). In this sense, things either are a subclass of substances or exhaust that category. Accordingly, Hume’s view of perceiving these substances is relevant for his position on the perception of things.

There is only one place in the first Enquiry that seems to suggest that Hume endorses the (sensible quality) bundle theory of the perception of things. In the second Part of Section 4, he illustrates his point with bread and makes the passing remark: “The bread, which I formerly eat, nourished me; that is, a body of such sensible qualities, was, at that time, endued with such secret powers” (EHU 4.2.16; emphasis added). Still the key text from the later works in relation to the present topic is the posthumous essay Of the Immortality of the Soul. This essay was written for the collection Five Dissertation before 1755, but Hume suppressed it - presumably for prudential reasons. Just before his passing, on 7 August, he nevertheless authorised its publication posthumously, which probably was not done by his printer. Therefore it can be taken as representing his final view of the issues it discusses.  

Hume begins the essay with five different objections to the metaphysical arguments for the soul’s never-ending existence. The first works on the notion of substance:

“1. Metaphysical topics are founded on the supposition that the soul is immaterial, and that it is impossible for thought to belong to a material substance.

But just metaphysics teach us that the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect, and that we have no other idea of any substance, than as an aggregate of particular qualities,

that theory. As Hume holds it and the assertions concerning causality follows from it, the theory provides Hume the firm back on which to rely. From this it does not follow, however, that the sensible quality bundle theory is the only possible theoretical foundation for Hume’s claims concerning causality. A bundle theory with the perceptions of quantitative properties as primitives seems to have the same implication as the sensible quality type of that theory.

178 See Eugene F. Miller’s first editorial note to essay Of Suicide (E, S, 577-8) and the codicil to Hume’s will (HL 2, 453).
inhering in an unknown something. Matter, therefore, and spirit, are at bottom equally unknown, and we cannot determine what qualities inhere in the one or in the other. (E, IS, 591)

It must be acknowledged that this dense passage is open to more than one interpretation.\(^{179}\) Still it is possible to say briefly something certain of Hume’s point on the general level. His objection starts with the notion of substance in general - whether that substance is material or immaterial and independently of how we should exactly interpret this notion. The notion of substance that “just metaphysics” teaches us is that the idea of substance is at least a bundle of the ideas of particular qualities. Moreover, it is such that even if we accept that the bundle inheres in some fundamental entity, we cannot determine which bundles of properties inhere in the matter and which in the spirit. In the case of the mind, the bundle Hume is speaking of is the aggregate constituting of all perceptions of a supposedly individual subject. His target consists of the proponents of the immortal soul who presuppose that thought, this bundle, cannot inhere in the matter. He remarks against them that according to just metaphysics, the material basis of the mind bundle is possible. Even if we accept the inheritance in the fundamental entity, it is not possible to decide the inheritance bias of thought.

For our purposes, the notion of substance in general is the relevant point in the passage. Admittedly, there are internal similarities between the passage and Hume’s argument against the immaterialists’ reasoning at T 1.4.5.7-16. Still it is most likely that in the passage, and also in this argument of the Treatise, Hume alludes to the Section of the Treatise on modes and substances, 1.1.6. That Section is important for understanding the previous passage and supporting Hume’s continuing endorsement of the bundle theory. Let us therefore compare it with the Immortality of the Soul passage:

“The idea of a substance as well as that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection. But the difference betwixt these ideas consists in this, that the particular qualities, which form a substance, are commonly refer’ed to an unknown something, in which they are supposed to inhere; or granting this fiction should not take place, are at least supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation.” (T 1.1.6.2)

These passages are open for at least two interpretations of Hume’s positive account of the notion of substance. In order to understand them, we need to make the distinction between the bundle and substratum theories of substance (within

\(^{179}\) I will come back to them at the end of this Chapter.
Hume’s Attitude to the Second Profound Argument

The first interpretation follows the bundle theory: the notion of substance is merely a bundle of the ideas of particular qualities. According to that reading, in the Treatise passage, Hume is saying that he does not accept the notion of inherence in “an unknown something” because it is a “fiction”. The difference between the bundle of the mode of a substance and the bundle of a substance is determined by the relations between the member-ideas of the bundle. The bundle reading of the Immortality of the Soul passage is that Hume’s purpose in adding the inherence relation and “an unknown something” is solely critical. In that part, he is not reporting his own view. The argument that he is advancing in it is that even if we accept inherence to our conception of substance, we cannot determine whether the substance of the human mind is material or spiritual.

The second reading is the substratum interpretation that the Humean notion of substance is the idea of the bundle and the supposition of an unknown substratum, which “supports” the bundle. In this reading, the argument in Of the Immortality of the Soul works on genuinely Humean premises – he is describing his own position in every sentence of the passage as it admittedly seems in the first reading. In this case, the quotations might signal a chance in Hume’s views since the Treatise passage is more critical of the substratum notion.

These two readings can be illustrated in the following way. For that purpose, let us consider a thing. In the bundle theory of substance, it is nothing over and above an aggregate of particular properties – the thing and the substance are one and the same thing. If we maintain the substratum theory, the thing is the bundle of particular properties and a substratum, in which the bundle inheres. In dualist ontology, this means that the bundles of perceptions are supported by the spiritual substratum and the collections of particular properties of things inhere in the matter.

In this part of the Chapter, let us recall that our interest lies in the question whether Hume still holds the bundle theory of the perception of things in Of the Immortality of the Soul. First, it is to be realised that in both the bundle and substratum reading of Hume’s notion of substance, the perceptions of things are bundles of the perceptions of properties disposed in a certain manner. The difference that the notion of substance makes is whether they are mere bundles. We have hence good grounds to claim that throughout his career Hume maintains the position that the perceptions of things are bundles of perceptions. The question is whether they are

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180 For this distinction, see Loux 2002 96-105 and 1978, 107-15.
181 Here it is not needed to go into the examination of the distinguishing features between these relations. Suffice it to remark that in the idea of substance, the relations are close and inseparable.
mere bundles or also involve a substratum. If Hume is a substratum theorist of the perception of things and substances, according to his theory, it seems to be possible to conceive bare concrete particulars in his theory. What else the material substratum is from our perspective but a bare concrete particular as it is “an unknown something” underlying the properties of things.

Our present argument hangs, therefore, on the solution of the problem whether Hume is a bundle or substratum theorist of substance. Although the Immortality of the Soul passage seems to say otherwise, my view is that Hume does not accept the substratum theory of substances and thus of the perception of things. His position is the bundle theory of substance. This implies, in turn, that he never abandons his bundle theory of the perception of things. However, this is not the right place to go into the complex argument that establishes the interpretation that Hume maintains the bundle theory of substance, instead of the substratum position. I am going to develop that argument later when I discuss Hume attitude to the 1777 supplement to the second profound argument. At this point, my interpretation should be taken as assumed.\(^{182}\)

Hitherto I have considered things in the category of bare concrete particulars. This is not yet exhaustive and it does not rule it out that unextended “mathematical points” might be bare concrete particulars and perceptible according to Hume. However, let us recall that even these points must have a spatial location. Otherwise they could not be concrete entities. In Hume’s theory of the perception of extension, this involves that the points are able to mark a location in space and to constitute extension. But that doctrine also requires that they cannot do this unless they appear to us coloured or tangible. In that case, they are not bare anymore; the points have colour or a tactile quality. Thus, for Hume, bare “mathematical points” are imperceptible.\(^{183}\)

\(^{182}\) Here it can be remarked that the interpretation of Hume denying the conceivability of bare things and of him holding the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of things are plausible from the perspective of his strict sensibilism. According to it, impressions and ideas are what we can conceive. When we perceive things by our senses, it can happen only through the five senses. They produce impressions of qualitative properties. So our impressions of things consist merely of the impressions of these properties. As ideas are only copies of impressions, our ideas of them are also composed of mere ideas of qualitative properties. Impressions and ideas exhaust what we can conceive. Therefore bare things are not perceptible for us.

\(^{183}\) When we generalise this argument, we can get more support for the interpretation that we cannot have any perception of bare things according to Hume. Any thing must have a spatial position; a thing is, by the definition used here, an extended entity. But Hume’s theory of the
Let us conclude this section by summarising the quite complicated argument advanced in it. Bare concrete particulars are either things or unextended “mathematical points”. The first Book of the Treatise supports strongly the interpretation that the perceptions of things are nothing over and above the bundles of the perceptions of sensible qualities organised in a certain manner. In the case of the concrete points, this bundle consists only of one simple perception. It follows from this that bare concrete particulars are imperceptible for us. Therefore he appears to subscribe to proposition (18).

This argument is complicated, however, by two circumstances. First, it concerns the Treatise only. Second, what Hume says about substance challenges the interpretation that the perceptions of things are mere bundles. These two problems are intertwined as our best evidence to extend the bundle theory of the perception of things to Hume’s whole intellectual career, including the first Enquiry, is in the passage causing the second problem. In the beginning of the posthumous Of the Immortality of the Soul, he appears to say that the perceptions of substances, to whose category things belong, involve a bare concrete particular in addition to the bundle: a substratum. Bare concrete particulars seem to be perceptible according to Hume in the end.

However, this raising tension can be explained away by assuming that Hume cannot accept the substratum conception of the perception of substances. At this point, this must be taken for granted; it will be established below. Then it follows that the perceptions of substances are nothing but the bundles of the perceptions of properties. This, in turn, implies that the perceptions of things and concrete points are as well because they are substances in this sense of concrete particulars. It can be concluded, therefore, that Hume maintains the (sensible quality) bundle theory of the perception of concrete particulars throughout his intellectual career. In the first Enquiry as well, although he does not say so, he holds that the perceptions of concrete particulars – points or things – are nothing over and above the bundles of the perceptions of properties. It is also likely that he restricts the perceptions of properties to those of sensible qualities, which is entailed by his continuing belief in the theory of the perception of extension in the Treatise. It follows from this that we cannot perceive concrete particulars that do not have any properties. Hume’s implicit position in the first Enquiry is thus to deny that we can perceive bare concrete particulars. He endorses proposition (18).

perception of extension involves that every entity with place in space must appear to us coloured or tangible. Entities without any properties do not. Thus, we cannot perceive bare things.
Above I have concluded that Hume subscribes to proposition (17) as well: we cannot have any perception of Real entities as having properties. Propositions (17) and (18) imply proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of the supposed Real entities. At this point, we need to recall that Real entities are concrete entities because they have an external location in relation to the perceiving mind. Universals are also ruled out as Hume is a nominalist. Therefore they must be concrete particulars.

Furthermore, let us supposes that Hume also assents to the two-sided proposition (20): the SNQP is inductively rational and the other premises for (19) perception-analytically rational. Then he must also adhere to the rationality of the imperceptibility of the supposed Real entities, proposition (21). So far we have established that Hume endorses the second profound argument up to this point excluding the argument for the SNQP. It follows from this that he also thinks that the perception analysis in that part of the argument is rational. If we employ our understanding methodically, we come to conclude that ultimately we have only perceptions of sensible qualities. Actually, this is the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of concrete particulars. It may be added to this that the analysis of perceptions is one function of reason or the understanding according to Hume. The latter half of proposition (20) is thus genuinely Humean without doubt. On these grounds, it is fairly obvious that Hume’s attitude to the first half of the rationality of SNQP is of the last importance. Our next task is accordingly to discuss that question, which leads us to somewhat extensive examination of the several passages by Hume and of the validity of one the arguments he presents.

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184 Garrett and Wright admit this (Garrett 1997, 216-8; Wright 1983, 108-9).
Rationality of the Sensible Qualities Principle

The first potential evidence for Hume holding the rationality of the SNQP is the point that as I have argued, the first Enquiry (and the Treatise) treats it rather as a rational than as an unreflective principle. It must be accepted, however, that this is only potential evidence. It still leaves room for the possibility that Hume thinks that the SNQP is not a proper rational principle. This possibility would be that the argument on which it is based is only seemingly valid, but ultimately, it is not. Hence we need more evidence for the view that Hume takes SNQP to be a principle that we ought to adopt when being rational. As I have observed above, Hume claims that it is a principle “universally allowed by modern enquirers” (EHU 12.1.15). This quotation bears evidence on Hume’s endorsement of the principle itself if he includes himself into these “modern enquirers”. He asserts that the SNQP is universally believed by them and in the case he belongs to these “modern enquirers”, the quotation is a statement of his position as well.

In Hume’s times, “modern” used to be understood as the opposite to “ancient” (OED, modern, 2.a; E, ST, 245) and for sure, Hume does not think he is one of the ancients. Therefore it seems to be a reasonable assumption that he identifies himself with these “modern enquirers” and assents to the SNQP. It is possible, however, that things are not so simple. “Modern enquirers” may refer to a subgroup of the modern philosophers and we cannot be sure that Hume thinks he is part of that group. The state of affairs might be analogous to the distinction between the Cartesian and Newtonian physics. Both are ‘modern’ in some sense but still not identical. Accordingly, this quote cannot settle the problem that we are addressing now.

The next natural move is to look at the entire first Enquiry whether it can provide us evidence of Hume’s attitude to the rationality of the SNQP or his relationship to the “modern enquirers”. Unfortunately, it does not bear any explicit evidence on these questions apart from a withdrawn footnote. That note concerns morality and yield evidence for the SNQP. However, in addition to being omitted from the final editions, it must be discussed together with similar passages from Hume’s other

185 “But a late Philosopher [Hutcheson] has taught us, by the most convincing Arguments, that Morality is nothing in the abstract Nature of Things, but is entirely relative to the Sentiment or mental Taste of each particular Being; in the same Manner as the Distinction of sweet and bitter, hot and cold, arise from the particular Feeling of each Sense and Organ.” (EHU 1.14.n.1; 1748-50 editions)
texts. Consequently, we need to start with the context of the first Enquiry in order to decide the preferred interpretation of its relation to the problem under discussion.

The closest textual context for the first Enquiry consists naturally of Hume’s other texts. Let us therefore consider what the Treatise, his essays and other potential texts have to say about Hume’s position in relation to the SNQP and its rationality.

My thesis is that in Hume’s texts, the rationality of the SNQP (well grounded on an argument) and the principle itself appear only in positive light. In the first place, when Hume comments Reid’s manuscript of An Inquiry into the Human Mind via Blair, he criticises Reid of claiming that the origin of SNQP is natural, that it is a vulgar principle. He also says that it took pains for Malebranche and Locke to establish the principle. The letter seems to suggest then that Hume takes it as a proven, rational tenet. (Hume 1986, 416)

It must be granted, however, that the letter in itself cannot constitute decisive evidence for Hume holding the rationality of the SNQP. It is nevertheless possible to find additional and more substantial support from Hume’s interesting essay Of the Standard of Taste. It was published after the first Enquiry in 1757 (Four Dissertations) and as such it can bear evidence on Hume’s mature views and hence his positions in the Enquiry. While establishing one of the key claims of the essay that “there are certain general principles of approbation or blame [concerning the beautiful]” in human nature, Hume writes as follows:

“If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.” (E, ST, 234)

This passage is typical for Hume as it compares the aesthetic and moral beauty with sensible qualities, colours at this point. Here he is arguing that we can determine “the perfect beauty” in the similar way as we can decide the “true and real colour” of things. Regarding the beauty, the situation becomes more complex later in the essay. Still it is not challenged that some works of art, like those of Virgil (70-19), are uniformly felt beautiful (Ibid. 242-3). So Hume is here reporting his own view of the beauty, which is only qualified later. As he tries to convince his reader with

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186 I thereby agree with Wright (Wright 1983, 109-12; and 1995/86, 232).

187 In his letter to Blair, Hume says that the SNQP is “a paradox”. It ought to be realised, however, that he says it is a paradox “in the Eyes of the People”, that is, in the vulgar view. (Hume 1986, 416) This does not imply that it is a paradox in the rational view.
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comparing it with colours, it is most likely that he is reporting his own position in the latter case as well - this is obviously the effect he wants to generate here. That position includes the proposition that colour is “merely a phantasm of the senses”, which is a special case of the Sensible Qualities Principle. This passage constitutes therefore evidence for the interpretation that Hume endorses not only the rationality of the SNQP but the principle itself as well.

It should be also into account that the SNQP with regard to (physical) taste appears in the positive light at the start of the essay. When Hume discusses “a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in” attempting “to seek a Standard of Taste”, he writes that to “seek in the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an enquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter.” (E, ST, 229-30) Here it is not possible to establish that this “species of philosophy”, interpreted in a certain way at least, is the starting point of Hume’s argument in the essay (which is not based on false premises) and represents his own view. But if we presume that, and that is what we ought to do in my view, this quote also supports the interpretation that the SNQP (concerning taste) is genuinely a Humean principle. This account is only confirmed by what Hume writes later in the essay:

“Though it be certain that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings.” (E, ST, 235)

We are able to trace this comparison of the beauty with sensible qualities back to the Treatise by means of Hume’s another essay, The Sceptic. It was published about one year later than the third Book of the juvenile work, in January 1742 (Miller 1987, xii-iii). The following footnote with more theoretical nature than the essay itself was attached by Hume to the passage where he claims that the beauty of Virgil’s Aeneid (from ca. 30 BC.; unfinished at his death) “lies not in the poem, but in the sentiment or taste of the reader”. The footnote is so relevant for our purposes that it is justified to quote it in its entirety:

“We are not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my reader of that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, “That tastes and colours, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies, but merely in the senses.” The case is the same with beauty and deformity, virtue and vice. This doctrine, however, takes off no more from the reality of the latter qualities, than from that of the former; nor need it give any umbrage either to critics or moralists. Though colours were allowed to lie only in the eye, would dyers or painters ever be less regarded or esteemed? There is sufficient uniformity in the senses and feelings of mankind, to make all these qualities the objects of art and reasoning, and to have the greatest influence on life and manners. And as it is certain, that the discovery above-mentioned in natural philosophy, makes no alteration on action and conduct; why should a like discovery in moral philosophy make any alteration?” (E, S, 166, n.3; emphases added)
This passage is closely similar to those in *Of the Standard of Taste*, note for instance that Virgil is used again to illustrate the point. The difference between them lies in the exposition because this time Hume is more explicit of his own views. First he claims that the SNQP is “supposed to be fully proved in modern times”. This reminds us of his letter to Blair where Hume says that Malebranche and Locke took pains to establish it. Although “supposed” in itself may cause us to doubt whether Hume really thinks that the SNQP is “fully proved”, the letter to Blair and this passage together support the reading that he takes the SNQP to be decisively proven. This interpretation gets further evidence from how the footnote continues. Hume treats the view of the non-Reality of the beauty and deformity, and the SNQP as the same doctrine. As the former is, without doubt, Hume’s own position, the latter must be as well (because of the identity). Moreover, at the end of the quotation Hume writes that the SNQP is a “discovery […] in natural philosophy” in the same way as the non-Reality of the beauty and deformity is in the moral.

This claim of the discovery surfaces also at a closely resembling passage in the third Book of the *Treatise* before *The Sceptic*. In that passage as well, Hume compares the (moral) beauty and deformity with the Sensible Qualities Principle:

> “Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar’d to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind: And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a considerable advancement of the speculative sciences; tho’, like that too, it has little or no influence on practice.” (T 3.1.1.26; emphases added)

This passage is considerable for us because it makes an additional claim to those previously quoted. In the passage, Hume asserts that the SNQP is a discovery that must be taken as an important improvement in the theoretical sciences, especially in physics. So it bears even stronger evidence that not only on SNQP’s rationality but also on the principle itself is endorsed by Hume.

Now we are in the position to discuss the footnote that was omitted from the later editions of the first *Enquiry*. Let us first cite the part of it that is relevant for our purposes here:

> “But a late Philosopher [Hutcheson] has taught us, by the most convincing Arguments, that Morality is nothing in the abstract Nature of Things, but is entirely relative to the Sentiment or mental Taste of each particular Being; in the same Manner as the Distinction of sweet and bitter, hot and cold, arise from the particular Feeling of each Sense and Organ.” (EHU 1.14.n.1; 1748-50 editions)

In this passage, Hume makes the same comparison between morality and sensible qualities as he did in the previously quoted passages between the moral or aesthetic beauty and sensible qualities. When we take into consideration that he makes it in the texts that he kept on publishing, it is justified to claim that Hume did not omit the
footnote because of this part. The natural explanation is that he cut it off after 1750 for the reason of having been published the second *Enquiry* in 1751. It follows from this that this passage can yield evidence for Hume’s view of the Sensible Qualities Principle. Indeed, it provides firm support for my claim that Hume endorses the rationality of the SNQP. At the end of the passage, Hume writes without reservations that the distinctions between sweet and bitter, hot and cold “arise” due to the perceiver. They are therefore “relative to the Sentiment or mental Taste of each particular Being”. In my terminology, they are mental in their ontological status. Thus, tastes and felt temperatures are not Real and Hume is stating a restricted form of the Sensible Qualities Principle here. The nice thing about the passage is that Hume explicitly puts it forward as his own view; he is not merely describing Hutcheson’s position.

In the *Treatise*, the most important evidence can be found from the Section Of the modern philosophy and the reference back to it in Conclusion of Book 1. Hume begins T 1.4.4 by bringing forward the “fundamental principle of that philosophy”, that is, the Sensible Qualities Principle and comments its ground as follows:

> “Upon examination, I find only one of the reasons commonly produc’d for this opinion to be satisfactory, viz. that deriv’d from the variations of those impressions, even while the external object, to all appearance, continues the same.” (T 1.4.4.3)

In the next paragraph, he continues with claiming that

> “The conclusion drawn from them [sense variations], is likewise as satisfactory as can possibly be imagin’d.” (T 1.4.4.4)

This conclusion is partly based on the principle that

> “from like effects we presume like causes.” (Ibid.)

I will discuss the argument for the SNQP in a while. At this point, the relevant observation of these passages is that they firmly support the interpretation that Hume takes the SNQP as an inductive-causally rational principle. Firstly, he claims that there are “satisfactory” reasons for it. In other words, Hume thinks that there is a good argument that justifies the SNQP. Secondly, the conclusion, that is, the SNQP is not only satisfactory but satisfactory of the highest, imaginable and possible degree. In the third place, the valid argument for the Sensible Qualities Principle works on the premise that is Hume’s fourth “rule” of inductive inference in the *Treatise* (T 1.3.15.6). The argument for the SNQP seems to be then a genuinely valid, inductive reasoning from Hume’s point of view. This appearance is further corroborated by what I have quoted from the last paragraph of T 1.4.4 and Hume’s reference back to it in the last Section of *Treatise* 1:

> “When we reason from cause and effect, we conclude, that neither colour, sound, taste, nor smell have a continu’d and independent existence.” (T 1.4.4.15)

> “nor is it possible for us to reason justly and regularly from causes and effects, and at the same time believe the continu’d existence of matter.” (T 1.4.7.4)
In addition to all these passages, I do not know any other in Hume’s corpus that bears explicit evidence on his view of the SNQP or its rationality. When we consider these passages together, they support more the reading that Hume takes the SNQP as rational than that he does not. We also ought to take into consideration that in EHU 12.1.15 the principle appears in positive light. It is true that Millican has suggested that the occurrence at 12.1.16 might be critical since Hume may be advancing there a modus tollens type of argument rather than modus ponens (Millican 2002b, 465). In this place, as we remember, Hume says that if the SNQP is rational, the belief in Real entities is contrary to reason. Millican’s suggestion is that Hume’s point might be to challenge the antecedent by the absurdity of the consequent. If we considered that passage as such, Millican’s proposal might have claims of being a justified reading of it. Nonetheless, the overall evidence is on the side of the reading that Hume really endorses the antecedent, that is, the rationality of the Sensible Qualities Principle (proposition 20) and therefore he himself belongs to those “modern enquirers” who “universally” assent to it. There are good reasons to think that in Of the Standard of Taste it appears as a Humean tenet. In The Sceptic, Hume is explicit that the SNQP is identical with his doctrine that the beauty is not a Real property of Real entities, which is repeated in the Hutcheson footnote to EHU 1 in the early editions. The Sceptic and the third Book of the Treatise treat it also as a significant improvement in natural philosophy. The Sceptic and Hume’s letter to Blair take it as a proven principle. Most importantly, in T 1.4.4 and 1.4.7, Hume explicitly says that the SNQP is an inductively well-grounded principle.

Nevertheless, there are four possible objections to this interpretation. The first could be made from the point of view of an anti-Realist reading of Hume. If Hume the philosopher does not subscribe to the existence of Real entities, how can he endorse the Sensible Qualities Principle that makes a statement about Real entities? This is close to Bricke’s and Wright’s claim that Hume’s argument for the dependency of perceptions, that is, the table argument presupposes Metaphysical Realism (Bricke 1980, 20; and Wright 1983, 86). To this objection, it is possible to reply that this threatening incoherence can be explained away. It is consistent to formulate the SNQP in the way that it makes only hypothetical claims of Real entities. This formulation would be that if there are Real entities, they do not have qualitative properties and our perceptions of sensible qualities do not resemble their Real properties. There is no need for a proponent of this principle to assert that there are Real entities. Therefore there is no obvious inconsistency for an anti-Realist to maintain the principle in this hypothetic form. The same reply of hypothesis applies.

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188 In his book, which came out just before printing this work, Baxter makes the same claim (Baxter 2007, 14).
to Bricke’s and Wright’s contention that the table argument presupposes the existence of Real entities.

The second objection is brought forward by Garrett (Garrett 1997, 218). He quotes Hume from T 1.4.4 where he claims that “many objections might be made to this system.” (T 1.4.4.6) Garrett seems to think that Hume is referring here to the Sensible Qualities Principle too as one part of the modern “system” of natural philosophy. Garrett can be answered by reflecting on the nature of Hume’s arguments against the modern notion of body. It is evident, as I have shown, that they do not challenge the SNQP. In contrast, they are based on that principle and argue against the view that we can conceive primary qualities in total separation of the sensible. Accordingly, this objection cannot undermine the interpretation that Hume endorses the rationality of the SNQP.

Garrett’s more challenging objection is his claim that Hume “pointedly refrains from endorsing” the Sensible Qualities Principle (Garrett 1997, 220). His basis for this assertion is that

“Hume himself [...] does not ever assert the truth of the modern philosophers’ conclusion about the unreality of secondary qualities. Instead, he restricts himself reporting it as their conclusion” (Ibid. 218).

It is true that as far as I know, Hume never explicitly writes in the first person, “I, David Hume, maintain the SNQP.” Still I think we should not draw Garrett’s conclusion from this fact. As I have shown, there is enough textual evidence for Hume assenting to the SNQP in his writings from different periods. Garrett’s weak point is also that he does not take the other works than the first Book of the Treatise into account. He does not advance an argument for denying the evidential value of the passages in Treatise 3, The Sceptic, the 1748-50 editions of the first Enquiry, and Of the Standard of Taste. The most remarkable omission in his discussion is however that he seems to miss the passage in T 1.4.4 where Hume explicitly claims that the SNQP is satisfactory of the highest degree as the conclusion of the argument in T 1.4.4.3-4. When we pull all available textual evidence together without omitting anything and consider it in some detail, I think the conclusion is that Hume’s texts support more the interpretation that Hume continuously endorses SNQP’s rationality than Garrett’s view that he refrains from believing it. Therefore we ought to prefer the former reading to the latter and have good reasons to think that the rationality of SNQP is Hume’s position in the first Enquiry as well.

Yet there is the fourth objection that must be replied before making the final assessment. It is rather casting doubt on Hume’s endorsement of the SNQP than arguing that he refuses to believe it. It is also advanced by Garrett and consists of the assessment of the argument for the principle at T 1.4.4.3-4 (Garrett 1997, 218-20).
Hume’s argument is rather complex and vague to some extent. It is not, however, needed to go into the detailed analysis of it anything like my reconstruction of the two profound arguments. Sketching it by means of an example that also points out the problems of the argument suffices for our purpose of replying to the fourth objection.

In what follows, I shall then first outline the argument in both Hume’s and my own words. After that, it is possible to assess its validity. In that part, I first locate what I consider to be the real problem in the argument observed by Loeb. From that discussion, I proceed to present Garrett’s doubts about the validity of the argument. It leads us to weigh up his objection and finally to conclude that the objection can be refuted.\(^{189}\)

The argument outlined using Hume’s own words is as follows:

1. “the variations of those impressions, even while the external object, to all appearance, continues the same.” (T 1.4.4.3)
   “These variations depend upon several circumstances.” (T 1.4.4.3)
   “Upon the different situations of our health: A man in a malady feels a disagreeable taste in meats, which before pleas’d him the most.” (T 1.4.4.3)
   “Upon the different complexions and constitutions of men: That seems bitter to one, which is sweet to another.” (T 1.4.4.3)
   “Upon the difference of their external situation and position: Colours reflected from the clouds change according to the distance of the clouds, and according to the angle they make with the eye and luminous body. Fire also communicates the sensation of pleasure at one distance, and that of pain at another.” (T 1.4.4.3)

2. “the same object cannot, at the same time, be endow’d with different qualities of the same sense” (T 1.4.4.4).

3. “the same quality cannot resemble impressions entirely different” (T 1.4.4.4).

4. “Instances of this kind are very numerous and frequent.” (T 1.4.4.3)

5. “many of our impressions have no external model or archetype.” (T 1.4.4.4)
   “when different impressions of the same sense arise from any object, every one of these impressions has not a resembling quality existent in the object.” (T 1.4.4.4)
   “Many of the impressions of colour, sound, &c. are confess to be nothing but internal existences, and to arise from causes, which no ways resemble them.” (T 1.4.4.4)

6. “These impressions are in appearance nothing different from the other impressions of colour, sound, &c.” (T 1.4.4.4)

7. “from like effects we presume like causes.” (T 1.4.4.4)

8. “they are, all of them, deriv’d from a like origin.” (T 1.4.4.4)

\(^{189}\) Bricke and Wright have also very brief sketches of the argument (Bricke 1980, 18-9; and Wright 1983, 109). But because of their brevity, I mainly concentrate on Garrett and Loeb. Bricke and Wright agree with me that Hume endorses the argument.
(9) “colours, sounds, tastes, smells, heat and cold [...] are] nothing but impressions in the mind, deriv’d from the operation of external objects, and without any resemblance to the qualities of the objects.” (T 1.4.3.3)

The argument has a two-part structure. The first part consists of propositions (1) to (5) and the second of (6) to (9). In the first part, the intention is to argue that there are many impressions of sensible qualities that do not resemble their causes in their supposed Real objects. The second builds on this conclusion with an inductive-causal argument to the result that none of our impressions of sensible qualities resembles their supposed Real objects (SNQP).

We can see the relevant points of the argument and Loeb’s and Garrett’s criticism by using an example that is borrowed from Locke (Essay 2.8.21). It is closely similar to Hume’s own illustration of fire producing the feeling of pain at near distance and the sensation of pleasure when perceived from farther off. Locke’s example is just more telling in my view. So, let us imagine that one sinks one’s hands into a bowl of water with the presumption that one of the hands is cold and the other is warm before sinking. For the cold hand, the water feels warm, whereas in the warm hand the tactile impression is cold. In more general terms, here we have thus a case of two tactile sense-impressions concerning one and the same object, or more precisely, concerning a causal factor in it (the power of the water to produce feelings of temperature in the perceiver).

The first part of the argument (1-5) is to argue that only one of the perceptions of warm and cold can resemble the causal factor in the water. This happens through inferring first that the water cannot be both warm and cold at the same time (proposition 2). The hidden premise for this conclusion is, as Wright observes, using Aristotelian terms, that warm and cold are contrary properties: x cannot be both warm and cold at the same time (although it does not need to be one of them) (Wright 1983, 109). It follows from this, as proposition (3) says, that the causal factor in the water cannot resemble both perceptions. For this further conclusion, it is needed to presuppose that the resemblance in question is specific, that is, it concerns a particular qualitative temperature and not that kind of temperature in general. If the cause in the water can be only either warm or cold, it is not possible that it is specifically similar to both as a particular temperature.

In the conclusion of the first part of the argument, Hume does not actually do anything else but turns this other way around. As the causal factor in the water does

190 Quantitative temperature is of course measured in terms of one of the temperature scales (Kelvin, Celsius, Fahrenheit).
not specifically resemble both warm and cold, it is also so in the other direction. At least one of these perceptions is not thus specifically similar to the causal factor. In order to keep this simple, let us suppose that it is the feeling of warm although Hume expresses it more generally in proposition (5). For that general statement, he needs proposition (4): there are many instances of this type. We can, however, focus on this particular case: the feeling of warm does not specifically resemble the causal factor in the water.

Though it is not explicit in the text, the second part of Hume’s argument consists of two phases. In the first causal phase, his intent is to extend the result of the first part to concern the other actual perceptions. In our example, this means that the perception of cold is not similar to the causal factor in the water either. For this conclusion, Hume uses the second part of his fourth rule of causal reasoning (proposition 7): from similar effects, we infer similar causes (T 1.3.15.6). How is this rule supposed to do the needed work? Hume’s argument seems to go like this. At this point, we know that the feeling of warm does not specifically resemble its cause in the water. Since warm and cold are similar on a more general level as qualitative temperatures, we are able to use the fourth rule. From these premises, it seems to follow that their causes are similar on a more general level, too. Thus, they, or actually the causal factor in the water is not of the kind of qualitative temperature. Nor can thus the feeling of cold resemble it, neither as a specific feeling of temperature nor as belonging to the category of qualitative temperatures.

The inductive use of the fourth rule is to generalise this conclusion to concern any perception of sensible qualities. First we need to remember that there are many cases of sense-variation in perceiving them, of which this is only one illustration. In the second place, because all perceptions of sensible qualities are of the same type as perceptions of qualitative properties, the inductive use of Hume’s fourth rule sanctions extending the result to every possible perception of sensible qualities. They have similar causes in respect of not resembling the perceptions of sensible qualities.

For our purposes, however, it is the causal phase of the second part that is relevant. It is in that section of the argument where the problems seem to lie. In the first place, Loeb objects that from the dissimilarity of the perception of warm to the causal factor in the water, it does not follow that the feeling of cold does not resemble it either. Hume’s mistake is to dismiss specific differences for the sake of more general similarities. (Loeb 2002, 221) Loeb’s conclusion is thus that the argument for the SNQP “is far from just and regular”; Hume is hasty in his endorsement of it (Ibid. 222). In order to understand Loeb’s criticism, let us consider
the pretended inference again and focus on the properties of the water and perceptions instead of speaking about resemblance.

The result of the first part of the argument is that the causal factor in the water cannot be both warm and cold. We have supposed that warm cannot be a property of the water and therefore factually it is not. The problem lies in inferring from this lack of a specific property that it cannot have any property of that type. From the fact that $x$ does not have a particular property of the type $y$, it does not follow that it cannot have any property of type $y$. The water not being warm does not sanction us to conclude that it cannot have some other qualitative temperature and thus cannot be cold either. (Even in the case that we perceive it to have these different temperatures.) At least without some further premises, it is entirely possible that in the sense-variation cases regarding sensible qualities, one of our perceptions resembles its cause in a Real entity. Besides, employing Hume's fourth rule on a more specific level does not seem to help either. The cause of the feeling of warm in the water is not itself warm. According to the fourth rule, the cause of the perception of cold must be similar to it. Thus, it must be of the type “not-warm” (in the more general argument, the conclusion is “not qualitative temperature”). But all other qualitative temperatures belong to that category – cold included.

Hence Loeb thinks that Hume's argument for the SNQP is fundamentally flawed. He writes that it is as if Hume has forgotten his sixth rule of causal reasoning, according to which the difference in the effects must be due to the difference between their causes (T 1.3.15.8). (Loeb 2002, 221) However, it is not certain that it might have made Hume to see the flaw of his argument. All we can infer with the sixth rule in the water case is that there is a difference in the total cause of the different sense-impressions. The causal factor in the water is an invariant circumstance in the total causes. In itself, it does not help us to see the problem of the argument. A more fundamental reply to Loeb’s criticism can be nevertheless detected by reflecting on another point he makes. Loeb wonders why Hume indicates that the argument is common among modern philosophers (EHU 12.1.15, and T 1.4.4.3). Neither Locke nor Berkeley advances it. (Loeb 2002, 218-20)

It is true that Hume’s argument appears to be causal when it is considered on its own, whereas Berkeley’s argument for the SNQP is grounded on the notion of arbitrariness. Faced with the sense-variation regarding perceiving sensible qualities, it would be arbitrary, Berkeley claims, to prefer one to another. In order to avoid this ungrounded preference, we have to conclude that the matter does not have any
sensible qualities whatsoever. (DHP 73; Works II, 186)\(^{191}\) Although this is how Loeb reads Berkeley, he does not see any way to read Hume’s argument from the perspective of Berkeley’s argument (Loeb 2002, 220). Let us recall that its second part works on the parity of sensible qualities as qualitative properties. Could Hume’s point then be that their causes in Real entities are also, by the fourth rule, on par as dissimilar to their effects? Is it possible to read the argument in the way that preferring some sensible quality as similar to its cause would be arbitrary? Presuming that experience of the variation and the rules of causal reasoning are the only grounds that we have. Perhaps this is a possible reading of the argument and it calls for further research that cannot be done here. Nevertheless, the argument does not explicitly speak about arbitrariness or anything concomitant to it. Therefore it seems to me that we ought to prefer Loeb’s interpretation of the argument. On that reading, his objection to it also hits the target. Hume’s argument for the SNQP is problematic.

Garrett’s doubts on the validity of the argument suggest that there may be another gap in the argument as well (Garrett 1997, 219). Even if we succeeded in showing that the causal factor in the water is not itself any qualitative temperature, it would not ruled out that the water taken in its entirety can have some qualitative temperature. The argument concerns rather the causal factor of the water to produce certain sense-impressions in us than the water as a whole.

It seems to me clear that the possibility of this gap – or that of the first - does not surface in Hume’s formulation of the argument. This may suggest at least three things. The first possibility is that there is a hidden premise that rules it out and for Hume, there is no gap in the argument at this point. For example, according to the Corpuscularian hypothesis, the Real water consists only of the corpuscles and it is their movement that is the partial cause of our feelings of warm and cold. There is not thus anything more in the water that could resemble these perceptions. The second explanation is that Hume sees the gap and considers the conclusion of the argument, the SNQP, to be possibly false. The argument is merely a good probable argument. The third possibility is that Hume does not realise that there is a gap and accordingly his argument might be defective but he just does not realise it. This is what it seems to be the case in relation to the gap observed by Loeb.

Garrett’s objection is based on his claim that the second possibility is the correct interpretation. It follows from it that Hume can doubt the SNQP although he

\(^{191}\) Russell uses the same argument for the conclusion that we immediately sense “sense-data”, which “depend upon the relations between us and the object.” (Russell 1912, 16 and 8-11)
Hume’s attitude to the Second Profound Argument

considers the argument for it to be “satisfactory”, “regular”, and “just” (T 1.4.4.3, 15, 1.4.7.4); it is a mere probable argument with possibly false conclusion. Garret thus thinks that the dubious nature of Hume’s argument in his opinion raises doubts about his commitment to its conclusion. (Garrett 1997, 218-9) This is, in my view, the first of the two problems in Garrett’s objection that I take to be sufficient for refuting it. In the first place, even if Garrett is right in his doubts about the argument, it in itself does not constitute evidence for Hume taking it as such or as merely probable argument, without further support from the text. As far as I can see, there is no such textual evidence, Hume appears to be either blind to the possibility of the gap or while advancing the argument he presupposes something that rules it out.192

The second problem in Garrett’s view is connected to the first. There is textual evidence for Hume taking the SNQP and the argument for it more than merely probable. As I said, Garrett acknowledges that Hume takes the argument to be a valid (but only probable) argument. Normally he is a careful reader of Hume, but here it is unfortunate that he seems to miss one important thing. As I have observed, in T 1.4.4.4 Hume clearly claims that the SNQP is satisfactory of the highest degree:

“The conclusion drawn from them, is likewise as satisfactory as can possibly be imagin’d.”

This is also coherent with The Sceptic, and Hume’s letter to Blair which treat the SNQP as a proven tenet. The textual evidence, therefore, supports more the interpretation that Hume’s takes the SNQP as a conclusion of what he calls a “proof” than as based on a “probability”, which is Garrett view of it and the principle. According to this distinction of Hume, proofs are “such arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt and opposition.” (EHU 6.n.10) From the perspective of the textual evidence, then, Garrett’s objection appears as speculation that cannot stand the weight of Hume’s texts. They suggest more the reading that in Hume’s view, the SNQP is more than a probable tenet, that is, an inductively and causally rational principle based on a “proof”.

It also follows from the second problem of Garrett’s objection that the second possible interpretation of the potential gap located by him is not the case. Whether the first or the third is the correct interpretation is an interesting question with philosophical implications. It is not, however, relevant for our purposes. Independent of this question, it is Hume’s view that the SNQP is based on a firm

192 Although Loeb takes Hume’s argument to be defective, from it he does not draw, rightly in my opinion, the conclusion that Hume rejects its conclusion. On the contrary, Loeb thinks that Hume endorses it (Loeb 2002, 222).
inductive-causal proof. This is the reply to the last fourth objection to Hume’s endorsement of the rationality of the Sensible Qualities Principle.

Earlier I have also discussed Garrett’s two other objections to and a further possible problem in Hume’s endorsement of SNQP’s rationality. In all their cases, I have provided good reasons not to accept the objection. Moreover, I have shown that Hume’s texts bear almost unambiguous evidence in favour of Hume maintaining the rationality of the SNQP (well grounded on an argument). Thus, in the end, we have all the reasons to conclude that he endorses at least the rationality of the SNQP. In addition, it is most likely that that rationality is of the inductive-causal, Humean type.

In the previous part of the Chapter, we have concluded that Hume assents to proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. This proposition follows from the Sensible Qualities Principle and the analysis of our perceptions of the putative primary qualities mainly. Previously, it has been concluded that this analysis is rational for Hume. Thus, as the rationality of the SNQP is Hume’s position, we are justified in maintaining that he subscribes to proposition (21), too. In his view, proposition (19) is rational. The consistent use of Humean reason provides thus firm grounds to conclude that none of our perceptions resembles Real entities.

Content of Rational Beliefs

So far we have not yet discussed the last two questions of the four proposed before, that is, Hume’s view of the rest of the pre-1777 second profound argument. Our next task is accordingly to consider these questions by starting with the third of what provides content for beliefs and rational beliefs according to Hume. Since the answer to it hangs on Hume’s views of beliefs and especially on rational beliefs, we must take a brief excursion to Hume’s famous theory of belief.

There has been extensive discussion on this theory in Hume scholarship and his general reception in philosophy.\textsuperscript{193} This debate, however, has revolved around three issues: (1) the nature of the attitude of belief in assenting to something, (2) Hume’s varying statements of his position between the Treatise, Appendix, and the first Enquiry, and (3) how to distinguish beliefs from other mental occasions.

psychologically and epistemologically. As far as I can see, in this specific discussion, nobody has contested the view that for Hume it is perceptions that provide content for beliefs – despite of the differences in the views for the three above-mentioned problems. The uncontroversial and not open question regarding Hume’s theory of belief appears to be their content: it consists of nothing but perceptions.\footnote{Even New Humean Wright seems to admit this. His interpretation is that we can believe in of which we cannot have any clear and distinct idea – in fictions or confused ideas, for instance. Yet Wright acknowledges that ideas are essential parts of beliefs. His point is rather to emphasise that not every belief should be based on legitimate, that is, clear and distinct ideas than to deny that perceptions provide content, whether clear or confused, to beliefs. Wright contention is thus that Hume is not restricted by clear and distinct ideas in his beliefs. (Wright 1995/1986, 226, and n.20 (244); 2000, 89-90; and 1983, 106-7)}

There is also ample textual evidence for this in the first Enquiry, Appendix, Abstract, and the Treatise. It is especially present in what is Hume’s emphasis in his theory of belief, the so-called inductive beliefs. Let us therefore consider it in their case first, on which the discussion on Hume’s theory of belief has naturally focused. In our procedure, the first Enquiry provides the primary textual evidence and we can find strong support for ideas providing contents for inductive beliefs in Part 2 of Section 5, where Hume goes into a more theoretical discussion of his doctrine (EHU 5.1.9):

“it is evident, that belief consists not in the peculiar nature or order of ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind […] in philosophy, we can go no farther than assert, that belief is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination.” (EHU 5.2.12; see also 20, 21, 13, and 9.5)\footnote{If anybody doubts that in EHU 5.2 Hume is expressing his own view, he just has to compare these passages with those in 5.1.8 and 4-5. In Part 2, Hume is only employing more technical terminology and approach.}

It is true that the Appendix expresses some doubts about what Hume has said about inductive belief in the first Book of the Treatise. Still what has not changed is Hume’s view that their contents consist of ideas. Two passages put this beyond doubt:

“there is nothing ever enters into our conclusions but ideas” (T 3.App.4).

“An inference concerning a matter of fact is nothing but the idea of an object, that is frequently conjoin’d, or is associated with a present impression. This is the whole of it.” (T 3.App.6;)

The Abstract is equally unambiguous:

“belief implies a conception […] The presence of this visible object, and the constant conjunction of that particular effect, render the idea different to the feeling from those loose ideas which come into the mind without any introduction […] Belief, therefore, in all matters of fact arises only from custom, and is an idea conceived in a peculiar manner.” (Abs.21; see also 22, and 25)
But the clearest evidence can be found, perhaps, in the Treatise, where Hume first brings his theory forward. In Section 7 of Part 3 (Of the nature of the idea or belief), he gives us a definition of inductive belief:

“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; see also 1, 6, and 1.4.7.3)

It seems to me that although the other elements in Hume’s theory of belief may be debated, these passages put it beyond doubt that throughout his intellectual career Hume maintained the same position with regard to the content of inductive beliefs. It consists of ideas.

According to Hume, there are, however, other kinds of beliefs, too. Besides, it is hard to see how the belief in Real entities, which is the target of the second profound argument, could be an inductive belief. Hume concluded in the first profound argument that inductive inference from sense-impressions to Real entities is not legitimate. Nonetheless, even in the first Enquiry, we have textual evidence for the interpretation that Hume extended his theory of belief outside the sphere of inductive beliefs - to the assents produced by the senses and memory at least. In Section 5, he writes in the way that implies that even if we had not inductive beliefs, we would have knowledge and beliefs produced by the senses and memory:

“Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects, commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses” (EHU 5.2.21).

In addition, I have shown that in the profound arguments against the senses Hume treats our natural assent to the existence of Real entities as a belief. It is equally clear that the content of the beliefs of the senses and memory is provided by impressions and ideas (EHU 5.2.12, 15, 16, 17, and 20). It is also a reading that is corroborated by the Treatise:

“the belief or assent, which always attends the memory and senses, is nothing but the vivacity of those perceptions they present; and that this alone distinguishes them from the imagination. To believe is in this case to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory. ’Tis merely the force and liveliness of the perception, which constitutes the first act of the judgment” (T 1.3.5.7; see also 1.4.7.3)

There is also evidence for the claim that Hume does not limit his theory of belief to inductive beliefs and the beliefs produced by the senses and memory. In the first Enquiry, he maintains that the associative principles of resemblance and contiguity end up with beliefs as well when the other member in association is an impression or idea of memory. Again the relevant point is that the contents of these beliefs, akin to those of inductive beliefs, consist of ideas. (EHU 5.2.14-17, 20). Besides, in the Treatise, Hume has even clearer intention of making his theory of inductive belief
general. The analogy between inductive beliefs and those produced by resemblance and contiguity is made there as well (T 1.3.8.3-5). While discussing the distinction between the ideas of memory and imagination, he makes a passing remark that liars become to believe their lies by repeating them. Here we have an idea of imagination whose repetition makes it an idea of memory to which the liar assents. (T 1.3.5.6)
The explanation is closely similar in the case of education as repetition, which produces beliefs in the repeated ideas (T 1.3.9.16-19). So it is not surprising that there are passages in the Treatise where Hume makes it clear that his theory of belief is meant to concern any belief and that their contents are constituted by perceptions. The clearest instance of this is perhaps from the footnote attached to T 1.3.7:

“Whether we consider a single object, or several; whether we dwell on these objects, or run from them to others; and in whatever form or order we survey them, the act of the mind exceeds not a simple conception; and the only remarkable difference, which occurs on this occasion, is, when we join belief to the conception, and are persuaded of the truth of what we conceive. This act of the mind has never yet been explain’ed by any philosopher; and therefore I am at liberty to propose my hypothesis concerning it; which is, that ’tis only a strong and steady conception of any idea, and such as approaches in some measure to an immediate impression.” (T 1.3.7.5.n.20; see also 1.3.9.2, 17, 19.n.22, 1.3.10.3, 1.4.2.41, and 1.4.7.3)

That perceptions provide contents for beliefs is a plausible tenet from the point of view of Hume’s theory of ideas, too. If any immediate object or content of thought (broadly taken) is either an impression or idea, could anything else then endow beliefs with content? Beliefs and therefore their contents are mental in their nature and any mental content in Hume’s view is either an impression or idea. We have then all the reasons - textual, consensual, and philosophical – to think that Hume endorses proposition (22): perceptions provide content for beliefs.

There are only two propositions that we have not yet discussed on which Hume’s endorsement of the pre-1777 second profound argument hangs. The first is (23): it is a rational requirement that all beliefs should have content. Hume’s attitude to this proposition also constitutes the other side of our third question concerning Hume’s view of the contents of beliefs. I have to admit that there is no explicit textual evidence for or against Hume holding this proposition. The reason for this is presumably revealed by reflecting on Hume’s theory of belief. In the previous section, we concluded that perceptions endow beliefs with content. Regarding our present problem, we just have to reflect that this is one of the elements of Hume’s theory belief, which is, without doubt, as a theoretical construction, a rational position, even in his opinion. So when it is a rational view according to Hume that nothing but perceptions can provide contents for beliefs, is it not rational to require perceptual content of beliefs? It seems then that Hume’s endorsement of
proposition (23) follows from his assent to proposition (22). Hume’s silence concerning it can therefore be plausibly explained from the point of view that it is so self-evident that he does not need to make it explicit.

Earlier we concluded that Hume endorses the rationality of proposition (19). It is well-grounded on induction and perception analysis that we cannot have any perceptions of Real entities. It is therefore a rational position as well that there cannot be any perceptual content for the belief in Real entities. In this part of the Chapter, we have seen that Hume requires perceptual content of rational beliefs. These two conclusions force us then a constraint when we are rational: we ought to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities (proposition 24). Hume’s endorsement of these two conclusions entail then that he must maintain proposition (24) as well. It is rational to refrain from believing in Metaphysical Realism.

Temporary Refraining from the Belief in Real Entities

We have reached the point where Hume’s view of the second profound argument and whether he actually refrains from believing in Real entities when rational turn to his attitude to a single proposition. That proposition is number (25), according to which we can at least momentarily refrain from believing in the existence in Real entities. This is also our fourth and last question of those proposed before.

The next task is accordingly to consider Hume’s view of this proposition. At the first look, his texts seem to suggest that he does not endorse it. The belief in Real entities belongs to the most basic human beliefs, the holding of which is out of our control. This is to which Hume appears to commit himself when he claims that this belief is caused by a “powerful instinct of nature” as one part of the “primary opinion” (EHU 12.1.9 and 8; see also 7). Two paragraphs later, when he begins the counter-argument to the philosophical system, Hume makes the passing remark that this instinct is “irresistible” (Ibid. 10; see also 5.1.2). This also concurs well with what he says about the corresponding instinct custom that causes us to infer inductively: it “is indeed difficult to resist” (Ibid. 12.2.22).

The strongest statement of the involuntariness of the belief in Real entities can be found, however, in Hume’s criticism of Pyrrhonism. Let us remember that Hume understands Pyrrhonism as universal suspension of belief. One of his points against

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196 This, of course, needs a further presupposition that it is rational to insist on content from beliefs – that beliefs with no content are not rationally acceptable. I think it is most likely that Hume would subscribe to this principle, too. I am going to give reasons for it in the next part discussing the New Hume.
Pyrrhonism is that it is psychologically impossible for a human being to sustain, that is, we cannot refrain from all beliefs:

“Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a PYRRHONIAN may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples […] When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first […] to confess, that all his objections […] can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations” (EHU 12.2.23).

As such, this passage does not, of course, entail that suspension of belief in Real entities is one of the involuntary beliefs in Hume’s view. The natural reading of Hume’s counter-argument to Pyrrhonism is, however, that at least this belief and our assent to the validity of inductive inference are involuntary. Hume asserts in the passage that the mental effect of the Pyrrhonian arguments is extinguished by “nature”, that is, by custom and the natural instinct making us believe in Real entities. These arguments are the profound arguments against the senses and the philosophical counter-argument to inductive inference (EHU 12.2.22). It is the fundamental beliefs in Real entities and the validity of inductive inference that these arguments challenge. In the end, the only value these arguments can have is to show the extraordinary condition of humankind who, on the one hand, cannot lay these beliefs on a certain foundation, but on the other, are forced to believe in them.

This quotation supports therefore the interpretation that belief in Real entities is involuntary in Hume’s view. That reading gets just more confirmation from a famous passage in the Abstract that is closely similar to Hume’s criticism of Pyrrhonism in the first Enquiry:

“the philosophy contained in this book [the Treatise] is very sceptical, and tends to give us a notion of the imperfections and narrow limits of human understanding. […] Nor is this [inductive scepticism] all; when we believe anything of external existence, or suppose an object to exist a moment after it is no longer perceived, this belief is nothing but a sentiment of the same kind. Our author insists upon several other sceptical topics; and upon the whole concludes that we assent to our faculties, and employ our reason, only because we cannot help it. Philosophy would render us entirely Pyrrhonian, were not nature too strong for it.”

(Abs.27)

Again, the Treatise itself yields firmest evidence for the topic:

“he [the sceptic] must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, tho’ he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his
choice, and has doubtless, esteem'd it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations.” (T 1.4.2.1)\textsuperscript{197}

It seems on the first look that these passages put it beyond doubt that according to Hume, believing in the existence of Real entities is absolutely involuntary. However, when we consider them closely, we come to realise that they do not deny the psychological possibility of refraining from that belief temporarily. Indeed, one of Hume’s repeated points concerning Pyrrhonism in the first Enquiry is that its arguments can produce temporary suspension, even of all beliefs. He makes the first point in the footnote commenting Berkeley’s arguments, which I cited in the preliminary Chapter and the beginning of Chapter 4. After claiming that they are “merely sceptical” because “they admit of no answer and produce no conviction”, he says that there is another sign of merely sceptical arguments:

“Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism.” (EHU 12.n.32)

Hume attached this footnote to the second profound argument and therefore what it says can be taken to concern that argument at least. Let us also remember that the target of the second profound argument is the belief in Real entities. This passage therefore strongly suggests that it is possible to refrain from that belief after being exposed to the second profound argument. As a result, the passage gives us good grounds to think that according to Hume, refraining from the belief in Real entities is temporarily possible.

As it was made evident in the discussion of Hume’s conception of Pyrrhonism, another occurrence of the same point is in the context of the philosophical argument against inductive inference (Ibid. 12.2.22).\textsuperscript{198} Hume does not, however, limit it to the specific Pyrrhonian arguments and their targets, but extends it to concern all (profound) Pyrrhonian arguments and Pyrrhonism itself. In the third place, then, the counter-argument to Pyrrhonism involves the acknowledgement that the Pyrrhonian arguments can be effective temporarily:

“a PYRRHONIAN may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings” (Ibid. 23).

\textsuperscript{197} Consider also the following passage from the last lines of this section: “[…] I […] take it for granted, whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world” (T 1.4.2.57).

\textsuperscript{198} “While the sceptic insists upon these topics, he shews his force, or rather, indeed, his own and our weakness; and seems, for the time at least, to destroy all assurance and conviction.”
The fourth place where Hume states the same point is concerning the “popular” arguments against inductive inference:

“These principles [of Pyrrhonism] may flourish and triumph in the schools; where it is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible, to refute them.” (Ibid. 21)

Though the context of this comment is a specific type of Pyrrhonian arguments, there are two reasons to take it as a general statement concerning Pyrrhonism and its arguments. First, at that point, the text speaks about the Pyrrhonian principles in general. Second, when we compare it with the three other instances where Hume puts forward the same point, we realise that this is one of Hume’s general views of Pyrrhonism, its arguments, and targets.

On this basis, it is justified to interpret Hume thinking that temporary refraining from believing in Real entities is psychologically possible. It is to be realised, besides, that this is not incoherent with the passages where Hume speaks about the involuntariness of this belief. They and the just quoted passages can be interpreted in the way that they are consistent with each other. On the one hand, Hume thinks that the belief in Real entities is involuntary in the sense that it is not psychologically possible to sustain the state of refraining from believing in Real entities. On the other, this does not rule temporal refraining out. Hume’s point is that there is no principal obstacle to it for a short period of time. This has consequences concerning both Hume’s view of Pyrrhonism and his attitude to the second profound argument, which are, of course, connected. For our purposes here, the latter is relevant. Our discussion is of Hume’s view to proposition (25): we can at least momentarily refrain from believing in Real entities. On the basis of the present considerations, there are good reasons to conclude that Hume maintains this proposition.199

Irrationality of the Belief in Real Entities

Above we have concluded that Hume thinks that it is rational to refrain from believing in Real entities (proposition 24). The main reason for this is that the belief in Real entities cannot have any perceptual content. As we have now seen that he takes this refraining not only as rational but also as temporarily possible, we have strong reasons to think that he does refrain from that belief in his rational moments, which is proposition (26).

By contrast, as we have seen, Hume’s stance is also that most of our lives we must hold the belief in the existence in Real entities. Hence, if we did that in our rational

199 Wright, for example, admits this although he stresses the short lasting of refraining (Wright 1995/86, 227).
moments, we would manifest a contradiction between two attitudes. We would simultaneously both believe and not believe in the existence of Real entities, which is a contradiction. We have therefore all the reasons to think that the conclusion of the pre-1777 second profound argument is also Hume’s view. Its first constituent is that believing in Real entities is contradictory to a rational attitude and we have just seen that Hume endorses this. It is also well grounded that in Hume’s view, this contradiction follows from the rational proposition that we cannot have any perception of Real entities. So it can be concluded that the other part of the conclusion is Hume’s view as well. He thinks that the belief in Real entities is contrary to a rational proposition in the sense that this proposition implies (because of certain conditions of being rational) a contradiction to the belief in Real entities.

There is an additional reason to take Hume endorsing this conclusion of the pre-1777 second profound argument. We remember that in EHU 12.16 he writes that if the SNQP is rational, the belief in the existence of Real entities is contrary to reason. What this passage minimally implies is that Hume takes the consequence to follow. In his view, the rationality of the SNQP implies that the belief in Real entities is contrary to reason. It follows from this that if Hume endorses the rationality of the SNQP, he also must subscribe to the irrationality of the belief in Real entities. Now, as we recall, in this Chapter I have provided enough evidence for Hume’s endorsement of the rationality of the SNQP. Thus, on the assumption that he does not commit himself to the basic logical mistake of holding the antecedent and implication but not the consequent, he must also assent to the proposition that the belief in Real entities is contrary to reason. Admittedly, this does not put it beyond doubt that my account of the conclusion is correct. The contrariety to reason is open to more than one interpretation because textual evidence is so scarce. In any case, it constitutes evidence for Hume holding that the belief in Real entities is contrary, in some sense, to the consistent use of reason. Besides, as my account of the contrariety is a good explanation, the passage also gives us reason to maintain that Hume thinks that the belief in Real entities is contradictory to a rational attitude and contrary to a rational proposition.

Finally we are able to weave the threads into the summary of Hume’s attitude to the pre-1777 second profound argument. It begins with a clearly Humean claim that any perception of the alleged primary qualities is necessarily connected to and numerically identical with some perception of sensible qualities. That is is the case because no primary quality can be perceived in total separation of some perception of extension (no abstract ideas) and Hume’s doctrine of extension requires conceiving colour or tactile qualities in order to be perceived. Hence, any perception of the properties of concrete particulars is a perception of sensible qualities. It
follows from this that if the Sensible Qualities Principle is rational (because the
perception analysis is), it is a rational position that we cannot have any perception of
Real entities as having properties.

In Hume’s nominalism, Real entities must be concrete particulars (external to the
perceiver) and the SNQP states that the perceptions of sensible qualities do not
resemble any Real property of them. The textual evidence is on the side of the
interpretation that the rationality of the SNQP is a Humean principle and the
suggested objections to this by Garrett and Wright do not work. Hume’s view of the
perceptibility of Real entities hangs therefore on what he thinks about the
perceptibility of so-called bare particulars, that is, of the concrete particulars without
any properties. If he holds the sensible quality bundle theory of the perception of
concrete particulars, it is clear that he denies the perceptibility of bare particulars.
There are good reasons to think that he does, or at least some bundle theory of the
perception of concrete particulars. It seems to me that the only thing in the ballpark
that may throw this into doubt is Hume’s possible endorsement of the substratum
type of the perception of substances (or the New Humean claim of relative ideas).
At the close of the next section of this Chapter, I show that he cannot and does not
subscribe to this position and therefore we can conclude that Hume thinks that it is
at least a rational view that we cannot have any perception of Real entities.

According to my reconstruction, the follow-up of the pre-1777 second profound
argument works on certain conditions of being rational. So Hume’s view of what the
rationality of the imperceptibility of Real entities implies turns to what else he thinks
about rationality. One thing is whether being rational requires doing consistently
what is rational. The other is if it is a necessary condition for rational beliefs that they
have perceptual content. The first is such an obvious condition of rationality that I
think we do not have any reason to doubt Hume’s endorsement of it. The second
follows from his theory of belief. One of the propositions of that theory is that
nothing but perceptions constitutes the contents of beliefs. As a theory is a rational
construction, it follows from this that all rational beliefs ought to have content. But
Hume has concluded that in the case of the belief in Real entities, this is not possible.
He is then committed to the view that it is rational to refrain from this belief.
Moreover, as according to Hume, one condition of being rational is doing
consistently what is rational, he also thinks that refraining from the belief in Real
entities is a rational attitude. It is obvious that this attitude is contradictory to
believing in the existence of Real entities. If we held this belief and simultaneously
refrained from it, we would manifest a contradiction. Thus, Hume thinks that the
belief in Real entities is contradictory to a rational attitude.
This implication presupposes that refraining from this belief is not only rational but also psychologically possible. So Hume’s endorsement of the second profound argument finally hangs on what he thinks about the psychology of believing – whether the belief in Real entities is absolutely involuntary or not. Initially, the textual evidence seems to indicate that Hume takes it as absolutely involuntary. However, as I have made evident above, the careful reading of these passages together with what Hume says about Pyrrhonism make us conclude otherwise. Although Hume thinks that most of our lives we cannot help believing in the existence of Real entities, in our rational moments, it is possible to refrain from this belief. Hence, in Hume’s view, refraining from the belief in Real entities is not only rational but also psychologically possible.

It is of some significance that the conclusion of the belief in Real entities being contradictory to a rational attitude is, according to Hume, if my interpretation is correct, an implication of the imperceptibility of Real entities. This last proposition is partly grounded on consistent inductive reasoning. In Hume’s view, then, the contradiction to the belief in Real entities is what follows from consistent inductive reasoning together with the analysis of perceiving primary qualities, his theory of belief, and a further condition of rationality. The implication of this is the following. Any commentator who thinks that Hume commits himself to just inductive reasoning has problems to deny that according to Hume, consistent inductive reasoning implies a contradiction to the belief in Real entities. This is supported by Hume’s texts, his clear endorsement of the relevant steps in the argument, and by logical reasons – whatever is the correct account of what the contradiction amounts to. So, any Metaphysically Realistic reading of Hume that also claims that he assents to consistent inductive inference is in danger of attributing a contradiction to him, of which he is conscious, that is, to make Hume consciously inconsistent.200

Wright’s New Humean interpretation is one of the readings that is under this threat. Wright evidently thinks that Hume endorses consistent inductive inference and reads Hume as a Metaphysical Realist (Wright 1995/86, 231-2, and 223-4; 1983, 111). Although Wright does not explicitly face this problem, it is possible to see how he would try to avoid it on the basis of what he says.201 This escape is to maintain that in Hume’s view, from the impossibility to perceive Real entities it does not follow that it is rational to refrain from the belief in their existence. By contrast, it is, according to Hume, causally rational to believe in Real entities, and indeed, in the modern

200 At this point, it is relatively clear that Morris’ *ad boninom* reading of the second profound argument as it is in the *Treatise* does not deserve the title of being the correct interpretation.

201 This problem has not been reckoned in the New Hume literature either.
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notion of body with only primary qualities (Wright 1995/86, 232). Wright bases this on two things: (1) he claims that Hume applies the distinction between “supposing” and “conceiving” in his reply to the second profound argument, (2) the foundation of the Sensible Qualities Principle is consistent inductive inference. Let us first see how the possible escape for Wright is formed, then consider his ground for it, and finally argue that Wright’s interpretation cannot be defended in this way.

Wright concedes that Hume thinks that the second profound argument from proposition (4) to (21) is able to show that we cannot conceive Real material entities with primary qualities only – and that this is also a rational position (Wright 1995/86, 232; 1983, 111). In order to save his interpretation apparently from attributing the contradiction following from this to Hume, Wright’s distinction between “conceiving” and “supposing” can be introduced (Ibid.). Wright makes this distinction in terms of clear and distinct ideas separated from obscure and confused ideas. Conceiving amounts to having a clear and distinct idea, whereas suppositions can be confused and obscure ideas. Still the content of both is provided by perceptions. The condition of conceivability is thus to pass the test of rational idea-analysis: every legitimate idea is clear and distinct, that is, copied from impressions. The extent of conceivability is therefore identical with the extent of clear and distinct ideas. By contrast, suppositions that are based on the ideas failing this test can be entirely warranted: they can be obscure and confused ideas or even involve a contradiction. (Wright 1995/86, 226-7, 232, and 234; 1983, 106-111; and 2000, 90) Wright’s favourite example is the everyday belief in Real entities according to the analysis of T 1.4.2. Although it is, in Hume’s view, a confusion or even contradiction to attribute identity to numerically distinct perceptions, Hume still entertains the belief in Real entities of the primary opinion, the content of which is provided by this attribution. (Wright 1995/86, 233-4)

In the case of the modern notion of body, this distinction is supposed to work in the following way. Hume’s first task is to establish the Sensible Qualities Principle (Wright 1983 109; 1995/86, 232). After that, he applies the idea-analysis and concludes that every idea of primary qualities is an idea of sensible qualities. Thus, by the SNQP, we cannot have any clear and distinct idea of objects with only primary qualities. This means that we cannot ‘conceive’ body as it is taken in modern philosophy. (Wright 1983, 108; 1995/86, 232) That result does not, however, imply that we cannot ‘suppose’ it in Wright’s stipulated sense. The case is analogical with Hume’s account of the everyday belief in Real entities in T 1.4.2. Although the modern notion of body does not pass the test of the idea-analysis, it is still possible to ‘suppose’ material entities in such a way that they have only primary qualities. It is this supposition that provides resources to believe in the modern notion of body.
Hume is therefore entirely permitted to entertain this belief. It is accordingly reasonable to take him as not refraining from the belief in Real entities in his rational moments. Hume’s philosophical position does not thus involve the contradiction between holding this belief and refraining from it. (Wright 1983, 110-2; and 1995/86, 232)

In Wright’s texts, we can find two arguments for this interpretation, general and particular. The first is Wright’s general point that in Hume’s opinion, all fundamental human beliefs are based on ‘inconceivable’ ‘suppositions’, that is, on obscure, confused, and even contradictory ideas (Wright 2000, 89; 1983, 111; and 1995/86, 234). It is therefore reasonable to propose that this holds also in the case of the ‘inconceivable’ matter with only primary qualities (Wright 1995/86, 234). Wright’s particular and main argument is that the Sensible Qualities Principle has “a solid basis in our experimental reasoning.” (Ibid. 232; see also Wright 1983, 109­10) In the similar fashion as I have done, he refers to T 1.4.4.4, for instance, where Hume claims that the SNQP is a highly satisfactory experimental principle. The difference between our views consists, however, in Wright interpreting that Hume holds the SNQP in Metaphysically Realist terms. He takes this principle of Hume’s to maintain that there are substantial bodies with no sensible qualities whatsoever, whereas I have defended the reading that Hume affirms it only hypothetically (Wright 1983, 111-2; 1995/86, 232). Wright contention is then that there are not only resources for Hume in this theory of ideas to believe in the modern notion of body but that there is also a firm experimental reason to do so (Ibid.). The modern notion of body represents therefore Hume’s philosophical position and as a result, he believes in the existence of Real entities even in his rational moments. No contradiction is accordingly involved in Hume’s philosophical position.

Although Wright is right in emphasising the experimental or inductive ground of the Sensible Qualities Principle (when the differences in its interpretation are not taken into account), his reading cannot be satisfactorily saved from attributing a conscious contradiction to Hume. In the first place, there is no specific textual evidence for Wright’s contention that in the case of the second profound argument, Hume applies the distinction between ‘supposing’ and ‘conceiving’ and thereby evades the conclusion of the argument – even if he holds it in other places. At least, Wright does not present any. The most he says is to use one piece of general textual evidence and to make a philosophical point. Wright’s textual ground is to refer to the first sentence of T 1.2.6.9. This passage might be read in the way of drawing the distinction between ‘supposing’ and ‘conceiving’ but in general terms. Besides, the sentence next to it makes a cross-reference to T 1.4.2 instead of T 1.4.4, which contains arguments similar to the second profound argument in the Treatise (I will
discuss these passages below). Wright philosophical ground is to claim that “it is clear in some sense that we are able to suppose what it would be like for this [modern] theory [of body] to be true” (Wright 1995/86, 232). To this, it may be replied that it is perhaps the case but we would need some positive evidence for Hume thinking in that way.

The ground on which Wright proceeds is therefore quite thin. This is especially problematic for his interpretation as my contrasting reading is founded on firm textual, philosophical, and logical basis. The evidence provided by me can then overcome that supplied by Wright. Especially, there is strong textual evidence for Hume holding that the contradiction between the everyday belief in Real entities and the consistent use of reason is implied by the rationality of the SNQP. As Wright himself grants that Hume takes the SNQP to be rational, he must then acknowledge that texts support Hume’s endorsement of the contradiction. Wright interpretation faces then the problem of attributing a conscious contradiction to Hume and he cannot avoid this difficulty in the above-proposed way.

1777 Supplementary Conclusion of the Argument

Finally we are in the position to proceed to the discussion of the 1777 addition to Part 1, Section 12 of the first Enquiry. It is useful to begin this discussion by recapitulating my reconstruction of the argument that the insertion adds to the conclusion of the second profound argument. The second concluding argument builds on the sub-conclusion of the fifth phase, proposition (19) that Real entities are imperceptible. As I have remarked above, the 1777 addition brings a new explicit “notion” into the second profound argument and that notion is the material substance. So, if we take into consideration that the matter as a substance is a Real entity, proposition (19) entails that we cannot have any perception of the material substance either. This is the first step in the 1777 strand of argument, proposition (31). It implies, in turn, that the material substance is unintelligible for us in the sense of incomprehensible (proposition 33) if we presume that intelligibility involves perceptibility (32). As it is reasonable to suppose further that we cannot know what is unintelligible for us (34), it follows that the material substance is also unknown for us (proposition 35). For the proponent of the second profound argument, this is not yet enough as his final conclusion in the 1777 line of argument is proposition (37) that the material substance is an inadequate notion. His last premise for this is that an unintelligible and unknown notion is inadequate (36).

We see from this reconstruction that the line of argument that the 1777 edition adds is different from the earlier argument in the fifth phase after proposition (19). The former attacks the notion of the material substance explicitly. The target of the latter
is the belief in Real entities more generally. As the material substance is a token of Real entities, it is obvious that the target of the 1777 addition is more restricted. This is one reason to follow a slightly different method in discussing the later argument. It is in principle possible that Hume denies some of the additional premises (32), (34), (36) or thinks that there is some non-substantial conception of matter available. Still it would not be self-evidently impossible for him to endorse the pre-1777 argument.

Relative Idea Objection to Hume’s Assent to the Conclusion

The more important reason is that in my view there is only one, seemingly strong objection to Hume’s adherence to the 1777 addition, which has also stirred debate in Hume scholarship. It is actually so pressing that if it succeeds, the negative consequences of proposition (19) in the pre-1777 argument do not follow either. Moreover, the objection calls for the defence and clarification of Hume’s endorsement of proposition (32) that intelligibility presupposes perceivability. The objection is the New Humean contention put forward by Strawson that according to Hume, we are capable of ‘supposing’ the matter and material entities as existing by virtue of the so-called ‘relative ideas’ even if we cannot ‘conceive’ them, that is, have any perception of them.

The discussion of Strawson’s contention may be begun with reminding us of the 1777 insertion to the second profound argument:

“Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it, and leave only a certain unknown, inexplicable something, as the cause of our perceptions; a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it.” (EHU 12.1.16)

The straightforward reading of this passage is that the second profound argument ends up with claiming that we ought to reject the notion of the material substance. The argument leaves us only an “inexplicable” notion of it in the sense that it is totally shut up from our understanding – and that kind of notion should not be endorsed. Although Strawson does not put his point by using this passage (for obvious reasons), it is quite easy to see what his reading of it would be. The point of the passage is not that we ought to reject this “notion” of the material substance.

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202 It is also possible that the addition is an allusion to Berkeley in PHK 77-9 and DHP 107-8; Works II, 223.

203 We can see that Strawson’s claim is stronger than Wright’s close affirmation. Strawson states that we can suppose the matter even if we cannot have any perception of it, whereas Wright’s point is merely that we cannot have any clear and distinct perception of the matter and bodies.

204 He discusses it in slightly different terms in his book (Strawson 1989, 137-8).
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Rather, Hume’s claim is that the material substance is “inexplicable” or “unintelligible” only in his (and Locke’s and Berkeley’s) restricted sense as “incomprehensible” (Strawson 2002, 239). This sense means that we cannot “conceive”, that is, to have an idea of material substance (Ibid.). Conceiving or having an idea is something that must satisfy, according to Hume, the constraints placed by his Copy Principle (Ibid. 241). The content of the ideas must be “directly impression-based” and as such positively describable “on the terms of the theory of ideas.” (Ibid. 241 and 238) The passage denies, thus, only that we cannot have any conception of any properties of the matter whatsoever. As such, the notion of the matter is completely empty from the point of view of our understanding. Strawson points out, however, that this does not mean that the notion of the matter is “unintelligible” in our contemporary sense of ‘incoherent’ (Ibid. 237-8). Strawson’s interpretation works then on the distinction between unintelligible as incomprehensible and as incoherent. His point is that Hume’s use of the term is the former, which accordingly represents his position. The notion of the matter is empty in the sense that we cannot give any positive description of its properties. It is a “skeleton” concept.

Strawson’s further claim is that although we cannot have any perception of the properties of the matter at all, it is still possible for us to suppose it as existent. This happens through the possibility of having a “relative idea” of it. (Ibid. 239 and 241) According to Strawson, the reading of the 1777 addition is therefore twofold. First, what Hume is doing in this passage is that he denies merely the possibility of any perception of what kind of entity the matter positively is. Still he permits in the second place that we can have a relative idea of it as something existing but of which we cannot have any positively describable conception whatsoever.

The concept of relative idea and the distinction between it and non-relative ideas (perceptions) call for a more detailed explication. According to Strawson, a relative idea consists of three components: an (impression-based) idea, relation, and incomprehensible X, to which the first two refer (Ibid. 239-40; Strawson 1989, 51 and 54). In the case of the putative relative idea of the matter, the impression-based idea that we have is of an impression of the senses caused by this incomprehensible X. In virtue of this relative idea, we are able to refer to the material substance as this X. (Ibid. 240) The relative idea is meant to pick out (single out) the matter as the cause of our sense-impressions. Actually, in Strawson’s view, relative ideas or something corresponding to them is almost necessary for any sound empiricist philosophy of mind and theory of linguistic reference (Ibid. 243 and 239). They provide means to refer to those possible and actual entities that are not positively describable (Ibid.).
The leading authority on the topic of relative ideas and Hume (and Berkeley and Locke) is Flage. His work can be used in supplementing and criticising what Strawson says about relative ideas and the distinction between them and non-relational ideas (perceptions). At this point, it is enough to introduce the distinction between positive or direct ideas and relative or indirect ideas, which Flage develops on the basis of Locke and Reid (Flage 2000, 140-3 and 145-6). According to this distinction, having a positive or direct idea amounts to perceiving an entity immediately (Ibid. 143 and 146). The entities of which we can have positive or direct ideas are therefore perceptible entities. Those of which we can have only relative ideas are, by contrast, either unperceived or imperceptible. A relative idea “singles out”, accordingly, an entity (or property) that stands in a certain relation to another entity, of which we have positive or direct idea (perception) at the moment, or of which we can have one in principle (Ibid. 145-6 and 143). It therefore provides us means, when adequate, to refer to possible or actual, unperceived or imperceptible entities or properties (Ibid. 146).

A helpful illustration of the concept of relative ideas is provided by Reid in his *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* (1788), which Flage cites. Reid's example concerns a perceivable but at the moment unknown entity. Let us imagine a situation where I go to my university library and ask for a book with its mere location information. Let us suppose further that the location is fully determinate: it refers to only one book and location in the library. Another assumption is that the librarian does not know anything about the book except its code. The book that I am asking for is therefore unperceived both for me and for the librarian and completely unknown for him in the sense that he does not know anything positive of it – neither its author, title, language, content, nor even its colour, binding, or thickness. He would not have any means to distinguish it from the other books in his library on the basis of this empty, “skeleton” conception of the book. Still, and this is Reid’s point, he is able to single it out because of its fully determinate location; he would find it immediately. (Reid 1983, 513; quoted in Flage 2000, 140) A relative idea, or more precisely the relation in it, is supposed to work in the same way. Although we do not (or even cannot) have any positive idea of an entity or property, we can still single it out with the help of the relative idea consisting of the relation obtaining between it and a positive idea.

According to Strawson, Hume thinks that we can have a satisfactory relative idea of the material substance as the cause of our sense-impressions and therefore we are able to suppose it as existent. This would be the Strawsonian reading of the 1777 addition. He also takes this to have certain implications for Hume’s views. First, the notion of the material substance or Real entity is not ‘incoherent’ (involving a
contradiction). It is therefore intelligible in the contemporary sense. (Strawson 2002, 241, 3, and 5) In the second place, thus, the existence of the matter is possible, that is, we cannot know that it does not exist (Ibid. 241 and 3). On this ground, Strawson seems to think, more questionably, that Hume not only takes the existence of the matter possible but also “firmly believes” in it (Ibid. 241 and 2). His not so disputable contention is that the relative idea of the matter entails that in Hume’s view, we can also refer to it and Real entities in language. Their terms are, therefore, meaningful. (Ibid. 240, 3 and 2)

If Strawson is right and the Strawsonian reading of the 1777 addition is correct, it is quite easy to see what follows from it to Hume’s attitude to the second profound argument. His endorsement of proposition (19) that we cannot have any perception of Real entity is not, as such, challenged. Its implications, however, are. Let us first consider them in relation to the 1777 argument. Although its first step that the matter is imperceptible still stands, Hume does not endorse the second that the matter is unintelligible anymore if unintelligibility is taken in some stronger sense than Strawson’s ‘no positive perception whatsoever’. The third step of the matter’s unknown status is not accepted by Hume anymore because we know that it exists. Moreover, in the case that Strawson is right, Hume assents to the conclusion only in the sense that any alleged positive notion of the matter is inadequate and ought to be rejected. This does not imply, however, that its relative notion and idea is and that it should be rejected. Actually, Strawson’s view is that Hume happily accepts it. In the end, we would be under the obligation to qualify significantly Hume’s view of the 1777 addition.

The implications for Hume’s assent to the earlier version of the fifth phase would be more severe. If he accepted the relative idea of Real entities, it would provide him a way to claim that the belief in the existence Real entities has some content although positive perceptions cannot provide it. Therefore it would not be irrational to hold the belief. Proposition (24) that it is rational to refrain from this belief would not then be endorsed by Hume and no contradiction between this rational attitude and the belief would not follow (proposition 29). From Hume’s point of view, if Strawson is right, the second profound argument before 1777 collapses from proposition (24) onwards. Proposition (19) that Real entities are imperceptible would not have the negative consequences anymore. The reason for this is that Hume would not assent to the premise expressed by proposition (22): perceptions provide contents for beliefs – it is also relative ideas that can supply content for beliefs.

It is fairly obvious, then, that much is at stake here. The next question is, accordingly, which one of the two readings of the 1777 addition we should prefer; the
straightforward denying the notion of the matter or the Strawsonian that Hume endorses the relative idea of it. The dilemma is therefore between the following two accounts of to what Hume is committing himself in the passage.

(1) The alleged relative notion or idea of the matter and Real entities ought to be rejected because it is not a satisfactory notion (as well as the positive idea). Hume’s use of “inexplicable” in the passage is that the matter and Real entities are totally shut up from our understanding (but not inconsistent) and therefore they are completely unknown for us. Hence we are not able to pick them out as existing objects distinguished from other possible or actual entities. This reading have also the implication that Hume’s endorsement of the second profound argument and conceptual negative dogmatism, with which it terminates, is not changed by the 1777 supplement.

(2) The relative notion or idea of the matter and Real entities provides us a legitimate way to suppose their existence and single them out in the category of actual entities although we cannot conceive them, that is, to have any positive perception of them. Hume’s meaning of “inexplicable” is that we cannot have any understanding of their properties. The matter and Real entities are “unknown” and its notion “imperfect” in this sense that no positive describable conception of them is possible. On this basis, it is not therefore possible to distinguish it from other possible or actual entities. As Hume endorses the relative idea of the material substance and Real entities, he does not assent to the pre-1777 second profound argument from proposition (24) onwards and his view of the 1777 argument ought to be significantly qualified.

At this point, it is possible to note that as Bricke and Wright observe, there are actually two forms of Representative Realism in Hume’s writings (Bricke 1980, 10; and Wright 1995/1986, 231). The Resemblance type is what is discussed in the first profound argument. Sense-impressions are similar to and caused by their Real objects. Causal Representative Realism is implicit in the relative idea of the matter, according to which bodies only produce sense-impressions without resembling them. Thus, if the Strawsonian reading of the 1777 addition is correct, it also means that Causal Representative Realism is Hume’s theory of perception.

Textual Evidence for the Relative Idea Objection

Strawson presents textual, contextual, and philosophical reasons for his interpretation that is represented by the second reading here. It is convenient to begin with his textual grounds as they lead us to the discussion whether Hume’s texts support more that or the first reading. After that, I proceed to discussing and assessing Strawson’s contextual and philosophical arguments. In all of these, I am
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going to take advantage of the work done by two Strawson’s critics: Winkler and Flage.

Strawson’s textual evidence is of two kinds. On the general level, he claims that Hume repeatedly bases his arguments on the distinction between ‘supposing’ and ‘conceiving’ in terms of the relative ideas in contrast to the positive ones (Ibid. 243). Hume also takes the distinction in these terms for granted in the first Enquiry and his “practice” in it and the Treatise substantiates his endorsement of the distinction (Ibid. and 244). The more specific textual evidence that Strawson presents consists of five passages in the Treatise, to which we next turn our attention. All of them are well-known in the literature concerning New Hume. I begin my discussion of them with the first three passages and critically consider the last two separately. First I quote the first two passages and display Strawson’s reading of them. After that, I criticise his reading and argue that the passages do not licentiate it. In this I take advantage of the third quotation, one of Winkler’s remarks against the New Hume, and the context of the first reference passage.

The three first of the passages are closely connected in their contents and Hume even links the first two to each other by a cross-reference. The first passage is from the Section of the Treatise where Hume discusses the ideas of existence and external existence (1.2.6). He begins the brief ending part of the Section discussing the idea of external existence by claiming Conscious Mentalism (T 1.2.6.7). After that, he includes his Copy Principle to the argument and draws the conclusion that “‘tis impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions.” (Ibid. 8) According to Strawson, this is one side of Hume’s position: we can conceive nothing but of which we can have perception. The other side, and the relevant point here, is manifest in the next, last paragraph of the Section where Hume makes evident, in Strawson’s view, his adherence to the relative idea of Real entities:

“The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when suppos’d specifically different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects.” (Ibid. 9)

Strawson (and Wright) think that the notion of specific difference, which Hume uses in this context, means difference in kind between two types of entities. Perceptions are mental in nature and “external objects” non-mental, that is, mind-independent. The relevant point here is, however, as Strawson notes, that “external objects” are also different in terms of similar properties compared with perceptions: they do not have any properties that resemble perceived properties. They are completely qualitatively distinct. (Strawson 2002, 239; Wright 1995/1986, 231) In connection with the second profound argument and the Sensible Qualities Principle, this can be
put in the way that perceptions do not resemble Real entities at all – if there are Real entities, their properties are completely different from perceived properties. Therefore we cannot have any perception of Real entities (parenthesizing here the problem of bare particulars). According to Strawson, this is the first side of Hume’s point that we cannot conceive “external objects”. Still Strawson thinks that Hume claims in the passage the possibility of supposing them by virtue of relative ideas – a term Hume explicitly uses in the passage - consisting of three components: a positive perception, relation, and an incomprehensible “external object”.

Strawson reads the second of his reference passages, which Hume himself links with the first, consequently in the manner of Hume denying only the possibility of having some perception of Real entities but not their intelligibility (in his sense) by virtue of relative ideas:

“For as to the notion of external existence, when taken for something specially different from our perceptions, we have already shown its absurdity." (T 1.4.2.2)

Strawson’s contention is thus that Hume’s use of “absurdity” is not “unintelligibility” in the contemporary sense of involving a contradiction. Nor is it his intention to reject the relative idea of Real entities discussed in T 1.2.6. Hume’s objective is merely to claim that the notion of Real entities is absurd in the sense that we cannot have any perception of them.

It is entirely possible that Hume uses “absurdity” here in this sense of having no perception instead of some stronger meaning (self-contradictory). Still the passage does not support Strawson’s interpretation. This we are able to see, ironically, by virtue of considering the three reasons for this reading of “absurdity”: (1) what Hume is doing at T 1.4.2, (2) Strawson’s third reference passage at the end of that section, and (3) how the last sentence of T 1.2.6.9, to which 1.4.2.2 refers, goes.

(1) As Winkler notes, Hume’s account for the belief in Real entities in T 1.4.2 works on the premise that the explanation is made in terms of perceptions (Winkler 2000, 78-9). Therefore it would be absurd to suggest that this belief would be based on the ‘supposition’ of imperceptible Real entities that are “specifically different” from perceptions. (2) A remark from the penultimate paragraph of the Section makes just this point but regarding philosophers’ Representative Realism:

“Philosophers deny our resembling perceptions to be identically the same, and uninterrupted; and yet have so great a propensity to believe them such, that they arbitrarily invent a new set of perceptions, to which they attribute these qualities. I say, a new set of perceptions: For we may well suppose in general, but ’tis impossible for us distinctly to conceive, objects to be in their nature any thing but exactly the same with perceptions.” (T 1.4.2.56)

(3) If the last sentence of T 1.2.6 is read from this perspective, it is clear that it makes exactly the same point that our natural belief in Real entities and also the
philosophical system of Representative Realism is grounded on perceptions, to which we are apt to attribute merely different relations than those that they inhabit in themselves. Hume himself also refers to his account in *Of scepticism with regard to the senses*:

“Generally speaking we do not suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connections and durations. But of this more fully hereafter.”

Initially it may appear that Strawson’s interpretation is supported by these passages. When we read them carefully together, however, it becomes clear that Hume’s point is not to accept the relative idea of Real entities. Rather, his intention lies in pointing out that the *explanans* for our natural and philosophical belief in Real entities consists of nothing but perceptions. The main point of the end of T 1.2.6 is that we cannot have any perception of external entities. The belief in Real entities is based on perceptions, to which we attribute new relations. T 1.4.2.2 puts this in even stronger terms by claiming that it would be absurd to try to explain the natural belief in terms of the notion of Real entities as specifically different from perceptions. T 1.4.2.56 makes the same point regarding the philosophical belief in Metaphysical Realism, which is part of Representative Realism. Hume’s actual explanation of the vulgar belief and its transformation to the philosophical system only supports what these two passages say. The weight of the only sentence in these passages quoted by Strawson as evidence is seriously lessened when its immediate textual context is read together with *Of scepticism with regard to the senses*. It appears more as a passing remark than as signalling Hume’s conscious subscription to the relative idea of Real entities.

Nevertheless, Strawson’s two last reference passages look more promising for him if one takes them out of the context. In Section 5 of Part 4 of the first Book of the *Treatise*, Hume advances an argument to the result that the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul leads to an outright atheism in the same way as Spinoza’s (1632-1677) metaphysical monism is claimed to do by his religious critics. In the argument, one of Hume’s moves is to establish a principle that consists of two parts. The positive part is the affirmative proposition that the relations of objects, that is, those of external existences, extend to impressions. The negative part denies this in the opposite direction from impressions to objects. For example, if we conclude

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205 Hume’s two expressions of the principle are: “[1] 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 conclusions of this kind we form concerning objects, will most certainly be applicable to impressions […] [2] we can never, by any principle, but by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience,” (Of the coherence of our perceptions).
that the impressions of the sun today and tomorrow are numerically distinct, it does not follow that this holds also of the sun itself appearing today and tomorrow. But if we were able to come to the conclusion that the sun today and tomorrow are numerically identical, this would mean that its impression today and tomorrow most certainly are as well.

According to Strawson, Hume bases his argument on the relative ideas of Real entities – and on the first look, he seems to be right. When Hume first states the two-part principle, he explicitly grounds it on the following proposition by using conjunction “since”:

“we may suppose, but never can conceive a specific difference betwixt an object and impression” (Ibid. 20)

It appears that this is an allusion to the part of the previous paragraph where Hume says:

“To make this evident, let us remember\footnote{\textit{T} 1.4.5.19} 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)

It may seem that in this part of T 1.4.5, Hume is founding his argument on the supposition of Real entities in terms of relative ideas. He appears to use the premise in the first passage that we can suppose Real entities. The second passage says that this cannot be done by virtue of reducing Real entities to perceptions. So it seems to leave it as the only possibility to suppose Real entities by means of relative ideas: conceiving a relation between them and perceptions without perceiving the other \textit{relatum} – Real entities. Since it is likely that Hume is not grounding his argument on a false premise, it seems that there is at least one occasion where Hume adheres to the relative idea of Real entities.

Though it must be acknowledged that Strawson does not put forward precisely this argument when he discusses T 1.4.5.19-20 (2002, 244; 1989, 54-5), it appears to be clear that he would accept it. Strawson takes these passages as providing substantial evidence for his interpretation. Yet his discussion of them has some serious weak points. First, he misrepresents Hume’s second statement of the principle by paraphrasing Hume wrongly and cutting the quotation in a misleading way. When

connexion or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions; tho’ the inverse proposition may not be equally true, that all the discoverable relations of impressions are common to objects.” (T 1.4.5.20)
Hume says that “we can never, by any principle, but by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience⁴⁶[Such as that of Sect. 2, from the coherence of our perceptions⁴⁷], discover a connexion or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions”, Strawson reads “we can ‘by an irregular kind of reasoning from experience, discover a connexion or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions’.” (T 1.4.5.20; and Strawson 2002, 244) Strawson maltreats Hume’s words in the way that he would accept this “irregular kind of reasoning”, whereas Hume’s point is more critical.

While it is true that this does not, as such, refute Strawson’s interpretation, it gives us a clue to doubt his use of T 1.4.5 and leads us to see another soft spot in his reading of it. He does not put the passages, to which he refers, in the context of what Hume is doing in that section. Let us next, then, turn our attention to outlining briefly what is going on in that part of the Section where Hume criticises Spinoza’s religious antagonists and what consequences it has for Strawson’s interpretation.⁴⁶

Hume advances his argument against Spinoza’s antagonists in paragraphs 18 to 28, roughly the third quarter of the entire Section. He starts it by summarising Spinoza’s monism, according to which thinking as well as substantial bodies are modifications of one simple, indivisible, necessary substance, wherein these modifications inhere (substance as a substratum) (T 1.4.5.18).⁴⁷ Hume continues his discussion with expressing his intention in treating Spinoza: to establish that the popular doctrine of the immateriality of the soul is almost identical with “this hideous hypothesis” (Ibid. 19). For that purpose, he reminds his readers of the end of T 1.2.6 with the passage speaking about conceiving “an external object merely as a relation without a relative”, which Strawson (and Wright) is pleased to quote. The Copy Principle entails that an “idea of a perception” and an idea of “an object or external existence” cannot be “specifically different from each other.” (Ibid.) Both are impression-copy ideas and as such cannot represent properties that the other could not. Thus, if we suppose external objects as specifically different from perceptions, that is, as imperceptible, they and the difference are “incomprehensible to us”. This leads to the famous sentence that we must either reduce external objects to perceptions or conceive them “as a relation without a relative”. (Ibid.) It is possible that the latter alludes to the relative idea picking out imperceptible Real entities.

⁴⁶ For the more extensive discussion of T 1.4.5, see Yolton 1983, 49-63; 1984, 147-64; McIntyre 1994; Russell 1995; and Wright 1996. According to McIntyre and Russell, Hume has in mind at least Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) when he is speaking about Spinoza’s religious antagonists.

⁴⁷ Naturally, this is not the right place to discuss the correctness of Hume’s account of Spinoza.
In the next paragraph, Hume’s aim is to establish his asymmetrical principle ‘from the relations of objects to those of impressions but not certainly the other way around’. He explicitly relies on his result in the previous paragraph that we can only suppose but not conceive objects as specifically different from perceptions, that is, as imperceptible Real entities. We should also pay attention to the fact that in this exact place, Hume does not speak about relative ideas anymore. This should make us ask whether Hume’s more detailed exposition of the argument for the principle works on relative ideas at all.

Hume explains his argument for the negative inverse of the principle first (from impressions not to objects). As the inverse inference would start from impressions and proceed to objects, it is founded on impressions. Hume’s point is however that it is not certain that the basis of the inference extends to objects. This follows from the supposition that impressions and objects are specifically different. This supposition, in turn, entails that we cannot have any impression or idea of the properties of the objects taken as these specifically different Real entities. Consequently, we cannot be certain that a perceived property \( x \), on which we ground our inference, is also a property of the specifically different Real entities. (T 1.4.5.20)

By contrast, it is most likely that the inference works in the opposite direction. If we reason from objects to impressions, the inference must be founded on some perceptible property of objects. The crucial premise of the argument is that this property could not be apprehended if we were not able to have an impression of it. We apprehend by means of ideas and according to the Copy Principle, ideas are copies of impressions. The property of objects on which the inference is founded must therefore be a perceivable property of which we can have some impression as well. It is therefore a property represented by impressions. The positive part of the principle then follows: any known relation of objects can be applied most certainly to concern impressions as well (the argument presupposes that relations are based on properties). (T 1.4.5.20)

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208 “As an object is suppos’d to be different from an impression, we cannot be sure, that the circumstance, upon which we found our reasoning, is common to both, supposing we form the reasoning upon the impression. ’Tis still possible, that the object may differ from it in that particular.”

209 “But when we first form our reasoning concerning the object, ’tis beyond doubt, that the same reasoning must extend to the impression: And that because the quality of the object, upon which the argument is founded, must at least be conceiv’d by the mind; and cou’d not be conceiv’d, unless it were common to an impression; since we have no idea but what is deriv’d from that origin.”
Hume’s arguments for the two components of his principle are therefore founded on different notions of external entities. It is most likely that Hume thinks that the argument for the negative proposition (from impressions not to objects) takes objects as imperceptible Real entities. As we cannot perceive and know their properties, we cannot be sure that the perceived properties extend to them. However, this is not a necessary presupposition of the argument. It works even if objects and impressions are qualitatively different only in part. If we know that objects do not have some perceivable properties but it is not possible to say which they have and which they do not, it is still not certain that perceived properties extend to objects. The argument could then work on a notion of external entities that are partly perceivable.

Whatever is the case regarding the argument for the negative proposition, Hume’s main reason for the affirmative element in the principle works clearly on the notion of external entities in which they have perceivable properties. The inference from objects to impressions must be founded on an apprehended property and according to the Copy Principle we cannot have an idea of a property if it is not possible to have an impression of it.

The most we are justified in saying is thus that Hume uses the notion of external entities as imperceptible Real entities in grounding a negative proposition – and even this is dubious. It is consequently entirely possible that he is taking them only hypothetically: if there were this kind of entities, we could not draw certain conclusions concerning their properties on the basis of our perceptions. Wright’s contention, then, that Hume’s argument presupposes the existence of imperceptible Real entities is not satisfactory (Wright 1996, 181). For our purposes, it is also questionable whether Strawson is right in claiming that Hume is here subscribing to the relative idea of Real entities. Hume is only arguing for a negative proposition and for that purpose it is enough to hold the relative idea only hypothetically. Even if one accepted the relative idea of imperceptible Real entities, one could not be sure that the perceived properties extend to these entities. We should also keep in mind that although it is likely that Hume’s notion of external entities in this context is imperceptible Real entities, the argument seems to work also on the lesser notion in which external entities are partially perceivable.

Moreover, Hume’s argument against the antagonists of Spinoza in the next paragraph, without going to its exposition, works explicitly on the affirmative part of the principle solely (from objects to impressions). This component of the principle and the argument for it works on the notion of external entities as something more contentual than imperceptible Real entities. They have perceivable properties. This is
only corroborated by the fact that in this paragraph, Hume makes it explicit again that one of the reasons for the affirmative part of the principle is the Copy Principle. But this would not be possible if the objects that Hume is speaking about were imperceptible Real entities. Hume clearly says that the property of the object on which the inference to impressions is based is conceivable, that is, within constrains placed by the Copy Principle. It follows from this that Hume’s argument in this part of T 1.4.5 cannot work on the relative idea of imperceptible Real entities. In that notion, they are, as Strawson says, completely incomprehensible, that is, it is not possible to have any impression or idea of them.

Hume clearly thinks that his argument against Spinoza’s antagonists is a good argument (T 1.4.5.22). Still he goes on to show that the antagonists’ three specific objections to Spinoza can be turned against themselves (Ibid. 23-25). From that, and from his general argument, he draws the conclusion that the position of the antagonists, the immateriality of the soul, is equally dangerous to religion by opening the door to “a dangerous and irrecoverable atheism.” (Ibid. 26) He finishes the discussion of this topic by refuting the possible reply to his argument. The operations of the soul are acts of this immaterial substance, whereas the substantial bodies are modifications of the material substance in Spinoza’s system, and this makes a sufficient distinction between them. (Ibid. 27-8)

These particular discussions are relevant for our purposes only in reminding us of the context where the passages on which Strawson relies appear. All in all, it seems to me that the context seriously challenges Strawson relies appear. In the first place, the passages that Strawson cites are from a specific argument against certain philosophers, whose position and objections to a particular thinker are turned against themselves. Clearly this is not those parts of Hume’s corpus where he is developing his own views systematically. This ought to warn us against taking these passages too seriously. Their context challenges their relevance as evidence for Hume’s positive views. In addition, Strawson does not take the context into consideration and misrepresents an important point of the discussion.

Secondly, I hope I have been able to show that it is far from being obvious that Hume uses the notion of Real entities as imperceptible and as supposed by virtue of relative ideas in the argument he advances at this part of T 1.4.5. It seems to me that

210 “We have no idea of any quality in an object, which does not agree to, and may not represent a quality in an impression; and that because all our ideas are deriv’d from our impressions.” (T 1.4.5.21)
his argument works rather on the notion of external objects as having perceivable properties than on the relative idea of imperceptible Real entities. External entities, taken in this way, are not incomprehensible and unintelligible in Strawson’s weak sense. It is at the most in Hume’s argument for a negative proposition where he may use the relative idea of incomprehensible Real entities – and even this dubious and the use may be only hypothetical. It must be granted that this part of the Treatise is not one of the most transparent and it has not been subject to the needed detailed analysis. Still my doubts concerning Hume’s argument can also question the weight of evidence that T 1.4.5.19-20 can bear on Hume accepting the relative idea of Real entities.\(^{211}\)

As we remember, one of Strawson’s textual reasons for his interpretation is that Hume takes for granted and uses the distinction between supposing and conceiving in terms of relative ideas and positive perceptions throughout the first Enquiry. Simon Blackburn has observed that this is an overstatement and Flage seems to agree (Blackburn 2000/1990, 101-2 and Flage 2000, 139). As far as I can see, their view has better qualifications of being the right interpretation than the one advanced by Strawson.\(^{212}\) There is, as Flage notes, only one possible, explicit use of relative ideas in the entire first Enquiry before the 1777 addition – and that occurrence is in a footnote. In the second Part of Section 7, Hume presents his well-known two definitions of cause and inserts the following note in to the definitions:

“According to these explications and definitions, the idea of power is relative as much as that of cause; and both have a reference to an effect, or some other event constantly conjoined with the former. When we consider the unknown circumstance of an object, by which the degree or quantity of its effect is fixed and determined, we call that its power” (EHU 7.2.29.n.17).\(^{213}\)

Let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that Hume is here really committing himself to the position that the idea of power is a relative idea in the sense stipulated by Flage (and Strawson).\(^{214}\) Another fruitful, heuristic assumption is that the quotation tells us also something on the conditions that Hume sets on adequate relative ideas.


\(^{212}\) Strawson replies to Blackburn in Millican’s collection but he merely repeats his claim concerning the first Enquiry (Strawson 2002, 244).

\(^{213}\) The end of EHU 7.1.19 can also be taken as saying the same thing if we read it together with this passage.

\(^{214}\) This is what Flage thinks (2000, 139 and 146).
The first thing that follows from these assumptions is that an adequate relative idea is capable of picking out an unperceived or imperceptible factor in a perceivable entity. Hume says in the passage that power is “the unknown circumstance of an object”. When we read the footnote carefully, we see that this object is a cause. The footnote also refers to Hume’s first definition of cause, according to which the necessary condition of a cause is that we can have experience of it and its constant conjunction with the effect. It follows from this condition that a Humean cause must be perceptible because the necessary condition of possible experience is perceptibility. Thus, if the two presumptions are correct, the relative idea of power picks out an unperceived or imperceptible factor in a cause, which must be perceptible.

On these assumptions, another observation is that in an adequate relative idea, we must be able to have some perception of the relation obtaining between the positive idea and the unperceived or imperceptible factor. This is also a consequence of the connection of the footnote to Hume’s two definitions of cause. Hume says in the passage that there is a constant conjunction between a power and its effect. According to the first definition of cause, we have to have experience of this constant conjunction. This is evident from what Hume says just before the definition: “Similar objects are always conjoined with similar. Of this we have experience. Suitably to this experience […]” (EHU 7.2.29). Possible experience concerning the relation of (constant) conjunction requires then that this relation is perceptible. It is therefore reasonable to claim perceptibility of the relation on the basis of which a relative idea picks out an unperceived or imperceptible factor.

The footnote suggests, thus, that according to Hume, the structure of an adequate relative idea is the following. It consists of three components: a perceivable relation, two perceivable relata in the one of which the relative idea picks out an unperceived or imperceptible factor. This can be illustrated with the gravitational force: the perceivable relation of attraction between two perceivable entities. The relative idea of gravity singles out the imperceptible factor in the entities that explains the attraction. For example, we can see that a pen falls when it is dropped near the surface of the earth (in certain conditions). Both the earth, pen, and the descend are perceivable and gravity is the imperceptible force that accounts for the phenomenon.

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215 For the reference, see the next paragraph.
216 Cause and power differ from each other also in the circumstance that power is unknown whereas cause is not.
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Hence, even in the case that this passage constitutes evidence for Hume endorsing a doctrine of relative ideas and that it tells us something about the conditions that he places on them, it does not support the interpretation that he adheres to the relative idea of Real entities. The model suggested in the passage is not compatible with that alleged relative idea. In the first place, the model seems to require that the relation component in a relative idea is perceivable. In the alleged relative idea of Real entities, however, this is not possible – the relation goes beyond perceptions. In the place where I discuss Hume’s attitude to the synchronic, rational epistemic justification of Representative Realism, I have established that Hume subscribes to this: we cannot have any perception of relations beyond perceptions. Therefore it is likely that he would see the incompatibility of the alleged relative idea of Real entities with the model suggested by the passage. Moreover, in the case of power, both relata of the relation are perceivable. But this is not possible regarding the relative idea of Real entities as it refers to imperceptible Real entities (even Strawson grants this).

Concerning the first Enquiry, I have to disagree, then, with Strawson and to conclude that in it there is no textual evidence for reading the 1777 insertion in the way that Hume endorses the relative idea of Real entities and the matter in it. Strawson claims that Hume takes it for granted and his practice substantiates it throughout the first Enquiry. But there is not even slight, explicit sign of that in the entire work before 12.16. In the end, the text of the first Enquiry just does not support the relative ideas reading of the 1777 addition.

Now we are in the position to judge the textual evidence for this reading in general. Is it justified? Or does the textual evidence support more the interpretation that Hume is rejecting the relative idea of Real entities and the matter? We have gone through all the evidence relevant for Real entities in the Treatise and the first Enquiry. At the best, this evidence is scant. In the possible uses of relative ideas in T 1.2.6 and 1.4.2, Hume’s point is more that perceptions constitute the explanans for our belief in Real entities than to report endorsement of the relative idea of Real entities. When we put the allusion in T 1.4.5 into the context of what Hume is doing at that place, he signalling assent to this relative idea becomes dubious. In these places of the Treatise, the relative idea of Real entities, after critical survey of the context, appears rather as a passing remark than as a representation of Hume’s positive doctrines. In the first Enquiry, even this is missing. We have discussed the only explicit possible use of relative ideas (in general) in that work before 12.16, the idea of power, and concluded that it suggests rather the incompatibility of the putative relative idea of Real entities with Hume’s possible concept of relative ideas than his endorsement of it.
All in all, the textual evidence just does not support the interpretation that Hume endorses the relative idea of the matter and Real entities and reports it in the 1777 insertion. Rather, Hume’s texts suggest that he does not. This naturally involves that he recognises the notion of relative ideas, which, I think, the texts are able to substantiate. Hume signals that he is aware of the notion but does not endorse it in the case of the matter and Real entities.

**Contextual Reasons for the Relative Idea Objection**

This does not yet show that Hume rejects this putative relative idea. In the next part of this Chapter, I will put forward philosophical reasons to support the reading that the point of the 1777 supplement is to reject the relative idea of the matter and Real entities. That discussion gives us also a possibility to reply to Strawson’s philosophical arguments for his interpretation. In that part, I am much indebted to Flage’s work concerning relative ideas. Before that, however, it is needed to assess Strawson’s contextual reasons with the help of Flage’s view of the doctrine of relative ideas in early modern philosophy.

Strawson bases his interpretation partly on the contextual claim that the distinction between supposing and conceiving in terms of relative ideas or notions and positive ideas was “routine” in the philosophy of Hume’s time (Strawson 2002, 243). He refers briefly to Locke’s concept of real essence, and Berkeley’s theory of meaning and philosophy of science (Ibid. 237-8).

According to Flage, it was Reid, at the latest, who developed a theory of relative conceptions or notions (Flage 2000, 140-1). In Reid’s later masterworks, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785), and *on the Active Powers of Man*, we can find evidence that substantiates Flage’s judgment (Reid 2002, 200-4, 216, 362, and 419; 1983, 513-4). This does not show, however, that the doctrine was “routine” in the philosophical context where Hume wrote the first *Enquiry* - for the obvious reason that Reid published these works after Hume’s death.\footnote{There are only small hints of relative conceptions in Reid’s first work *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Reid 2000, 65 and 259).} Despite of this, it is Flage’s view that Reid did not develop his theory out of nothing but that there was a “tradition” of relative ideas in Locke and Berkeley before Hume and Reid (Flage 2000, 141).

Flage claims that Locke’s idea of substance in general is a relative idea, which is manifest in *Essay* 2.23 and Locke’s letters to Stillingfleet (2.23.n in the fifth edition).
It consists of the positive idea of a quality of a thing, the relation of inhesion or support, and an unknown substratum. According to Flage, Locke thus holds a substratum conception of substance, wherein qualities of things inhere, and which the relative idea is able to pick out. (Flage 2000, 141-2) Regarding Berkeley, Flage’s controversial claim is that Berkeley’s concept of the spiritual substance is a relative notion capable of singling out the spirit as the agent of mental acts resulting in positive ideas (Ibid. 142-3; see also Flage 1987). So Berkeley, as well as Locke, permits picking out an unperceived or imperceptible entity on the basis of its relation to a positive idea, of which we can have immediate awareness (Flage 2000, 142). The difference between them is that Berkeley criticises Locke of accepting the relative idea of the matter with no clear conception of the relation of inherence obtaining between it and the qualities of things (Ibid. 145).218

It must be granted that Flage’s claims are controversial in the case of Berkeley, at least (cf. Winkler 1983, 279). But if he is even near the right track, there were resources for a doctrine of relative ideas in Hume’s philosophical context or at least for becoming aware of the possibility of this kind of ideas. Besides, as I have argued, it is not reasonable to deny that Hume makes some passing remarks on relative ideas or notions. Yet I do not think that this establishes Strawson’s bold claim that it was routine in Hume’s time to distinguish suppositions from conceptions in terms of the distinction between relative and positive ideas. What the texts and the context can justify, at the most, is that Hume recognised the notion of relative ideas. However, this is not a reason for taking him to accept the relative idea of Real entities and the matter.

Philosophical Counter-Arguments to the Relative Idea Objection

What the contextual and textual evidence suggest can be further supported by philosophical reasons stemming from considerations of how well the relative idea of the matter and Real entities fits with Hume’s views more generally. In this discussion, we should pay attention to the relation component in the alleged relative idea of Real entities. According to Strawson, the relation in question is causality and it obtains between sense-impressions and imperceptible Real entities, which it is capable of picking out. As Winkler has observed, it is hard to see how the relative idea of this kind would be compatible with Hume’s theory of ideas. More precisely, it

218 Flage also contends that the real definition in the Port Royal logic is an analogy in the linguistic realm to relative ideas or notions in the cognitive. It must pick out at least and at most the things to which the definition refers. For example, the real definition of car has to pick out all cars and nothing else. (Flage 2000, 144-5)
is not easy to perceive how we could have, within the constraints of that theory, any access to the causal relation of this putative type. (Winkler 2000, 80) It is to be emphasised that here we are not speaking merely about ‘conceiving’ but also ‘supposing’ it in the New Humean senses. The problem concerns any access, whatsoever, with the faculty of the understanding, that is, intellectual access, to this type of causation. Let us call this intellectual access ‘broad intelligibility’ in order to distinguish it from Strawson’s narrower “intelligibility” and the contemporary sense. Broad unintelligibility of \( x \) means thus that \( x \) is beyond our intellectual capacities: we cannot have any understanding of it and nothing but it.

Winkler’s way of putting the problem is in terms of one of Hume’s central notions, resemblance. He notes that, as T 1.1.5.3 makes it clear, every Humean relation involves resemblance between \( \text{relata} \) and this is not possible in the case of causation from Real entities to impressions. According to Strawson (and Wright), Real entities are specifically different from impressions; they do not have any similar properties whatsoever. Although Winkler’s objection is cogent and hits the nerve, I would like to supplement it with three further supporting considerations. They are intended to show that there are philosophical reasons in Hume’s theory of ideas that compel him to deny the broad intelligibility of the putative causal relation between Real entities and impressions, or any causal relation (any relation indeed) beyond perceptions.

The first is based on how we remember Hume to deny any synchronic justification for the putative causation between Real entities and impressions: there cannot be possible experience of Real entities causing sense-impressions. It is also connected to the question whether Hume maintains Representative Realism. The second consideration approaches the question from the direction of Hume’s theory of relations: it sets the condition on their broad intelligibility that both \( \text{relata} \) are perceivable. In the third place, it is taken into account that the putative relation is causation and argued that it is not compatible with Hume’s well-known two definitions of cause. These considerations have the mutual relations that the second supplements the first, the third firmly supports the first two and all the three revolve around the question of the broad intelligibility of relations beyond possible perceptions.

As we recall, Hume’s denial of any synchronic, epistemic rational justification for Representative and Metaphysical Realism is founded on the premise that we cannot have any experience of any relation between Real entities and perceptions, including causation (proposition 32 in the first profound argument). This premise is ultimately grounded on Conscious Mentalism that nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions (proposition 12). Although Hume’s argument between these two
propositions works explicitly on the notion of possible experience, I think it is clear that in it, he denies the perceivability of the putative causal relation as well.

In order to see that, let me first reiterate Hume’s way of putting the argument: “The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects.” (EHU 12.1.12) Hume is clearly indicating here that experience concerning this specific causal relation would require perceiving both relata. But as it is not possible to perceive Real entities – we conceive only perceptions - , experience of the causation is not possible either. So the form of his argument is modus ponens: if we had experience of the causal relation, we could perceive both relata. Since we cannot perceive both of them (Real entities imperceptible), experience of the causation is not possible. Hume clearly denies the possible experience of Real entities causing impressions.

However, this does not yet show that Hume denies the perceivability of the causal relation. For that we would need either of the following two presuppositions. (1) The perceivability of both relata is a necessary condition of the perceivability of a relation. (2) The extensions of possible experience and perceptible are equal in the case of causality. On that assumption, the denial of possible experience of the putative causal relation is also the denial of its perceivability. In a while I will argue for Hume’s endorsement of the first in the context of Hume’s theory of relations. But at this point, it is already possible to observe that no Hume scholar would doubt Hume’s consent to the second presupposition. Hume clearly treats possible experience and perceivability as coextensive in the case of causality at least. Since he denies the possibility of experience in the case of the causation between Real entities and impressions, he also must reject its perceivability.

Nevertheless, this still leaves the door open to a New Humean objection in terms of their distinction between ‘conceiving’ and ‘supposing’. Although this causal relation beyond perceptions is not perceivable, its existence can still be supposed. Therefore the relation is broadly intelligible. This objection can be replied in two ways. First, because Hume being a Representative Realist is dubious, it throws a shadow also on his alleged endorsement of the relative idea of Real entities. This we can see by a modus ponens argument. Hume’s putative endorsement of the relative idea of Real entities implies that he is a Representative Realist, for to take a relative idea adequate is to consider it as representing true state of affairs. If the relative idea in question is adequate, it really picks out Real entities that cause sense-impressions. But as we have seen in the case of the first profound argument, Hume being a Representative Realist is far from being clear. As the consequent in an implication is dubious, it casts a shadow on the antecedent, too.
While it must be conceded that this reply raises only a further problem in Strawson’s interpretation, the other is more substantial and it leads us to the second supplementary consideration for Winkler’s observation that Humean relations require resemblance. It consists of the proposition that Hume’s theory of relations rules out the broad intelligibility of relations beyond (possible) perceptions.

It is quite well-known that in the *Treatise*, Hume treats relations as complex ideas (Owen 1999, 79; Falkenstein 2006, 69). The firmest evidence for this can be found in the last paragraph of 1.1.4 where Hume passes from the principles of association to relations, a distinction he later puts in terms of “natural” and “philosophical relations” (association vs. reflective comparison) (T 1.3.6.16 and 1.1.5.2). At that place, Hume writes as follows:

“Amongst the effects of this union or association of ideas, there are none more remarkable, than those complex ideas, which are the common subjects of our thoughts and reasoning, and generally arise from some principle of union among our simple ideas. These complex ideas may be divided into RELATIONS, MODES, and SUBSTANCES.” (T 1.1.4.7)

This passage strongly suggests that from the point of view of our understanding, relations are complex ideas according to Hume, whether they result from association or reflective, philosophical comparison. Hume claims that the “effects” of association are complex ideas as well as philosophical relations, modes, and substances considered in the subsequent sections. From this, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that relations are, for the mind, reducible to the content of the perceptions constituting their relata. But as Falkenstein has argued convincingly, this would be a hasty conclusion (Falkenstein 2006, 69). The possible manner of spatial or temporal organisation of their parts, that is, the structure of the complex ideas must be taken into account. For example, if we had the complex idea corresponding to the proposition “the blue point is left to the red”, the colour of the points is not enough for understanding their spatial relation. We need to take their location, that is, the coloured points between them, into account.

The relevant point here, however, is that relations are, for our understanding, nothing but complex ideas (including their structure). Let us consider what implication this has for the broad intelligibility of the relations beyond perceivable. They are of the type R(a, x) where a is a positive idea and x imperceptible. The causal relation in the alleged relative idea of Real entities belongs to this type of relations. As relations are nothing over and above complex ideas and their structure, the idea of R(a, x) would not be distinct from the idea of a in any way at all. X does not add up anything to the idea and therefore it is numerically identical with the idea of mere a. Hence, the distinction between a relatum, considered separately, and the relation
can only be made when both *relata* are perceivable. The alleged relative idea of Real entities would not differ from its positive idea component in any way.

The minimal implication of this is that Hume places the constraint on broad intelligible relations that both of their *relata* are perceivable. In the case of the alleged relative idea of Real entities, this is not possible because one of Strawson’s premises is that we cannot have any intellectual access to Real entities *per se* (only by means of the relative idea). Hume’s theory of relations entails, then, that the relation component of this supposed relative idea is not broadly intelligible for us. Generally speaking, it implies that we cannot have any intellectual access to any relation beyond perceptions.

It is true that what Hume says about “philosophical relations” in the *Treatise* is missing from the first *Enquiry*. We do not have, however, any textual reason to suspect his continuing endorsement of the theory of relations as it is represented in the juvenile work. In addition, let us keep in mind that associations are also complex ideas and the same implications concern them as well as philosophical relations. Besides, it is clear that Hume still maintains his position on the associative relations of resemblance, contiguity, and causation in the first *Enquiry* (EHU 2 and 5.2.13-20). In each of these, it is required that both *relata* are perceivable. Associative resemblance and contiguity can obtain only between present perceptions. Causality is capable of passing the mind to an idea that is not present to it in the first place. Still that relation cannot be broadly intelligible to the understanding without perceiving both *relata* after the associative movement of the mind.

What Hume says about relations in both works firmly supports, then, the interpretation that the necessary condition of the broad intelligibility of a relation is that both of its *relata* are perceivable. As it is clear that Real entities are imperceptible - even Strawson accepts this -, it is well grounded to claim that Hume thinks that we cannot have any intellectual access to the putative causation between Real entities and impressions. This relation is not broadly intelligible for us in his view because it is a relation beyond perceptions.

In the third place, it is ironic that Hume’s theory of causality causes insurmountable problems for the broad intelligibility of the putative causal relation. Before we go to the objection, it is needed to observe initially that causation required for the alleged relative idea would be of a specific type. It would obtain between two specific kinds of items, Real entities and impressions. So the question is not of causal relation in general but of the intelligibility of a particular type of causation.
The objection itself can be seen on the basis of what Hume writes in Section 7 of the first *Enquiry*, which discusses the idea of necessary connection. Hume is explicit in the claim that without experience of the constant conjunction between causal *relata*, we could not even use the words “cause” and “effect” or entertain their notions (EHU 7.2.26-8 and 30). As even Strawson approves that Real entities are imperceptible and thus we cannot have experience of them, two things follow indisputably. (1) It is not legitimate to use causal terms in the case of the putative relation in Hume’s view. (2) Hume denies the broad intelligibility of this particular, putative causal relation. Without perceivability of Real entities, we cannot employ the notion of cause in their case.

We have, thus, compelling philosophical reasons to think that Hume denies any intellectual access to the alleged relation component in the supposed relative idea of Real entities. It follows from this that he rejects any intellectual access to the relative idea itself. It cannot be broadly intelligible if one of its essentials is not. Judged on philosophical reasons, Hume’s position must be then that it is not possible to have any relative idea of Real entities. His Conscious Mentalism together with the theories of relations and causality places such constraints on him that he has to reject it. The negative implication of these theories is so obvious that it is the most reasonable assumption that Hume not only must see it but that he actually does so.

If this did not yet convince Strawson or his defender, it could be acknowledged, for the sake of the argument, what Strawson in fact seems to concede of the putative causal relation. It is possible to have intellectual access to it, but it does not result in any determinate conception of the relation. (Strawson 1989, 67-8) Even after this concession, we are able to use Flage’s counter-argument and Winkler’s objection to Strawson’s view.  

Flage’s belief is that Hume really had a doctrine of relative ideas (Flage 2000, 146, and 150). He bases his judgement on the footnote of the idea of power, Hume’s allusions to relative ideas in the *Treatise*, and on his claim that there was a tradition of relative ideas before Hume in Locke and Berkeley. In Locke’s case, Flage’s reading is quite plausible but his claim that Berkeley’s notion of the spirit is a relative idea is, as I have remarked, controversial. The most dubitable part of Flage’s work is however

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219 It is somewhat remarkable that their powerful critiques in this specific topic have not been answered by Strawson or any proponent of the New Hume. It is even more remarkable that the New Humeans have not taken advantage of Flage’s work on relative ideas, notions, or conceptions in early modern philosophy, which is unique. His positive work could have provided them much on which to rely.
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that he uses Russell’s definite description in the interpretation of relative ideas (and real definitions) in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume (and the Port-Royal logic) (Ibid. 141 and 143-5). As he himself acknowledges, this is self-evidently anachronistic (Ibid. 143). Because of these controversial parts of Flage’s work, I reformulate his argument against Strawson in the way that it takes advantage of his insights but does not rest on the parts where his views are dubious (Flage 2000, 151-2). Winkler’s point is practically identical although it is rather an objection than a counter-argument (Winkler 2000, 79-80).

In this part of the Chapter, we are thus supposing that our understanding of the putative causal relation is indeterminate. This supposition implies that we do not have any determinate understanding of the cause of sense-impressions. As the understanding of this causal relation is indeterminate, it does not pick out a determinate entity or even a definite type of entity as the cause behind impressions. The relation can, so to speak, point at different kind of entities: Real material entities, brain, the mind as a spiritual substance, or even God (the last two are perception-independent, continuing entities). This we can see by considering the proposition corresponding to the alleged relative idea: “the thing that is the cause of a sense-impression, does not resemble it at all, and is not itself an impression.” This proposition as such may equally single out a Real material entity, a brain event, the spirit, or God. These entities are neither impressions nor similar with them.

Strawson seems to realise this (1989, 67-8), but still he goes on to claim that Hume assents to the relative idea of Real entities. But Flage’s counter-argument and Winkler’s objection can show that even if we had some access to the alleged causation, the relative idea formed on its basis would not be the relative idea of precisely Real entities. As even Strawson grants that Hume concedes the indeterminacy of the understanding of the relation, there is not much doubt that he would think that the alleged idea is not the relative idea of Real entities exactly. So even on the present assumption, Hume would not accept the relative idea of Real entities.  

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\[220\] If somebody suggested that the relative idea of Real entities is similar to the relative idea of power, he could be replied by the same point. This relative idea would not single out Real entities, as a kind of beings, as the causes of sense-impressions either. The proposal is that Real or the substantial bodies are imperceptible beings that explain the succession of our sense-impressions. In the similar fashion, power is the imperceptible circumstance of a cause that explains the occurrence of its effect. The difference between them is only in the relation. In the case of power, it is causality, whereas sense-impressions are only temporally or spatially successive and some of them temporally or spatially contiguous. However, the problem with this suggestion is that, on these
Besides, Flage is able to show that there is no guarantee that this supposed relative idea picks out any actual entity although it might be capable of singling out a possible entity. (Flage 2000, 152) In order to see this, let us consider a case where we have indeterminate understanding of a relation and are not sure whether its other *relatum* exists. Reid’s library example slightly modified is illustrative here, too. If I am not sure whether my university library has a copy of Hume’s *A Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh* but I know the location of Hume’s books in the library, this does not give me any reason to conclude that the library has the book. It is possible that they have the book but I cannot be sure although the relevant conditions are satisfied. In the first place, I have some understanding of the relation. The problem, however, is that it is indeterminate; it does not point at precisely one work by Hume. It follows from these conditions that my understanding of the relation does not provide me any ground to believe that the entity exists. There is no guarantee then that an indeterminate relative idea picks out any actual entity although it may single out a possible one. (I do not know whether the entity that the relation is meant to pick out exists.) Naturally, in the library case, I am able to check out from their online catalogue or the stacks whether they have this work by Hume. But in the case of Real entities, this is not possible; they are imperceptible.
Philosophical Reasons for the Relative Idea Objection

To conclude the discussion of Strawson’s interpretation and the relative idea reading of the 1777 addition, it is appropriate to take his two philosophical reasons for it into account. The first of them is linguistic and the other ontological. Strawson claims, in the first place, that Hume constantly uses Metaphysically Realistic terms and the distinction between objects as Real entities and perceptions as mental occurrences (Strawson 2002, 242, 3 and 4). For instance, when Hume speaks about the “secret powers” or “principles” of “objects” in EHU 4.2.1.6, he is thinking of “objects” as Real entities. Strawson’s argument for this particular use is that because perceptions are, in Hume’s view, totally transparent (T 2.2.6.2) and there cannot be anything hidden in totally transparent, “secret powers” of “objects” must be Real powers instead of merely perceivable principles. Hume’s use of “object” in EHU 4.2.16 must be then genuinely Realistic. (Ibid. 245) Strawson’s inference from this and the constant use of Realistic terms is that Hume takes them to be meaningful. His next step is to draw a transcendental conclusion. As there cannot be correspondent perceptions to constitute their meaning (Real entities are imperceptible), Hume must think that they have a referential meaning: Realistic terms refer to actual Real entities and this happens by virtue of relative ideas. (Ibid. 242, 3, and 4) This is the necessary condition of Hume taking the Realistic terms that he uses meaningful after perceptions are ruled out as the candidates for the providers of the meaning.

This linguistic argument by Strawson has two serious problems in it observed by Flage. First, Strawson presupposes that Hume “had a sophisticated theory of linguistic reference”, which he did not have (Flage 2000, 152). Although Flage puts his objection in quite strong terms, it is at least highly controversial whether Hume has any complete theory of linguistic reference – at least, he does not anywhere develop anything even close to it. The second problem in Strawson’s argument is that he thinks that every time Hume uses a Realist term, he takes it to have a clear or referential meaning. But then Hume’s works would not pass his own test of the clarity and significance of philosophical terms. (Ibid. 153) Flage has in mind, presumably, the constant use of causal terms like “power”, “force”, and “necessary connection” throughout the first Enquiry.

Flage’s second objection can thus be further supported by what Millican has remarked against the New Hume (Millican 2002c, 142-5). In to the 1750 edition, Hume inserted the footnote to EHU 4.2.16 where he makes known that the

“word, power, is here used in a loose and popular sense. The more accurate explication of it would give additional evidence to this argument. See Section 7.” (EHU n.7)
This footnote puts it beyond doubt that Hume can use a term without thinking that it has a clear, or, not to speak, referential meaning. Moreover it is evident that he thinks that sometimes we use in philosophy, and has to use, when describing certain things, pre-philosophical for instance, terms whose significance is constituted by confused ideas. One of the terms in the case of which we are under that obligation is “independent continuing external object”. Its meaning can be a confused idea to which we attribute relations that it as such does not inhabit. (see T 1.4.2).

After these considerations, it seems to me that Strawson’s linguistic argument cannot be considered satisfactory. His ontological argument works on the presupposition that Metaphysical Realism and phenomenalism are exhaustive alternatives for Hume: he has to be either a Metaphysical Realist or phenomenalist. If one denies that Hume is a Metaphysical Realist, he has to concede that he is a phenomenalist. Strawson’s further premise is that phenomenalism is an absurd position since it denies the existence of Real entities. His ontological argument has thus the form of reductio ad absurdum. If one rejects the Realistic reading of Hume, he attributes to him an absurd philosophical view. (Strawson 2002, 242-3) Strawson’s hidden supposition seems to be, then, that Hume a great philosopher cannot hold a view that Strawson himself takes to be absurd.

It can be remarked against Strawson that his thinking is too simplistic. He maintains that a phenomenalist not only reduces physical objects into perceptions but must also deny the existence of Real entities. This has naturally the problem of anachronism because the 20th century phenomenalism was not an option for Hume. The real difficulty is, however, that Hume does not have to deny the existence of Real entities even if he reduces physical objects into perceptions (which is not clear at all). It is completely possible for him to suspend his judgement on the existence of Real entities in his philosophy, that is, to stay ontologically neutral or sceptic on the issue. Thus, even if Hume is not a Metaphysical Realist, he does not have to maintain the philosophical position that Strawson takes to be absurd. Nor is then Strawson’s other philosophical argument convincing. Besides, both his philosophical arguments work on the premises of which we cannot be sure whether they are genuinely Humean. They seem to be more Strawson’s own or from the 20th century. Strawson’s philosophical arguments have then the problem of being anachronistic – and this time seriously.
Final Judgement of Hume’s View of the 1777 Addition

On the ground of the previous discussions, it is justified to conclude that neither textual nor contextual factors support Strawson’s belief that Hume endorses the relative idea of the matter and Real entities. By contrast, they suggest more that he rejects it. Especially Hume’s footnote on power in the first Enquiry indicates that the relative idea of the matter and Real entities is not compatible with his possible model of relative ideas in general. In addition, there are strong philosophical reasons to interpret Hume as denying that particular relative idea. We cannot have any intellectual access to it since its essential component, the relation, is not broadly intelligible to us at all. It is a causal relation beyond perceptions and Hume requires of causal relations that their both relata are perceivable. Moreover, the philosophical reasons that Strawson advances for the relative idea interpretation are not satisfactory and do not certainly work on Humean premises - unlike my philosophical arguments against it. Nevertheless, Hume’s texts and Flage’s work on relative ideas in Hume’s philosophical context are able to establish that Hume recognises the notion of relative ideas.

All these circumstances taken into account, it seems to me that we ought to prefer the straightforward reading of the 1777 addition. In it, Hume recognises the putative relative idea of the matter (Real entities) – perhaps he is alluding to Locke’s idea of general substance. Nonetheless, he rejects it as broadly unintelligible and thus unknown and inadequate. His use of “inexplicable” in the sentence is then more than Strawson’s imperceptible: it means that the putative notion is completely shut up from our understanding.221

The 1777 inserted line of argument interpreted in the following way is consequently a genuinely Humean, sceptical argument.222 It builds on the proposition in the pre-1777 argument that Real entities are imperceptible (19). Since the material substance is a continuously existing entity that is external to and independent of the mind, it belongs to the category of Real entities. Together with proposition (19), this implies that the matter (as a substance) is imperceptible for us, which is a central proposition in the 1777 argument.

The rest of the argument revolves around it; it works as an essential premise for it. Its natural implication is that we cannot have any direct or positive perception of the

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221 Yet it is to be emphasised that he does not take it as unintelligible in the strong contemporary sense of self-contradictory.
222 It is not, therefore, mere allusion to Berkeley in PHK 77-9 and DHP 107-8; Works II, 223.
material substance. The more relevant result, however, is that we cannot have any acceptable relative idea of the matter either. When we further presuppose Hume’s theories of relations and causality, the imperceptibility of the matter entails that we cannot have any intellectual access to the relation component in this supposed relative idea. Those theories require that both relata of a relation and causal relation are perceivable, but according to the imperceptibility of the matter, this is not possible in the case of the putative causation from the matter to sense-impressions. Hume thus does not accept any perception of the matter, direct or relative. As a result, he denies any intellectual access to the material substance as a perception-independent, continuous, and external entity. The matter is not broadly intelligible for Hume.223

The rest of the argument follows easily from this sub-conclusion. As we cannot have any intellectual access to the matter, Hume’s view is also that the material substance is totally unknown for us.224 Finally, Hume rejects the notion of the material substance because it is inadequate as unknown and broadly unintelligible. He assents to the supplementary conclusion of the second profound argument in the 1777 edition.225

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223 When we present the 1777 supplementary argument as Humean, we have to modify propositions (32) and (33) accordingly. The latter runs as follows: the material substance is not broadly intelligible for us (in the sense of having some intellectual access to it). The former has to be reformulated as saying that broad intelligibility presupposes direct or relative perception.

224 Proposition (35) does not therefore call for any modification, but we have to add qualification “broad” to the intelligibility of which (34) talks about.

225 In the context of concluding Hume’s attitude to the first profound argument, I observed that it results in the epistemological negation that we do not know whether our perceptions represent possible Real entities. Now we may conclude that it is Hume’s view that they do not. The second profound argument shows, according to him, that Real entities are broadly unintelligible for us. As such, they cannot be represented by perceptions.
Hume’s view of the Substratum Notion of Substance

If this interpretation of mine is correct, we can expect certain things of what Hume says about the substratum notion of substance. Substratum is the fundamental entity in which properties of things inhere. The relevant point is that the relation of inherence is equally a relation beyond perceptible as the supposed causation between imperceptible Real entities and impressions. The notion of substratum involves the supposition that substratum is an imperceptible entity supporting properties that can be perceived. It follows from this and my interpretation of Hume’s view of the relative idea of Real entities that it is to be expected that Hume rejects the substratum notion of substance. In this case, it would be a correct interpretation, as my position in the context of Hume’s attitude to the perceptibility of bare concrete particulars (proposition 18), that Hume does not hold the substratum notion of substance. If Hume’s expected rejection of the notion of substratum is supported by the texts, he also assents to proposition (18), which can be slightly reformulated at this point. Bare concrete particulars are totally out of the reach of our understanding; they cannot be broadly intelligible for us. This means that after we have excluded the perceivable properties of concrete particulars, there is nothing left for our understanding to get grasp of them.

When we consider Hume’s texts in which he discusses substratum, there is only one where it is not self-evident that he rejects it. That passage is the quoted beginning of the essay Of the Immortality of the Soul. I will discuss it in a moment, but before that, it is needed to refer to the places where Hume explicitly rejects the notion of substratum. The first context is at Of antient philosophy (1.4.3) in the Treatise. In that section, Hume’s discusses the Aristotelian hylomorphic natural philosophy, which he takes to assume an imperceptible “substance, or original and first matter” wherein “substantial form[s]” and “qualities” inhere (T 1.4.3.4-8). There is no doubt that he rejects this substratum notion completely. He treats it as a fiction and calls it a “conceit” and the system “entirely incomprehensible” (Ibid. 4, 7, and 8). On this basis, it is evident that Hume’s flirtation with the substratum notion of substance earlier in T 1.1.6 is not earnest. As we remember, he writes that

“the difference betwixt these ideas [of mode and substance] consists in this, that the particular qualities, which form a substance, are commonly refer’d to an unknown something, in which they are supposed to inhere; or granting this fiction should not take place, are at least supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation.” (T 1.1.6.2)

When this passage is read in comparison with how he rejects the notion of substratum as a fiction in Of antient philosophy, it is quite obvious that his reference to the substratum notion of substance here does not represent his own view.
Substratum is further criticised in relation to the immateriality of the soul. Above we have briefly considered Hume’s argument in which he turns the religious criticism of Spinoza’s monism against the religious critics themselves. He explicitly treats both Spinoza’s monistic ontology and the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul of Spinoza’s antagonists as the substratum theories of substance (T 1.4.5.18, 21, 23, and 25). He is equally hostile to both (Ibid. 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, and 29).

These passages from the Treatise where Hume discusses the substratum conception of substance have thus a common, clear message: Hume rejects the notion. On the basis of the Treatise, then, Hume denial of it is beyond reasonable doubt. But Of the Immortality of the Soul makes things more complicated. Let us first remind ourselves of what Hume writes at that place:

“Metaphysical topics [of which some of the arguments for the soul’s immortality are derived] are founded on the supposition that the soul is immaterial, and that it is impossible for thought to belong to a material substance.

But just metaphysics teach us, that the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect, and that we have no other idea of any substance than as an aggregate of particular qualities, inhering in an unknown something. Matter, therefore, and spirit are at bottom equally unknown; and we cannot determine what qualities may inhere in the one or in the other.” (E, IS, 591)

I have discussed this passage in the context of bare concrete particulars and Hume’s bundle theory of the perception of things (extended entities). In that place, I outlined the argument of the passage very generally. In this context, it is needed to be little more detailed. Let us first sketch the argument briefly and then consider Hume’s attitude to it.

The intent of the passage is to argue against the metaphysical reasonings for the immortality of the soul that are based on the presupposition that it is impossible for thinking to inhere in the material substance. The passage is therefore directed against this presupposition. It aims to argue then that it is entirely possible that thought inhere in the matter. The premise of the argument is what “just metaphysics” instructs us. Its teaching has a critical and positive message. The positive instruction is that we have the idea of substance as the bundle of the ideas of particular qualities. The critical message is that this is our only contentual idea of substance. Therefore, if the substance also includes a substratum, in which the bundle of particular qualities inhere, this substratum is X, “an unknown something”. Consequently, if “the notion of substance” includes the notion of a substratum, it is totally “confused and imperfect” as it involves an unknown component. It follows from this that because the matter or spirit is this X, they are both “at bottom” unknown. So we cannot determine which qualities inhere in the matter and which in the spirit. Is it the matter or spirit that is X in the case of this bundle? The presupposition of the metaphysical
arguments for the immortality of the soul is not thus true. It is entirely possible that thought, perceptions or their bundle, inheres in the matter.

Hume’s formulation of the passage seems to indicate that he accepts the substratum notion of substance. He writes that the proper metaphysics teaches us that the only idea of substance that we have is the bundle of the ideas of particular qualities inhering in substratum. He appears to imply that we have the idea of substance as substratum and this idea is acceptable although it is “confused and imperfect”. What is worse for my interpretation and promising for the proponents of the relative idea reading is that this idea of substance seems to be a relative idea. It would consist of a positive complex idea of qualities and a relation beyond perceivable to the substratum. We also know that Hume authorised the publication of the essay on 8 August 1776 (HL 2, 453). It might seem then that in his last moments, Hume wanted to make it known that he accepts the substratum conception of substance although he had sharply rejected it in the Treatise. Hume’s authorisation happened also after he had inserted the 1777 addition in to the first Enquiry, which happened in the spring 1776 (Beauchamp 2000a, xliii-iii). This may then signal as well that despite of all the opposite reasons, we should read the insertion in the Strawsonian way of reporting the endorsement of the relative idea of the matter and Real entities.

However, we should not draw that conclusion hastily and ought to ask instead whether there would be any other account of to what Hume is committing himself in the last-quoted passage. For that purpose, let us first pay attention to his formulation again. According to the passage, just metaphysics teaches us certain things. The first instruction is that “the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect”. It is only after this negative characterisation that the positive part comes: we have an idea of substance. But then Hume continues again with another critical message. The bundle of the particular qualities inheres in “an unknown something.” On this basis, Hume draws his negative conclusion concerning the knowledge of which bundles inhere in the matter and which in the spirit. The tone and content of the passage is thus almost entirely critical. It ought to make us ask whether Hume must assent to the substratum notion of substance in order to endorse the negative conclusion of the argument against the presupposition in the metaphysical arguments for the soul’s never-ending existence. In general, the conclusion of an argument can be true even if its premises are not. Besides, when we have an argument against a certain position, we ought to be careful in attributing endorsement of its premises to the proponent of the argument. He may advance it only ad hominem working on the beliefs of its target.
In this particular case, it is entirely possible that Hume’s argument is mainly *ad hominem*, that is, that he endorses most of its premises only for the sake of the argument. It is perfectly cogent to account the argument in the following way. The presupposition that thinking cannot inhere in the matter is not true even if we grant the substratum conception of substance. In that case, we would have a notion of substance that is more than the mere bundle of the ideas of particular qualities. The point is, however, that according to the substratum notion, the bundle of qualities inheres in an unknown something. It is then entirely possible that thought, the bundle of perceptions, inheres in the matter. The (supposed) fundamental entity of thinking is totally unknown and it is as equally possible that perceptions inhere in the matter as it is that they are supported by the spirit. This is the most that we are justified in concluding even in the case that we hold the notion of substratum.

Hume’s argument can then be accounted without attributing to him the substratum conception of substance. He can grant it only for the sake of the argument. This does not, however, yet establish it as the preferred interpretation. The account that Hume reports the endorsement of the substratum theory in the passage has equal claim of being the correct interpretation. We need, therefore, reasons outside this passage in order to decide the reading we ought to prefer. Next I will accordingly argue shortly that we should prefer the *ad hominem* reading mainly for the sake of making Hume consistent.

The *ad hominem* account has the clear advantage that in choosing it, we do not have to attribute a sudden, dramatic chance of mind to Hume on the basis of a single, dense, and somewhat fragmentary passage in which he advances a negative argument. Besides, the *ad hominem* reading does not compel us to deny Hume’s assent to the positive teaching of “just metaphysics” in the passage. It is entirely consistent for Hume to endorse one of the premises of the argument although he does not believe in the rest. Even in that case, Hume can still believe that we have an entirely adequate idea of substance as the mere bundle of the ideas of particular properties, that is, he may still subscribe to the bundle theory of the perceptions of substances and concrete particulars. On the *ad hominem* account, we are thus able to interpret Hume as maintaining a single theory of the idea of substance throughout his intellectual career from the *Treatise* to the lastly authorised text. For these reasons then, I think we ought to prefer the *ad hominem* reading to the substratum interpretation of the beginning of *the Immortality of the Soul*.

If my reading of the passages where Hume discusses substratum is correct, his attitude to it is exactly what we should anticipate on the basis of my interpretation concerning his view of the relative idea of the matter and Real entities. Hume rejects
the substratum notion of substance, which is expected because substratum involves a relation beyond perceptible. Hume’s rejection of substratum is clear in the *Treatise* and in order not to attribute to him a sudden change of mind on thin evidence, it is justified to read *Of the Immortality of the Soul* in that way as well.

Hume’s rejection of the substratum conception of substance has also the advantage - compared with reading him as endorsing it - that it does not create a tension within Hume’s thinking between his theory of substance and account of relations. The relation of inherence in the notion of substratum is a relation beyond perceptions, to which, according to the latter, we cannot have any intellectual access. The substratum reading would then oblige us either to modify our account of Hume’s theory of relations or even to deny his endorsement of it anymore in *Of Immortality of the Soul* (neither of which has any textual evidence supporting them). Hume’s denial of the substratum conception does not suffer from these problems. As it does not attribute to his thinking any relation beyond perceptions, it is compatible with his theory of relations.

Hume’s attitude to the substratum conception of substance has relevance also to his view of bare concrete particulars (proposition 18). As we recall, I argued above that if Hume does not maintain the substratum theory of substance, the bundle theories of the perceptions of substance and concrete particulars are his positions. What I have argued here substantiates therefore my claims in that context that (1) Hume thinks that the perceptions of things (extended entities) and “mathematical points” are mere bundles of the perceptions of particular properties and that (2) he thus denies any intellectual access to bare concrete particulars.
5 Conclusion

In order to draw the strands of the dissertation together, it is useful to keep two things separate. The first is to distinguish Hume’s view of Metaphysical Realism from that on the different theories of perception. The former is not only our main problem but the answer to the latter presupposes one to the former. For example, Hume can be neither a Direct Realist nor a Representative Realist (in the stipulated senses) without being a Metaphysical Realist.

Another helpful heuristic tool is to distinguish the evidence provided by Hume’s assent to the profound arguments from the potential further evidence that is textual in nature. This is useful in two respects. First, we are able to see precisely what Hume’s endorsement of the profound arguments really commits him to think. Second, extra evidence helps to discern the implications of these views for Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism and the different theories of perception. In the third place, the advantage is mutual. It will prove to be fruitful to read the further textual evidence from the perspective of the results substantiated by Hume’s attitude to the two profound arguments.

For these reasons, the Conclusion of this book is rather long compared with the normal procedure. I have organised it correspondingly. It begins by discussing the implications that Hume’s assent to the profound arguments has for his views. After that, I proceed to the consideration of the extra evidence. This leads us to establish the main thesis of the dissertation regarding Hume’s stance on Metaphysical Realism, my sceptical and positive dogmatic interpretation. The penultimate section of the conclusion concerns Hume’s sceptical attitude to the theories of perception in the first Enquiry. I will close the dissertation by observing how the sceptical positive dogmatic interpretation fits in with Hume’s epistemological realism and general philosophical programme.
5.1 Implications of the Profound Arguments

5.1.1 Justification
The immediate targets of the first profound argument seem to be two theories of perception, Direct Realism and Representative Realism. As I have argued, however, the justification of Metaphysical Realism is ultimately at stake. The endorsement of the first profound argument commits Hume to deny the possibility of any rational, epistemic justification for it, which means that the truth of the existence of Real entities cannot be supported by any reasons whatsoever. In the first place, it is not just to refer to the reliability of the natural instinct causing our primary belief in the existence of Real entities. That instinct is not reliable because it leads us to the primary but irrational, false, or at least misleading belief that Real entities themselves are present to the mind in sense-perception. What I have called diachronic justification cannot do the work required.

The situation is equally hopeless regarding the possibility of synchronic justification that is atemporal and does not refer to the causes behind the belief. For Hume, the only way to support the existence of Real entities synchronically would be to argue from their supposed effects, sense-impressions, to their existence. That kind of inductive causal argument is not, however, possible. According to Hume’s logic, inductive inferences work on the basis of experience of causality between types of objects or events. But it is not possible to have experience of the putative causation from Real entities to sense-impressions. Hume endorses Conscious Mentalism, according to which nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. As we can have experience only by virtue of mental perceptions, it not possible to have experience of any relation beyond them. The putative causation from Real entities to mental perceptions is not thus the object of our possible experience. Thus there cannot be any basis for supporting the existence of Real entities by the causal relation between them and sense-impressions. Metaphysical Realism cannot have any synchronic rational epistemic justification.

In Chapter 4.2.1, I have argued that Hume takes these two kinds of justification to be the exhaustive types of the rational kind of epistemic justification. Hume’s assent to the first profound argument thus obliges him to deny the possibility of any rational, epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism, which is granted by most of the Hume scholars (see Introduction). However, we should be careful not to exaggerate this result and keep constantly in mind that this is merely limited negative dogmatism concerning one possible type of epistemic justification. It implies nothing more than that from the point of view of reasons seeking reason, it is an open
question whether there are Real entities. The result does not mean that there are no Real entities, or that Hume must deny their existence. It remains completely possible that there are Real entities beyond our perceptions. We are not just able to prefer it to their non-existence, or conversely, on the basis of truth-supporting reasons. This conclusion suggests then that Hume suspends his judgement on the existence of Real entities. He neither believes in their existence nor denies it.

The next natural question is what entities belong to the category of Real entities, which has implications for Hume’s ontology. It is clear that any substance that is perception-independent, continuous, and external to the perceiver is a Real entity. As the material substance in its different forms (e.g. Cartesian and Lockean) satisfies these conditions, it is covered by such beings. Consequently, Hume’s attitude to the matter is most likely that its existence is completely without any rational, epistemic justification. So his view ought to be that the existence of the matter is an open question from the standpoint of reasons seeking reason. That result, in turn, supports the reading that Hume is a sceptic regarding its existence. The same results may be applied to the substantial bodies which are composed of the matter.

The case is not self-evidently so with regard to two other traditional substances, God and the soul. God is a human perception independent, continuous but not certainly a being with spatial location, which is the necessary condition of externality. The spatial location of the soul is likewise dubious although it seems to be a perception-independent and continuous being. An example of this would be Berkeley’s spiritual substance, upon which perceptions depend. Therefore the initial conclusion would be that the first profound argument is not applicable to these two entities. However, the argument against the rational epistemic justification of Metaphysical Realism is equally effective in their case. The point of the argument is the impossibility to argue from mental perceptions to non-mental beings. This follows from Conscious Mentalism that blocks any possible experience between perceptions and other kind of beings. This epistemological part of the first profound argument thus commits Hume to the view that the existence of God and the soul is unjustified in rational, epistemic terms. So it also suggests Hume’s suspension of judgment on this issue.
5.1.2 Intelligibility and Irrationality

As Hume himself observes, the second profound argument goes further than the first. In the first place, it terminates with conceptual negative dogmatism concerning Real entities. The pre-1777 editions conclude that we cannot have any perception of them. In the 1777 edition, Hume inserted a sentence that recognises and rejects what in scholarship is called the relative idea of Real entities. That notion makes the distinction between direct or positive perceptions and indirect or relative ideas. So it supplements the sensibilist theory of ideas, which is easily seen as including only positive perceptions. However, as Hume rejects the relative idea of Real entities, he is ultimately committed to the view that we cannot have any access to these possible entities by our understanding. They are broadly unintelligible; we can have neither positive nor relative perception of them. The second profound argument forces Hume thus to maintain complete conceptual negative dogmatism regarding Real entities.

It should be emphasised, however, that this does not mean that the notion of Real entities is somehow inconsistent. Hume’s unlimited conceptual negative dogmatism concerning them does not entail that they are impossible entities. This is a result that also fits well with the interpretation of Hume being a sceptic but not a dogmatic on the existence of Real entities: he neither endorses nor rejects but suspends his judgment on it. Real entities are possible entities that just are completely beyond our conceptual and rational epistemic capacities.

Another appropriate qualification of some consequence concerns meaning scepticism. The broad unintelligibility of Real entities does not imply that for Hume the very term “Real entity” is utterly meaningless. If it were, it would seem that we could not even know what we cannot conceive. In the first place, it is completely possible that by reiterating this term, we come to think that it has a meaning and there is a perception corresponding to it. This is what occurs according to Hume in the case of the Aristotelian technical terms “faculty and occult quality.” (T 1.4.3.10)

Secondly, as I have observed, it may happen that we confuse some other perception with the perception of Real entities. Actually, this is the case in Hume's account of the belief in everyday Direct Realism in the Treatise. To put this complicated explanation very briefly, we think that we perceive Real entities themselves, but in
Conclusion

fact, we only consider mental perceptions as having mind-independent and continuous existence. (T 1.4.2.31-40)

Nevertheless, the most relevant point is a philosophical observation following from Hume’s theoretical framework, which also concerns conflating distinct ideas. In Humean terms, it is rather clear that separately we can have clear and distinct ideas of independent, continuous, and external existence. First, we understand what it is to be causally independent, that is, that two objects do not affect each other. Second, short continuous existence can be conceived by watching briefly an unchanging object on a changing background (T 1.4.2.26-30). Finally, all the time that we keep our eyes open, in our visual field we see extended objects, which are external to our body. When these sense-impressions are copied, we have clear and distinct ideas of external objects. An important point is, however, that these external objects are external in apparent or relative space instead of Real or absolute space. Yet it is the case that we can have even clear and distinct ideas of independent, continuous, and external existence. This also implies that there is a legitimate idea of their combination: an independently, continuously, and externally existing entity. In the Humean framework, these terms have thus more or less determinate meaning - both separately and combined.

The first implication of these three points is that it is possible to feign to have a perception of Real entities. Therefore we can think that the term “Real entity” has meaning. The most substantial point follows, however, from the third consideration. The idea of independent, continuous, and apparently external entity is not identical with the idea of Real entity because Real entities are, by definition, external in absolute space. Yet it is close to the idea of Real entity and according to Hume, as it is shown, the human mind has the tendency to confuse ideas that are similar. Therefore it is possible to have a confused idea of Real entity. The crucial implication of this is that (1) we can paradoxically have some kind of grasp of what we cannot conceive and that (2) the term “Real entity” is not utterly meaningless.

It is to be emphasised, however, that when the putative idea of Real entities is subjected to meticulous philosophical analysis, it is concluded that actually it is not possible to conceive them in determinate manner. The pseudo-perception of Real entities is not the idea of them. This also only corroborates the interpretation that

226 According to Hume, this is really possible because of the bundle theory of the mind, in which the mind depends on perceptions and perceptions are independent of the mind (T 1.4.2.39).

227 Cf. the vulgar notion of power in EHU 4.2.16.
Hume rejects the very notion of Real entities; his general principle in philosophy is to reject terms with obscure and confused meanings (EHU 1.12, 2.9, and 7.1.1-4).

The same conclusions apply to Hume’s attitude to the matter as a substance. It and the substantial bodies belong to the category of Real entities, that is, to the perception-independent, Really external, and continuous beings. It is again helpful to be precise and to see the limitations of this claim. Denying the broad unintelligibility of the substantial matter and bodies does not imply that Hume cannot have a completely acceptable, different notion of matter and bodies. One possibility is what is nowadays called the phenomenalistic account.

The negative implication of this is that Hume’s rejection of the notion of the substantial matter (and bodies) is most likely. If the matter is beyond our intellectual access - whether it exists or not -, we cannot represent it to ourselves. From this it seems to follow that it ought to be rejected. Perhaps there could be some presuppositions that might prevent this negative implication from following, but in Hume’s case I am not able to see any. It is to be pointed out, however, that this does not entail the non-existence of the matter either. It means merely that we should not employ its notion in philosophy.

According to Hume’s second profound argument, Real entities in general are equally beyond our comprehension. Therefore any notion of substance involving perception-independency, continuous existence, and Real spatial location ought to be likewise rejected. The substratum notion of the material substance belongs to this category and as I have argued, Hume’s rejection of the relative idea of the matter supports this interpretation. We have therefore strong grounds to think that Hume rejects it and any notion of substance as a perception-independent, Really external, and continuous entity.

Here perhaps a brief comparison with Berkeley is illustrative to the reader. Berkeley’s intention is to show that the matter is an impossible entity and cannot exist because of being self-contradictory. In the *Principles*, this ontological and logical nature of the arguments that Berkeley considers strongest is evident in his so-called “Master Argument”, for instance (PHK 22-23). Hume’s reasonings, on the contrary, do not aim at establishing the impossibility of the matter but “merely” its broad unintelligibility. The material substance and substantial bodies are just something that

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228 This does not imply, however, that Hume is mainly occupied with concept analysis in the 20th century manner. First, Hume’s interest lies rather in perceptions than in concepts. Second, even perception analysis is in an inferior position in his mature works.
we cannot represent to ourselves, which does not mean, however, that they do not exist. This may suggest that Berkeley is an ontological dogmatic, whereas Hume is rather a sceptic regarding the material substance.

Above I concluded that one part of the first profound argument is equally effective against God and the soul as it is against Real entities and the matter. In the case of the second profound argument, it is not, however, the case. The necessary condition of its target is that it is a concrete entity (susceptible to spatial location) or has quantitative properties. God and the substantial soul do not seem to be concrete entities nor is it reasonable to suppose that they have only quantitative properties. Naturally, from this it does not follow that Hume could not and does not repudiate their broad intelligibility. He may have other arguments against them and at least in the *Treatise*, regarding the soul, that is actually the case (T 1.1.6.1, 1.4.5.3-6, 1.4.6.2, and T 3.App.11-8).

There is therefore a difference between the two profound arguments. The first is mainly epistemological in nature, whereas the second, up to this point, is a conceptual argument. As we know, its ultimate conclusion is quite different. In order to set the stage for it, it is to be pointed out a few things of the argument so far to the broad unintelligibility of Real entities and the material substance. Firstly, one of its crucial premises is the Sensible Qualities Principle, the hypothetical form of which Hume takes to be a well-established, inductive-causal tenet. It has a firm ground on an inductive-causal argument. Secondly, the rest of the argument for the conclusion under consideration, according to my reconstruction, is a result of a thorough and meticulous perception analysis. Here it is mainly Hume’s analysis of the perception of extension and concrete entities that is relevant. So this result belongs to the operations of reason as the idea-comparing, that is, intuitive faculty. On these two grounds, we are justified in claiming that the broad unintelligibility of Real entities is a rational stance according to Hume.

As we already know, this is crucial for the ultimate conclusion of the second profound argument in all editions of the first *Enquiry* and the *Treatise*. The belief in the existence of Real entities contradicts to a rational attitude and runs contrary to Humean reason. According to my reconstruction, this inconsistency means that the regular use of Humean reason compels us to refrain from believing in the existence of Real entities. It implies an attitude that is contradictory to the attitude of assenting to their existence. This follows from the rationality of their broad unintelligibility (negative conceptual dogmatism) and Hume’s theory of belief along with the constraints that that theory places on rational beliefs. Rational beliefs ought to have broadly intelligible content and as this is impossible in the case of Real entities, we
refrain from believing in their existence when rational. A presupposition of this line of argument is of course that refraining from that belief is psychologically possible, which has been established in the previous Chapter and will be discussed further when Hume’s final stance on Metaphysical Realism is considered.

It cannot be overemphasised that Hume takes this to be a result of mainly consistent inductive inference although there has been a clear tendency in Hume scholarship to avoid or even ignore it. Even if my account of the contrariety and contradiction is not correct, Hume is explicit that the belief in Real entities is in some way or another inconsistent with methodical inductive inference. To interpret him as both a Metaphysical Realist and endorsing induction at the same time faces therefore the threat of attributing a conscious inconsistency to him. Although Hendel and Kemp Smith already recognised this problem, it has not attracted enough attention in Hume scholarship (Hendel 1963, 198-9 and Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 127-31). Garrett and Loeb discuss it, but in the New Hume debate there has been silence although Wright and Strawson can be read as trying to avoid it. So, one implication of Hume’s endorsement of the second profound argument is that this problem ought to be seen as serious and calling for extensive and detailed discussion. It must not be simply played down. Hume himself considers it a profound and solemn problem.

To sum up, then, what Hume is committed to think of Metaphysical Realism after endorsing the two profound arguments. First of all, the belief in the existence of Real entities including the material substance and substantial bodies cannot have any rational, epistemic justification. We are not able to support its truth by any reason whatsoever. The same concerns the existence of God and the soul. In the second place, Real entities, the substantial matter and bodies are completely broadly unintelligible for us although they are not impossible entities. Therefore their notions ought to be repudiated. However, from this it does not follow that Hume takes these terms to be wholly insignificant. It is possible that they can have obscure and confused, though not precise meaning.

The third and most serious conclusion is that the belief in Real entities and the matter is inconsistent with the methodical use of reason, of which Hume emphasises inductive inference in this context. Both cannot be endorsed at the same time because the consistent use of reason leads to refraining from the assent to the existence of Real entities. Yet not even this result means that the notions of Real entities, the matter and substantial bodies are self-contradictory. In light of the profound arguments, they, God, and the soul are completely possible entities as their
notions do not involve inconsistencies - though understanding them is beyond our intellectual capacities.

5.2 Further Textual Evidence

I have proposed on a few occasions already that sceptical interpretation concurs well with these results: Hume would suspend his judgement on the existence of Real entities and the matter. However, this conclusion is not permitted without considering possible other textual evidence and still potential philosophical ways to subscribe to Metaphysical Realism. Can Hume still hold on to it in the face of these negative results? Or is the traditional Reid-Green interpretation of negative dogmatism notwithstanding the correct one?

5.2.1 Justification

Let us begin with the question of epistemic justification. Is there or can there be any other kind of epistemic justification for Hume than rational? As I have shown in Introduction, there is widespread consensus among Hume scholars that there is not: Hume denies any epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism. Yet there are (at least) two interpretative lines opened by Loeb and Garrett that might yield a different account. Loeb has argued that Hume endorses stability-based diachronic justification in everyday life. The justification he attributes to Hume must be then internal, diachronic, non-rational, but still epistemic. If Loeb is correct, in Hume’s opinion, there then has to be a type of epistemic justification beyond rational epistemic justification. It does not exhaust epistemic justification for Hume. So he could, in principle, avoid denying any epistemic justification for Metaphysical Realism.

As we recall from the Introduction, however, Loeb claims that Hume denies the possibility of any epistemic justification under reflection. Deep reflection leads us to all-embracing instability and thus to the unjustified status of every belief. So Loeb himself thinks that Hume denies epistemic justification for the belief in Real entities after having being subjected to the first profound argument. Besides, the problem with the possibility that Loeb’s interpretation raises is its almost exclusive basis on the Treatise. It is the first Enquiry that we use as Hume’s authoritative and final view of these issues. We would then need some textual evidence from that work with regard to the belief in Real entities. Thus, is there anything in EHU that suggests that Hume takes that belief to have some stability-based, epistemic justification? As far as I can see, there is not the slightest intimation in that direction or any implicit presupposition of it in the entire work. The other mature works are equally silent on
it. The possibility of stability-based, epistemic justification is thus not supported by Hume’s mature works.

In his recent article (2006) especially, Garrett has suggested that the belief in Real entities has consequentially naturalistic, non-rational, epistemic justification. It serves our inclinations, needs, and desires in human (everyday) life. The relevant point here is that Garrett takes this to be epistemic rather than practical justification. It attributes some epistemic merit to the belief making it warranted with regard to truth.

Garrett grounds his proposition on the Title Principle, which we can find in the Treatise. Yet, as far as I can see, there is no textual evidence in any of Hume’s work for the belief in Real entities having epistemic justification. The Title Principle concerns rather reason than the senses. It is true that there is textual support for inductive inference and beliefs being epistemically justified despite their rationally unjustified status – as Loeb’s work shows, for example (see EHU 5.1.6, 10.1.4, and 12.3.29). But we should be cautious in extrapolating this to the case of the belief in Real entities. Hume does not take them to be on par regarding the profound sceptical arguments. The epistemic foundation of inductive inference and beliefs, the Uniformity Principle that unobserved is uniform with experience, is merely rationally and epistemically unjustified (EHU 12.2.22). But the belief in the existence of Real entities is contrary to Humean reason and Real entities are broadly unintelligible to us.

In addition, Norton has argued convincingly that for Hume, in contrast to Reid, naturalness does not imply epistemic merit (Norton 1982, 201-2). Although Garrett does not explicitly speak about naturalness in this connection, his proposition involves it in the relevant sense. The merit of the belief in Real entities is judged on whether its consequences suit our natural inclinations, needs, and desires.

For these reasons, then, Garrett’s suggestion is not satisfactory. All in all, Hume’s works discuss only the possibility of rational epistemic justification when considering epistemic justification for the belief in Real entities. His final word on the issue works on the presupposition that there are only two forms of this rational, epistemic justification in its case. Since Hume argues that neither of them can do the needed work, I think we should conclude that he is a negative dogmatic on the matter.

229 “Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us.” (T 1.4.7.11)
Hume denies the possibility of any epistemic justification for the belief in Real entities and the substantial matter and bodies.

Notwithstanding this negative result, it is still possible that Hume claims this belief has a practical justification. As we recollect from Introduction, that the belief in Real entities is practically justified is one part of Kemp Smith’s naturalistic interpretation. It is a fundamental natural belief with beneficial consequences from the point of view of our (everyday) lives. This is sanctioned by the more fundamental level of providential Nature that has compelled us to hold this belief for our own good. In Kemp Smith’s view, Hume thinking is ultimately grounded on natural providentialism, which was typical of his day. Yet it is to be emphasised that Kemp Smith does not take this to imply that the belief in Real entities has some epistemic merit. The justification is of a practical kind.

This is close to the practical solution to two other related problems in Hume scholarship. The first is the so-called problem of David Hume: does he deny any justification for inductive inference? The second concerns philosophising itself. After strong sceptical arguments, are we still entitled to prefer philosophy to religion, and in particular superstition? Michael Ridge has claimed that Hume’s answer to the second question is positive in practical terms of utility and agreeableness. Philosophy as the methodical use of the understanding can satisfy these conditions and it is thus practically justified. (Ridge 2003, 167-8 and 183-4) If we attribute consistent inductive inference to the methodical use of the understanding, it seems to follow that also induction has a practical justification of this type according to Hume.

By contrast to Garrett’s suggestion of epistemic justification, there appears to be something in Ridge’s interpretation of practical justification. Hume says twice in the first *Enquiry* that his “ACADEMICAL philosophy” may be beneficial (to humankind) (EHU 12.3.24, and 25). This is especially relevant when compared with what he states about Pyrrhonism in the previous paragraph and about religion in many places. Pyrrhonism could not “be beneficial to society” even if it had “constant influence on the mind” (EHU 12.2.23). An entertaining example of Hume’s view of the consequences of religion is in the second *Enquiry*, where Hume argues that “the monkish virtues” are vices just because they have dangerous and painful consequences for the monk and consequently to society: they “stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper.” (EPM 9.1.3). As Hume elegantly puts it in the *Treatise*: “Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous, those in philosophy only ridiculous.” (T 1.4.7.13) Religion is

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230 See also T 1.4.7.12-13.
accordingly dangerous, whereas philosophy can be useful and in the worst case, its mistakes are harmless. Academical philosophy has therefore practical justification and we have a good reason to prefer it to religion. What is more, without doubt, Academical philosophy comprises consistent inductive inference (EHU 12.3.25, 28-30, and 34). So it seems that Hume takes methodical inductive inference to have practical justification although it does not appear to have any epistemic warrant.

However, even if this is the correct interpretation for the justification of philosophy and induction, it does not follow that it also concerns the belief in Real entities. It depends on the question whether Hume takes Academical philosophy to comprehend that belief. Discussion of this question must be postponed for a while. From this it follows that we have to put aside the possibility of practical justification for the belief in Real entities and thus the assessment of Kemp-Smiths’s interpretation on this issue. I will come back to these issues below.

5.2.2 Irrationality

So far we have concluded that Hume denies any epistemic justification for the belief in the existence of Real entities and the matter, rejects their notions as broadly unintelligible and takes methodical use of reason, mainly inductive inference, as inconsistent with that belief. However, despite these negative results, it is a fact that there is evidence for Hume being a Metaphysical Realist. Most of those passages are well known, so a brief consideration of them suffices for our purposes.

They consist mainly of what can be called “the involuntariness passages”. I have already quoted three of them in discussing whether Hume takes the belief in Real entities as absolutely involuntary. In EHU 12.2.23, Hume states that the only tendency that the Pyrrhonian arguments can have is to show “the whimsical condition of mankind”. We must act, reason, and believe although we cannot found these operations on certain basis (or refute the arguments against them). The natural reading of this passage is that it also alludes to the belief in Real entities. It is thus an involuntary, uncertain belief against which there are irrefutable arguments.

In a familiar place in the Abstract, Hume concludes that nature always overcomes Pyrrhonism and compels us to assent to the external existence (Abs.27). Equally famously, he begins his explanation of the primary belief in Direct Realism in the Treatise by asserting that “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.” The sceptic “must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, tho’ he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his choice, and
has doubtless, esteem’d it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations.” (T 1.4.2.1)

Though Hume expresses doubts about this statement in the penultimate paragraph of the section, he finishes it with the following yet unquoted affirmation:

“For this reason I rely entirely upon them; and take it for granted, whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world; and going upon that supposition, I intend to examine some general systems both ancient and modern, which have been propos’d of both, before I proceed to a more particular enquiry concerning our impressions.” (T 1.4.2.57)

Between these, Hume also writes that even philosophers have “so great propensity to believe” in the existence of Real entities that faced with Conscious Mentalism, they invent Representative Realism (T 1.4.2.56; see also 50).

Finally, just before proclaiming the whimsical condition of mankind, Hume writes that “[n]ature is always too strong for principle.” (EHU 12.2.23) This formulation is reminiscent of the well-known passage in the *Abstract*. The same point is also made when Hume discusses the second “species” of Academical philosophy in EHU 12.3:

“To bring us to so salutary a determination [Academical philosophy], nothing can be more serviceable, than to be once thoroughly convinced of […] the impossibility, that any thing, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it [Pyrrhonism].” (EHU 12.3.25)

All these passages suggest that the natural causes of the belief in Real entities are psychologically so strong that the belief cannot be continuously suspended or rejected. In some of them, Hume also appears to claim that he takes it as an unfounded, fundamental belief. Its logical and epistemological status seems to be then that of an axiom, which we take for granted. To this, it may be added a passage from *A Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh* where Hume writes that the belief is also highly certain. This happens in one of the points at which Hume comments his attitude to religion. But as it occurs in the section of the *Letter* answering to the accusation of scepticism, it is justified to treat it as relevant for our present problem:

“And must not a Man be ridiculous to assert that our Author denies the Principles of Religion, when he looks upon them as equally certain with the Objects of his Senses? If I be as much assured of these Principles, as that this Table at which I now write is before me; can any Thing further be desired by the most rigorous Antagonist?” (Letter 22)

Considering all these passages by Hume at the same time, is it possible not to conclude that Hume believes firmly in the existence of Real entities and the matter? Even a detailed analysis of these passages revealing subtle differences between them would not suffice to eliminate these passages. As a minimum, Hume believes that the natural instinct behind the belief in Real entities is psychologically powerful, rendering perpetual resistance to it impossible. But what are we to do with our
conclusions then? Is not Hume embracing a manifest contradiction in his own view? On the one hand, he seems to hold the belief in Real entities. On the other, Real entities (and the matter) are broadly unintelligible in Hume’s view, he rejects their notions in philosophy, and assenting to their existence is unjustified and inconsistent with the constant use of Humean (inductive) reason.

Next I will accordingly discuss this problem, which leads to the final judgment on Hume’s view of Metaphysical Realism. I begin by commenting on its habitual treatment in Hume scholarship. After that, I present and assess Kemp-Smith’s view and solution of the problem, which requires a short discussion of Hume’s Academical philosophy. By that means, I conclude that Kemp Smith’s solution does not work; rather, it merely intensifies the problem for the naturalistic interpretations. Finally, I evince a novel resolution to the problem, which also has implications for the main problem, and discuss passages for and against it. That will reveal how we ought to take Hume’s critical stance on Real entities and the involuntariness passages.

The standard reaction in Hume scholarship has been to emphasise the involuntariness of the belief in Real entities and to play down or even forget their broad unintelligibility and irrationality. Most of the recent Metaphysically Realistic commentaries - naturalistic in particular - witness this tendency (Stroud is a good example). There have been, however, notable exceptions with enough intellectual honesty. As I have observed above, Garrett, Wright, Baier, Livingston, and Morris have tried to prevent the problem from arising. However, I have shown that their strategies are not successful. They cannot save Hume from really facing the problem between the involuntariness passages and the irrationality of the belief in Real entities.

Kemp Smith has therefore been most cogent because he has recognized the problem and answered it instead of trying to steer away from it.231 In fact, Kemp Smith puts the irrationality problem in the way that makes it even worse for the naturalistic interpretation. He interprets Hume as thinking that the inconsistency is between two natural properties and fundamentally between two natural beliefs. First, we have noted that Kemp Smith interprets the belief in the existence of Real entities as a natural belief. The other side of the dilemma arises from the point that we have also natural propensity to reason causally and to believe that every event has some cause (T 1.4.7.4). It is this other propensity that leads us to ask for a cause to everything and is equally natural as to believe in Real entities. Hume shows, however, that these

231 Hendel also recognises the problem, but his answer to it is ambiguous (Hendel 1963, 199).
two natural propensities collide when the latter is pursued rigorously. (Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 127-8) There appears to be, thus, an inherent inconsistency in human nature.

Kemp Smith’s answer to this problem can be called “taming strategy”. Hume can avoid the problem by thinking that we ought to tame our natural propensity to ask for a cause to everything. In that case, the problem would not arise. We, so to speak, retreat from the confrontation. Actually, Kemp Smith thinks that this is merely an instance of what scepticism is in Hume’s works. His general point is that it is ground clearing in the sense that it opens the door for naturalistic explanations. When coherence and reasons seeking reason cannot alone make us hold certain fundamental beliefs, it must be due to our more instinctive nature. The problem under discussion shows that it is such in another sense, too. The second profound argument reveals a “mistaken endeavour”, to reason causally too far. (Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 131-2) For Kemp Smith’s Hume, then, there is a limit to consistent inductive inference that is shown by the joint play of scepticism and natural impulses. Hume’s scepticism is ground-clearing also in the sense of showing the limits of some natural impulses. In the argument for the Sensible Qualities Principle, methodical inductive inference goes too far because it violates our basic natural belief in the existence of Real entities.

Kemp Smith’s reading has the value of showing that the basic naturalistic point of the involuntariness of the belief in Real entities cannot save Hume from the second profound argument. The propensity to ask for a cause to everything is equally natural and involuntary (to some extent). There also seems to be something in his taming strategy because Hume’s Academical philosophy involves some limitation of inductive inference.

In order to judge Kemp Smith’s interpretation on this specific issue, we need then to consider in what senses Hume limits inductive inference. For that question, the relevant texts are Part 3 of Section 12 of the first Enquiry and the first Part of the Dialogues. The result of that consideration is negative from Kemp Smith’s point of view because even the brief analysis of these texts shows that his taming solution does not work.

It is useful to embark on this discussion with Hume’s limitation of the proper objects of induction and philosophy in general in his Academical philosophy. The famous sentence in the Enquiry goes as follows:

“A correct Judgment observes a contrary method, and [...] confines itself to such subjects as fall under daily practice and experience” (EHU 12.3.25).
According to Hume, then, the proper objects and topics of induction and philosophy are the objects upon which we are employed in our everyday lives. How are we to understand this methodical prescription? The natural answer is the contemporary ordinary meaning of “object”: a concrete everyday entity like a chair, table, house, tree, and their properties. In the Dialogues, Hume (as Philo) thus speaks about “the surrounding bodies” and in T 1.4.7, there is a positive remark about “many honest gentlemen [in England], who […] have carry’d their thoughts very little beyond those objects, which are every day expos’d to their senses.” (DNR 1, 36; and T 1.4.7.14)

However, the objects of common life are not exhausted by concrete particulars. Here another meaning of “object” comes into play: an object is something at which our attention is directed. The “subjects” of “daily practise and experience” are therefore matters that we meet in everyday life. The category of the subjects of daily life covers thus also human being in its various manifestations: human nature, reason and the understanding, passions, morality, politics, criticism (aesthetics), and history. So we may change the talk of the “subjects” of “daily practise and experience” to that of the objects and topics belonging to its sphere. It is these issues that Hume’s corpus studies and they are to be found in the list of “the proper subjects of science and enquiry” in last paragraphs of the first Enquiry, too (EHU 12.3.26, and 30-33; see also DNR 1, 37). Hume thus limits the objects and topics of induction and philosophy into those of natural and moral philosophy: bodies, their properties and powers, causes and effects, and every object belonging to the sphere of common life, history and politics, beauty and deformity, vice and virtue, passions and emotions, truth and falsehood.

Instead, there are many theological objects and topics that Hume restricts out of what philosophy should study. This is best evident in these two passages from the first Enquiry and Dialogues, the latter of which clearly elaborates the former:

“[C]an we ever satisfy ourselves concerning any determination, which we may form, with regard to the origin of worlds, and the situation of nature, from, and to eternity?” (EHU 12.3.25)

“[…] When we carry our speculations into the two eternities, before and after the present state of things; into the creation and formation of the universe; the existence and properties of spirits; the powers and operations of one universal spirit, existing without beginning and without end; omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, infinite, and incomprehensible […] we have got quite beyond the reach of our faculties.” (Philo speaking) (DNR 1, 36-7)

232 The situation is complicated by Cleanthes’ criticism of Philo in the next page, to which Philo does not immediately reply. Here this complication is not relevant, however, since for us it suffices to see what Hume restricts out of the true philosophy at most.
Conclusion

A little bit later in the *Dialogues*, Hume, as Philo, explicitly speaks about “theological reasonings” (Ibid. 37). For him, thus, at least the creation of the universe, the final judgment, the nature of angels and God are outside of the bounds of the human reasoning capabilities – it may be the case regarding providence, too (see EHU 11). These passages suggest, then, that the demarcation line between the proper and quasi-objects of the understanding goes at least along the border between everyday human life and the supernatural objects and topics of theology.

The ground for this demarcation is formed by the epistemic foundation of induction and philosophy, experience:

“A correct Judgment [...] confines itself to [...] daily practice and experience” (EHU 12.3.25).

There are two corresponding assertions in the *Dialogues*:

“[T]he larger [common life] experience we acquire, [...] the stronger reason we are endowed with” (DNR 1, 36)

“we make appeals [...] to common sense and experience” (Ibid. 37)\(^{233}\)

This methodological claim by Hume calls for an extended discussion in itself. At the very end, I will briefly come back to this issue, but here it is enough to note the following. Philosophers ought to ground their reasonings, which are mainly inductive, on the experience we get in living and observing everyday life. So not only the objects and topics of induction and philosophy ought to be from the sphere of common life, the ground of studying these objects is daily experience, too.\(^{234}\) This fits well with Hume’s two well-known statements that the foundation of induction is experience:

“A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full proof of the future existence of that event.” (EHU 10.1.4)

“[T]hese [causal] arguments are founded entirely on experience. [...] It is only experience, which [...] enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge”. (Ibid. 12.3.29)

\(^{233}\) Consider a similar passage from the suppressed essay *Of Essay-Writing* (1742) as well: “Even Philosophy went to Wrack by this moaping recluse Method of Study, and became as chimerical in her Conclusions as she was unintelligible in her Stile and Manner of Delivery. And indeed, what cou’d be expected from Men who never consulted Experience in any of their Reasonings, or who never search’d for that Experience, where alone it is to be found, in common Life and Conversation?” (E, EW, 534-5)

\(^{234}\) An example of this could be Hume’s explanation of inductive inference. In everyday life, we observe that people draw inductive inferences. Hume accounts for this experienced phenomenon by means of three equally familiar principles: custom, association, and experience. (see EHU 5)
Hume’s last point of limitation concerns again everyday life. The right type of philosophical reasoning is of the same kind with everyday reasonings:

“[P]hilosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodized and corrected.” (EHU 12.3.25)

“[E]very one, even in common life, is constrained to have more or less of this philosophy; [...] that the larger experience we acquire, and the stronger reason we are endowed with, we always render our principles the more general and comprehensive; and that what we call philosophy is nothing but a more regular and methodical operation of the same kind. To philosophise on such [common life] subjects is nothing essentially different from reasoning on common life” (DNR 1, 36)

As it was above, the passage from the Dialogues elaborates on what Hume has said in the Enquiry. In the latter, it is still somewhat vague what it means that philosophising is merely methodical and corrected everyday reflection. The former makes it clear that the type of reasoning in both common life and philosophy is mainly inductive. By means of reasoning in that manner, we terminate with more and more general principles. In addition, there is not much doubt that this kind of everyday reasoning is causal as well in Hume’s view. That is shown by EHU 4 and 5.1, for example. We are therefore justified in concluding that Hume restricts philosophical reasoning mainly to how he understands inductive inference.235

The general picture of philosophising that Hume draws in these passages is thus the following. The main method of philosophy is to employ inductive inference on the topics and objects of everyday life in systematic way and based on daily experience. Inductive inferences are then restricted in their method, ground, and objects, the proper sphere of which is formed by common life. This does not mean, however, that Hume forbids transcending everyday life by virtue of these reasonings. It is not so as long as these conditions are satisfied.236 The problem with the theological reasonings seems to be then that they violate these restrictions.237

235 Recall that the analysis of perceptions also belongs to the philosophical use of reason.
236 It is entirely permitted to come up with imperceptible and thus unexperienced explanatory principles. For example, recollect footnote 17 in Section 7 of the first Enquiry, which suggests that the idea of power picks out an imperceptible factor in the cause and it is that factor that explains perceptible causation. As imperceptible, it cannot be the object of everyday experience although talk of powers is frequent in common life.
237 Within the constraints of this work, it is not possible to discuss this problem. Above I have noted that the problem in many theological reasonings like the design argument may be, in Hume’s view, that they are not based on perceptible (causal) relation, which is an object of possible experience. Hume’s attitude to the design argument is complicated, however, as it is well known, by the last Part of the Dialogues.
So, if we consider Kemp Smith’s taming solution in light of these conditions, the second profound argument is not outside the bounds of proper inductive inference and philosophy. It and the argument for the Sensible Qualities Principle concern phenomena of everyday life: the perception of concrete entities, variation in perceiving their qualitative properties by our senses, and the extent of permitted beliefs (object). They also work on the basis of daily experience (ground). Finally, the argument for the SNQP is an instance of drawing basic inductive inference in methodical and regular way (method of inferring). Hence, at least from the point of view of how Hume limits induction and philosophy in his Academical philosophy, the second profound argument is not something that ought to be tamed according to him.

Furthermore, the passages that we have considered are not just any passages whatsoever. Rather, they are from Hume’s mature conclusion on the understanding. So we should put much weight on them. It is therefore justified to maintain that Hume does not want to tame the second profound argument; it is not something that the conflict with our “natural” belief in Real entities shows to be too far gone. On the contrary, as an Academical philosopher - we have firm grounds to believe - Hume intends to promote it as the proper, methodical use of reason. In the end, we have good reasons to conclude that Kemp Smith’s solution to the irrationality problem is not satisfactory.

Before proceeding to what else we can conclude on the basis of Hume’s Academical philosophy, a possible objection must be answered. Wright has contended that Hume’s restriction of the “philosophical decisions” into “the reflections of common life” shows that his Academical philosophy involves submitting to the everyday judgment that there are Real causes (Wright 2000, 95-6). Wright’s claim thus implies that Hume’s Academical philosophy comprehends Metaphysical Realism. His contention may be replied by asking whether there is anything in the text of the first Enquiry that sanctions it. Does Hume anywhere even suggest that his Academical philosophy involves Causal Realism? It seems to me plain that there is not; at least Wright does not present any textual evidence from the places where Hume discusses Academical philosophy, EHU 5.1.1 and EHU 12.3.

Besides, is there anything that shows Academical philosophy to encompass Metaphysical Realism? The answer is again negative. It is true that some of the objects of Academical philosophy are concrete entities of everyday life – tables, chairs, etc. The question is, however, that is it necessary for Hume to think that they are Real in their ontological status? It is clear that it is not. First, we need to take into consideration that “philosophical decisions” are not identical with “the reflections of
common life”; they are “methodized and corrected” judgements of everyday life. Hume the Academical philosopher does thus not self-evidently hold the everyday belief that concrete entities are Real in their nature. In the second place, before him, Berkeley, for example, has claimed that they are not perception-independent though external and continuous. In addition, an account of them nearing to what is nowadays called phenomenalism is completely open for Hume. Indeed, this direction is suggested by the part of the dissertation where it is argued that Hume takes the perceptions of concrete particulars to be bundles of perceptions.

Thus, it appears to be the case that Hume’s Academical philosophy does not involve Metaphysical Realism. This result has also implications for the possibility of practical justification for it, which Kemp Smith has defended and which can be suggested on the basis that philosophising and inductive inference seem to have practical justification according to Hume. Above I concluded that this line of interpretation could work only if Hume’s Academical philosophy involved the belief in the existence of Real entities. As we have now argued that it does not, it also implies that Hume denies even the possibility of practical justification for Metaphysical Realism. So it is justified to conclude that Metaphysical Realism is completely unjustified tenet in his opinion.

Hume’s limitation passages are significant for not only judging practical justification and Kemp Smith’s taming solution but also more generally because they merely intensify the irrationality problem for any reading of Hume. Previously, I have concluded that Hume takes the argument for the SNQP to be a valid inductive-causal reasoning. Now we have evidence that he endorses regular inductive inference in general; in fact, Academical philosophy puts that beyond doubt. The argument for the SNQP also satisfies the conditions that Academical philosophy places on proper philosophical reasoning. What is more, we also already know that he thinks that methodical inductive inference (with the perception analysis and Hume’s theory of belief) is inconsistent with believing in the existence of Real entities. On this ground, it is quite indubitable that the irrationality problem really is Hume’s problem. And the solution for it is not to be expected from the side of regular inductive inference.

A possible objection to this is that there are many passages in Hume that deny any influence of the sceptical arguments. As I have argued in Chapter 2.4, however, these passages do not concern the Pyrrhonian arguments but Pyrrhonism itself: universal suspension of belief cannot be sustained. Besides, there are passages where Hume says that Pyrrhonism and its arguments do leave a trace. In the context of both the species of Academical philosophy, Hume says that they may be the result of “this PYRRHONISM” and “the PYRRHONIAN doubts and scruples” (EHU 12.3.24 and 25).
Conclusion

He also writes about “the force of the PYRRHONIAN doubt, and of the impossibility, that any thing, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it.” (Ibid.) In addition, we recollect that the two profound arguments succeed to establish “the whimsical condition of mankind” at least, a claim which Hume repeats at the end of EHU 12.25. But the clearest statement is to found from Philo’s words in the Dialogues:

“In like manner, if a man has accustomed himself to sceptical considerations on the uncertainty and narrow limits of reason, he will not entirely forget them when he turns his reflection on other subjects; but in all his philosophical principles and reasoning, I dare not say, in his common conduct, he will be found different from those, who either never formed any opinions in the case, or have entertained sentiments more favourable to human reason.” (DNR 1, 36)

In light of these passages, it appears to be rather the other way around: the Pyrrhonian profound arguments can have influence on the philosopher. These passages suggest, then, that the arguments are not forgotten while philosophising. It is thus plausible that Hume thinks in the following manner. When we do philosophy, we employ consistent inductive inference. Once we have gone through the second profound argument, we remember that in it induction, perception analysis and what we have established about belief lead us to conclude that the belief in Real entities is inconsistent with them. Whenever philosophising, we can in principle become aware again that we cannot endorse both consistent inductive inference (together with the perception analysis and Humean theory of belief) and the existence of Real entities and the matter at the same time.

5.3 Hume’s Attitude to Metaphysical Realism

The problem we are facing is therefore the following. On the one hand, Hume thinks that believing in the existence of Real entities is inconsistent with the philosophical, systematic use of reason, whose firm supporter he is. On the other hand, especially the involuntariness passages bear firm evidence on that in some moments at least, Hume believes in the existence of Real entities. How are we then to reconcile these two inconsistent features of his thought together? Are we able to make Hume’s thinking coherent in this particular issue?

As I have shown in Introduction, four different interpretations of this have been proposed. First, we can read Hume as denying the existence of Real entities and the matter. This was the once dominant Reid-Green interpretation of total negative dogmatism or subjective Idealism. It also covers all Idealistic, solipsistic, and some phenomenalistic readings of Hume. The second interpretation is that he, ultimately, assents to the existence of Real entities — and the matter perhaps. The various
naturalistic interpretations of Kemp Smith, Stroud, and Garrett belong to this category of reading Hume as a Metaphysical Realist. The much-debated New Hume interpretation notably of Wright and Strawson (and Buckle) sides with the naturalistic reading here. Metaphysical Realism (in general) has not been its controversial part; it has been Causal Realism. At the moment, Metaphysically Realistic interpretation is thus prevalent in Hume scholarship. It has taken the place of the traditional Reid-Green account.

The third alternative is to maintain that Hume suspends his judgement on the existence of Real entities and the matter. This is the proper sceptical interpretation, but it is hard to find any scholar who endorses it. Instead, Popkin, for example, incorporates it into his so-called “no one Hume” interpretation, which is the last, fourth category. In addition to Popkin, two of his followers, Baxter and later Fogelin endorse it in some form or another. This interpretation makes temporal or perspectival differences in the positions that Hume holds and in this way, it attempts to steer away from several possible inconsistencies in his thinking. In the case of our present problem, the solution would be that Hume endorses both the existence of Real entities and consistent inductive inference (including the second profound argument) but at different times or in distinct perspectives.

The clear disadvantage of the negative dogmatic reading is that it has severe difficulties in explaining the involuntariness passages. It does not suffer only from this problem but there is not explicit textual evidence to support it either. As far as I can see, there are no passages where Hume denies the existence of Real entities. The closest he comes to this is at the end of Of modern philosophy in the Treatise where he writes that “[w]hen we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such [Real] an existence.” (T 1.4.4.15) We have therefore good reasons to think that Hume is not a negative dogmatic on the issue or that he would be some kind of an Idealist. No matter if somebody claims that his arguments commit him to deny the existence of Real entities, the text just does not support it.

The sceptical interpretation suffers from the same problem of having difficulties in explaining the involuntariness passages. However, it has a slight advantage over the negative dogmatic reading that there are some passages supporting it, which will be discussed below.

The strong point of the Realistic interpretations is that Hume’s avowals of Metaphysical Realism like the involuntariness passages support them. The grave problem that they face is how to treat Hume’s endorsement of consistent inductive inference. Most of the commentators are not willing to deny it for good reasons. Thus, if they incorporate both Metaphysical Realism and inductive inference into
Hume’s position, there is the threat that they attribute a conscious inconsistency to a great philosopher. For I have established that none of their strategies to avoid the problem works. Kemp Smith’s taming solution is not plausible in light of Hume’s Academical philosophy. Yet he is able to show that the basic naturalistic point of the belief in Real entities being involuntary does not solve the problem; inductive inference is equally natural and involuntary (to some extent). From the New Hume camp, Strawson’s relative idea and Wright’s inconceivable suppositions are not satisfactory solutions. I also shown that Baier’s, Livingston’s, and Morris’s readings that deny Hume’s endorsement of the second profound argument do not work. Finally, Garrett’s argument for Hume not endorsing the Sensible Qualities Principle cannot stand the weight of overall textual evidence and the analysis of Hume’s argument for the principle (though the argument is not satisfactory).

Attributing a conscious inconsistency to Hume would not be a problem if he took contradictions in philosophy with carelessness. However, there are two reasons to not to think so. First, we have repeated textual evidence that he does not accept contradictions in philosophy. An instance of this in the context of Metaphysical Realism is that, as I have shown, Hume adopts Conscious Mentalism instead of Direct Realism. His reason for this is that DR is contradictory to the rational stance on the issue, which is CM. Second, as far as I can see, there is no positive textual support for the interpretation that inconsistencies are not problem for Hume in philosophy.

With this respect, the “no one Hume” interpretation looks most promising. Without the threat of the inconsistency, it can claim that Hume endorses both the existence of Real entities and systematic inductive inference because of the temporal or perspectival difference it attributes to them. Accordingly, let us consider the merits and downsides of Popkin’s, Fogelin’s and Baxter’s interpretations.

Popkin’s claim is that Hume the only consistent Pyrrhonist believes only what nature compels him to believe. The problem with this reading is that it makes Hume a thinking machine completely at the mercy of the impulses of nature. This picture just is not plausible in light of Hume’s Academical philosophy, in which self-reflective reasonings are emphasised as we have seen. Among the three, Fogelin’s latest position is the most radical. According to him, there is not one Hume in any question; Hume only endorses what it seems to him in one perspective. Fogelin can be criticised from the point of view of what Hume does in the first Enquiry. He does

238 EHU 2.4, 3.16.n.6, 4.2.21, 5.2.10, 8.1.8, 8.2.36, 12.2.20, 12.n.34, T 1.1.5.8, 1.4.4.1, 1.4.5.1-2, 14, 1.4.6.2, 1.4.7.4-8, T App.10, and 21
not merely proceed from one standpoint to another. With regard to induction, causality, miracles, and scepticism, he has a clear intention to establish a position. Amid the various sceptical positions that he discusses, it is Academical philosophy. Recall that as far as it is reasonable, we are following the principle that the first Enquiry is Hume’s mature authoritative word on the understanding. Fogelin’s later reading is not therefore satisfactory and we should not subscribe to it.

Baxter’s philosophically interesting interpretation suffers the same fate. In order to reconcile Hume’s avowal of Metaphysical Realism in the beginning of T 1.4.2 and his rejection of it at the end of the section, he attributes the distinction between active endorsement (on rational basis) and passive (natural) assent to Hume. As the belief in Real entities belongs to the sphere of passive assent and the consistent use of reason to that of active endorsement, the inconsistency between them does not arise. Although we may find this distinction in Sextus Empiricus – if Popkin and Frede are right -, Hume does not employ it anywhere. Baxter’s general direction is therefore correct but there is no positive textual support for the specific distinction on which it is based.  

Instead, it is typical for Hume to make the distinction between common people and philosophers in its various forms. His point is not, however, to separate philosophers strictly from common people but that even the philosopher who engages in the most abstract thinking is a plain man in some moments of his life (EHU 1.6; T 1.4.2.36; and DNR 1, 35-6). We also remember that philosophy is in an intimate, constructive relation with everyday life in its object, topics, ground, and method. The crucial point in these tenets for our purposes is that Hume puts forward them in the connection of the belief in Real entities and inductive inference (EHU 12.1.5, T 1.4.2.36, EHU 12.3.25, and DNR 1, 36). By contrast to Baxter’s

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239 In his book, which got out just before the printing of this book, Baxter developes his position into a somewhat surprising direction, which comes close to naturalistic interpretations. Now he includes the conclusions of “good” inductive inference in passive assent together with the belief in Metaphysical Realism. (Baxter 2007, 9-14) As Baxter claims that Hume endorses what he is forced to assent passively by nature, his interpretation attributes to Hume the inconsistency between the belief in Metaphysical Realism and induction. Baxter’s most recent account is thus subject to the same problem as the naturalistic readings. The only rescue for him seems to be claiming that this inconsistency is not a problem for Hume. However, I have shown above that that is not plausible.

240 EHU 4.2.21, 5.1.2, 12.1.5, 12.2.21 and 23, 12.3.24 and 25; T 1.4.2 and intro.3; DNR 1, 35-6; and E, EW, 533-4

241 “The persons, who entertain this opinion concerning the identity of our resembling perceptions, are in general all the unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind, (that is, all of us, at one time or other) and consequently such as suppose their perceptions to be their only objects, and never
distinction of assents, thus, it is well grounded to use this distinction in the resolution of our present problem. We base our interpretation then on a genuine Humean distinction, which he applies in this context.

Upon distinguishing Hume’s philosophical position from his opinions as a common man, we are able to construct a satisfactory “no one Hume” interpretation, for which the irrationality problem is not a dilemma. The basic idea in this interpretation is that his philosophical position involves suspension of judgment on the existence of Real entities, whereas his everyday view is to believe firmly in their existence.

This account of Hume as a philosophical sceptic and an everyday positive dogmatic is the most satisfactory of those proposed so far when we take all the discussed circumstances into consideration. Among the four principal interpretations, it avoids the problem of the negative dogmatic reading having no textual support. It does not suffer from the difficulty of the mere sceptic interpretation to explain the involuntariness passages; on the contrary, they can be incorporated into it. As the relatively involuntary belief in Real entities is attributed to Hume the common man, it can include the strong point of the Metaphysically Realistic readings. It also fits well with what Hume’s point in the involuntariness passages is: when we do not reflect on the issue, the belief in the existence of Real entities returns. This “no one Hume” interpretation does not, however, assign a conscious inconsistency to him like the Realistic readings. Finally, it steers away from the problems involved in Popkin’s and Fogelin’s “no one Hume” accounts. It does not make Hume a natural thinking machine, on the one hand, and makes it possible that Hume has a final philosophical position, on the other. Concerning Baxter’s account, we have just above established its superiority.

This “no one Hume” interpretation is also capable of assimilating Hume’s endorsement of the two profound arguments into it. Hume the philosopher suspends his judgment on the existence of Real entities because believing in it is unjustified (first argument), inconsistent with the systematic use of Humean reason in philosophy, Real entities are beyond the reach of our understanding, and their notion thus rejectable in philosophy (second argument). Yet it does not commit Hume to Pyrrhonism as universal suspension of belief because according to it, suspension concerns only one belief and is momentary. Hume the philosopher can easily deny then that universal suspension of belief as the mental effect of the arguments is lasting.

think of a double existence internal and external, representing and represented. The very image, which is present to the senses, is with us the real body”.
The main thesis of this study is thus that Hume is both a sceptic and a positive dogmatic on the existence of Real entities. To put it in contemporary terms, he is both an anti-Realist in the sense of being neutral on the issue and a Realist. Scepticism or neutral anti-Realism is his philosophical position when he is engaged in deep philosophical thinking. As a common man, he is a positive dogmatic: he firmly believes that there are perception-independent, external, and continuous entities. This interpretation of a sceptic and a positive dogmatic can avoid attributing to Hume the conscious inconsistency between the systematic use of reason, mainly inductive, and assenting to the existence of Real entities. The inconsistency does not arise because of the temporal difference between philosophising and entertaining everyday beliefs. When Hume employs his reason in philosophy, he does not believe in Real entities and steers away from the unacceptable inconsistency. In the moments when he does not philosophise but lives more unreflective life, it does not either spring up or is not a problem. In everyday life, we do not go into the deep philosophical questions of the second profound argument and inconsistencies are not so serious matter in it – or at least that is Hume’s view of it (T 1.4.7.7; EHU 4.2.21; and DNR 1, 36).

The material substance and substantial bodies belong to the category of Real entities. From this combinative interpretation, it follows then that Hume the philosopher suspends his judgment on their existence and does not endorse these notions in philosophy. Hume’s philosophy of body, if he has any, is therefore anti-Realistic: in his notions, matter and bodies are not perception-independent (I will come back to this). It should be pointed out, however, that this does not concern two other traditional substances, God and the soul. Without further premises, the second profound argument does not place them beyond human intellectual capacities. Nevertheless, the first profound argument concerns them as well, which suggest Hume’s suspension of judgement on their existence. Hume’s religious view is nonetheless such a difficult topic that the decisive answer to this question cannot be given in this work. Instead, the interpretation advanced here leaves it completely possible for Hume the common man to believe that the concrete entities are Real and composed of the Real stuff called matter.

In order to support the combinative interpretation of scepticism and positive dogmatism further, let us consider it in light of Hume’s Academical philosophy and whether there is textual evidence for it in EHU 12 (compared especially with the competing interpretations). It is also appropriate to take into account the passages that appear to be problematic from this point of view.
The first point to be noted is that Hume says explicitly that his Academical philosophy involves suspension of judgment:

“The academics always talk of doubt and suspense of judgment” (EHU 5.1.1).

In this light, it is reasonable to read Hume’s use of “caution” referring to suspension in the corresponding passage in Section 12:

“In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner.” (EHU 12.3.24)

Of course, these passages speak about suspension of judgment in general instead of the specific suspension of belief in the existence of Real entities and the matter. However, for the very reason that the point of the passages is general, they can support the reading that Hume’s Academical philosophy, his philosophical position, involves suspension of judgment on the existence of Real entities.

To this interpretation, it might be objected that why Hume does not bring his solution of the inconsistency problem forward if he has one. As I have observed many times, Hume is almost completely silent of his attitude to the profound arguments. He merely presents them, refutes Pyrrhonism, and proceeds to Academical philosophy, which can be, in part, the result of Pyrrhonism. This is the reason why we had to reconstruct the profound arguments and his view of them. Nevertheless, here I would like to ask the reader to reflect on the very fact that Hume is silent. Which one of the interpretations of his philosophical position does it support more, suspension, affirming, or denying? If Hume the philosopher believes in the existence of Real entities, why does not he say it? Why does not he do so either if he denies their existence? But is not it the case that his silence fits quite well with suspension? If one suspends his judgment on a problem, he may say it aloud. However, it is equally reasonable to express his attitude, or more precisely, his omission by keeping silent. Hume’s silence supports therefore rather the sceptical than dogmatic readings of his philosophical position.

We should also pay attention to the circumstance that Hume’s presentation of Academical philosophy does not involve expressed belief in the existence of Real entities. The overall picture is therefore the following. There is no positive textual evidence for Hume denying the existence of Real entities. Neither is there any utterance of their existence in the parts discussing Academical philosophy. On the contrary, the sceptical reading has some textual support behind it. Besides, even slight textual evidence is significant in this issue because there is so little of it in general. The interpretation combining scepticism and positive dogmatism is not, therefore, only preferable as the best explanation; its philosophical element is supported more by Hume silence and has the advantage over the other readings as having positive textual support in Hume’s final word on the understanding. We should also recall that Hume’s avowals of Metaphysical Realism, the involuntariness
passages mainly, are not a problem for the “no one Hume” interpretation combining scepticism with negative dogmatism. On the contrary, they support it and its everyday component.

However, there are two well-known passages that do not seem to concur with it. These are two apparent assertions of Metaphysical Realism involved in Hume’s philosophical position. Our next task is then to show that these passages can be accounted in a way that they do not undermine the sceptical reading of Hume’s philosophical position.

The first passage is from *The Sceptic* (published before the first *Enquiry*):

“In the operation of reasoning, the mind does nothing but run over its objects, as they are supposed to stand in reality, without adding any thing to them, or diminishing any thing from them. If I examine the PTOLOMAIC and COPERNICAN systems, I endeavour only, by my enquiries, to know the real situation of the planets; that is in other words, I endeavour to give them, in my conception, the same relations, that they bear towards each other in the heavens. To this operation of the mind, therefore, there seems to be always a real, though often unknown standard, in the nature of things; nor is truth or falsehood variable by the various apprehensions of mankind. Though all human race should for ever conclude, that the sun moves, and the earth remains at rest, the sun stirs not an inch from his place for all these reasonings; and such conclusions are eternally false and erroneous. But the case is not the same with the qualities of beautiful and deformed, desirable and odious, as with truth and falsehood. In the former case, the mind is not content with merely surveying its objects, as they stand in themselves.” (E, S, 164)

Norton, Wright, and Buckle quote this passage to support their different Realistic interpretations (Norton 1982, 217; Wright 1995/1986, 222; and Buckle 2001, 117). It appears to found epistemological realism on the Metaphysical: the criterion of truth is in the Real nature of Real entities. Hume even employs terms “real”, “reality”, and “objects, as they stand in themselves” in the passage. His example of the sun and earth say that the location and kinetic status of the sun is independent of human conclusions and reasonings. The end of the passage reveals the context of the passage that is to establish Hume’s position that aesthetic qualities are not properties of the “objects” “in themselves” or “really” in them. This assertion is repeated in other places in the essay (E, S, 163, 166, and 171).

The other famous passage is the allusion to Leibniz’s pre-established harmony:

“Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle, by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct, in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. Had not the
presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects, commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or avoiding of evil.” (EHU 5.2.21)

This passage from the penultimate paragraph of Section 5 of the first Enquiry compares our inductive conclusions, which are ideas, with an “object”, “the course of nature” and “the other works of nature”. The point it makes is that according to our experience, there is correspondence in their successions, notwithstanding the conclusion that “the powers and forces” in nature are “wholly unknown to us”. Hume seems then to commit himself to Metaphysical Realism in the passage. There are natural entities with powers and forces, whose ontological status is Real. Like in The Sceptic, there is also quite strong epistemological realism involved. Our inductive conclusions correspond, in the best cases, to the course of Real entities.

In light of the sceptical interpretation of Hume’s philosophical position, the pre-established harmony passage is easier to explain away. It is also completely possible that Hume’s intention in it is ironic of Leibniz. However, let us presume that we should take it seriously and see what follows from it. Hume writes that we “find” that there is a correspondence between the course of nature and inductive conclusions. The question is how can we find that? Hume’s answer must be that we have experience of observations matching with our prior inductive conclusions. In his theoretical framework, inductive conclusions are ideas and observations are impressions. Hume is then committed to the view that actually we find correspondence between impressions and ideas. This does not licentiate the Metaphysically Realistic reading of the passage unless we presuppose that impressions represent their Real objects. But as Hume’s endorsement of that supposition is highly controversial at least, the natural objects about which the passage speaks may be construed in terms of impressions. As perceptions, impressions are not Real in their ontological status. The passage may be thus accounted in an anti-Realistic way; in fact, that is its preferred reading in the Humean framework. It is not, thus, a problem for the sceptical interpretation of Hume’s philosophical position. Nor does it self-evidently bear evidence on Hume being a Metaphysical Realist.
The same point applies to *The Sceptic* passage.\(^{242}\) When we take the epistemological claims that it makes into consideration, we realise that it is open to a non-Realistic reading. In the first place, the “often unknown” standard may refer to the unobserved matters of fact. Secondly, Hume does not say that ‘the objects in themselves’ are independent of human sense-impressions. Rather, he writes that they are independent of apprehensions and conclusions, that is, of ideas. In Hume’s view, sense-impressions are more or less independent of ideas: how they strike our senses does not depend on our ideas even if the recognition of sense-perceived entities, that this is a car, for instance, requires memory. He may therefore mean that sense-impressions of the planets, for instance, are independent of ideas in this respect.

In the third place, if we pay attention to the immediate textual context of the passage, the Realistic reading is challenged. As its end discloses, it is one part of the argument where Hume justifies his thesis that moral and aesthetic qualities are not properties of ‘the objects in themselves’. For getting grasp of what Hume means by ‘the objects in themselves’ or correspondent terms in this context, it is helpful to consider his illustrations of this category of beings. They vary from the planets, sun, and the earth to a circle, poem (Virgil’s *Aeneid*), and “a little miss, dressed in a new gown for dancing-school ball” (E, S, 164-6) It is also in this connection that one of Hume’s statements of and comparisons to the Sensible Qualities Principle occurs in a footnote. There Hume speaks about “bodies” (Ibid. 166, n.3).

Here Hume’s category of ‘the objects in themselves’ hence includes different kinds of beings. Bodies are Real material entities as that is what stating the SNQP requires of their ontological status.\(^{243}\) The poem and “little miss” are hardly causally independent of human perception. Hume’s category of ‘the objects in themselves’ is not thus exhausted by Real entities. Hence, it is not clear that when he speaks about the heavenly bodies as ‘objects in themselves’ that he means Real entities. That point

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\(^{242}\) This epistemological perspective can account the following two passages in non-Realistic manner as well:
“[M]atter and motion may often be regarded as the causes of thought, as far as we have any notion of that relation.” (T 1.4.5.33)
“Original impressions or impressions of sensation are such as without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs.” (T 2.1.1.1)

\(^{243}\) If bodies are somehow perceptually construed - bundles of perceptions, for instance -, it is not possible to exclude colours or tactile properties from them according to Hume’s theory of the perception of extension.
of the passage is not therefore certainly a statement of Metaphysical Realism as Wright contends, for example.

This suspicion can be further confirmed by putting the passage into its wider context in Hume’s corpus. It evidently recycles material from the *Treatise* and a similar argument in T 3.1.1.26 does not support the Metaphysically Realistic reading of ‘the objects in themselves’. There Hume’s provocative example is “[w]illful murder” and its moral quality. Moreover, Hume’s thesis can be construed in a non-Realistic way by linking it up with what he says about a sub-category of sensible qualities: sounds, smells, and tastes. In order to see that, we need to go to somewhat difficult and dense reflections briefly. Let us recall that in T 1.4.5.10-6 Hume argues that these qualities cannot be spatially conjoined. So they cannot be properties of ‘the objects in themselves’ taken as concrete entities *qua* their spatiality (e.g. a picture as belonging to two-dimensional entities). The relevant point for us in this connection is that these ‘objects in themselves’ are not Real entities; they are bundles of perceptions of colours or tactile qualities.

Respectively, when claiming in *The Sceptic* and the *Treatise* that concrete entities do not have moral or aesthetic qualities in themselves, it is reasonable to think that he means the same. Concrete entities in so far as they are considered as spatial consist merely of the bundles of the perceptions of visual and tactile properties and are construed without moral and aesthetic qualities. In fact, it is not even possible that they are spatially conjoined. It is only through our natural propensity to confound the situation that we think that concrete entities have moral and aesthetic qualities - that a circle is beautiful, for instance. It is therefore justified to take Hume meaning non-Real entities when he speaks about ‘the objects in themselves’ in the context of these qualities.

Thus, Hume meaning Real entities when he is speaking about ‘the objects in themselves’ in the epistemological propositions of *The Sceptic* is deeply suspicious at least. Rather, his epistemological framework and what he says about the perception of concrete entities in comparison with smells, sounds, tastes, moral and aesthetic qualities suggest that ‘the objects in themselves’ in the passage should be construed in non-Realistic manner. They support thus the reading that when Hume uses the term “real” or its cognates in the passage, his conception of reality is different from Metaphysically Real.

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244 As we recall, the argumentation in *Of the Standard of Taste* begins with this claim as well (E, ST, 229-30).
These two apparent avowals of Metaphysical Realism are not therefore a problem for the sceptical reading of Hume's philosophical position. It is at least justified to account them in anti-Realistic manner. As such, they cannot undermine the sceptical component of the interpretation defended here.

5.4 Hume on the Theories of Perception

Though the main question of the dissertation is Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism, his view of the different theories of perception is also involved in the reconstruction of the profound arguments. Unfortunately, the constraints of the dissertation do not allow the full discussion of this question, in which we would consider all the relevant passages in Hume’s entire corpus. We have to confine our consideration to what it follows from the profound arguments and the sceptical positive dogmatic interpretation for his position on sense-perception.

I agree with Bricke and Wright that there can be found three theories of perception in the profound arguments (Bricke 1980, 10 and Wright 1995/1986, 231). Philosophically speaking, their starting point, the primary opinion of all men is Direct Realism involving Metaphysical Realism. According to this doctrine, Real entities are present to the mind in sense-impression. By means of the second phase of the first profound argument, the table argument, Hume concludes that Direct Realism is inconsistent with inductive inference, misleading, or even false. His ground for this assertion is Conscious Mentalism: the table argument and sense-variation in general shows inductively that nothing but mental perceptions can be present to the mind – whether we are thinking or perceiving with our senses. For this reason, I disagree with Morris and Weller, who have claimed that Hume endorses the vulgar position.

In Chapter 4.2.1, I argued that Hume rejects Direct Realism also in the form of claiming some numerical identity between sense-impressions and the supposed Real entities. In the first place, it violates his nominalism: there are no entities with multiple existences in time or space. Secondly, the table argument is efficient in refuting it. There is difference at least in one of the properties of the Real table and the perceived table. Therefore they cannot be numerically identical entities because numerical identity presupposes total identity in properties, according to Hume and many other philosophers. Moreover, they cannot have any numerically identical properties either since we can produce similar arguments based on sense-variation in the case of any type of their possible properties.
Conclusion

My intention is not to contend that these two forms of Direct Realism exhaust the ways how that position can be understood. However, they are exhaustive forms of it in Hume’s text; it is another issue whether it proves rather the simple-mindedness than the sophistication of his views. Consequently, Hume proceeds from the refutation of Direct Realism to discuss the possibility of Representative Realism, in which there is merely similarity instead of identity between sense-impressions and their supposed Real objects.

However, to be precise, as Bricke and Wright, I take there to be two forms of Representative Realism. The first is Resemblance Representative Realism, according to which sense-impressions resemble and are caused by their Real objects. It is introduced in the third phase of the first profound argument as the philosophical reconciliation of Conscious Mentalism and Metaphysical Realism. It is challenged in the fourth by arguing that there cannot be any proof or even rational, epistemic justification for it. Although in this connection Hume seems to speak only about this kind of epistemic justification, his denial of it can be extended to concern any epistemic justification. The reason for this is the same as in the case Metaphysical Realism: Hume’s writings just do not exhibit any other form of epistemic justification in the perception-theoretical context.

We may thus conclude that Hume denies any epistemic justification for Resemblance Representative Realism. Whether sense-impressions are similar to and caused by their possible Real objects is an open question. We must not yet, however, infer from this that he rejects Resemblance Representative Realism – not to speak of any form of RR. In order to discuss that, it is required to pay attention to the other form of Representative Realism. It may be found from the second profound argument and it is the possibility that Real entities merely cause sense-impressions. As it was remarked in the context of the relative idea reading of the 1777 insertion, this can be seen surfacing in EHU 12.1.16 where Hume discusses the relative idea of the matter. Causal Representative Realism postulates Real entities as the causes of sense-impressions, which are not similar to them in any respect.

It is in this context where the necessary connection between the theories of perception that Hume discusses and Metaphysical Realism is most evident. The 1777 version of the second profound argument can be seen as attacking Causal Representative Realism in the form of the relative idea of the matter. So far we have concluded that that notion or any concept of the matter, substantial body and Real entities ought to be rejected according to Hume. They are broadly unintelligible; we cannot have any intellectual access to them. What is more, they are also inconsistent with systematic Humean reasoning – mainly inductive. For that reason, according to
the interpretation defended here, in philosophy, Hume suspends his judgement on the existence of Real entities. It follows from this that he must do the same with regard to Causal Representative Realism. It may be the true metaphysical picture that sense-impressions are caused by Real entities. Hume does not deny nor affirm it; he does not take stance on the issue. But this implies that as a philosopher, he does not endorse Causal Representative Realism.

Above I concluded that Hume takes Resemblance Representative Realism to be epistemically unjustified. The same conclusion can be extended to concern the causal type. Besides, extending works in the other direction, too. If my sceptical interpretation is correct, Hume the philosopher cannot subscribe to Resemblance Representative Realism either. It presupposes the existence of Real entities and Hume suspends his judgment on it in his philosophy. But again, he does not reject it either. Thus, my interpretation differs from those commentators – Bricke, Wright, Yolton, and Garrett, for example, - who interpret Hume endorsing one form of Representative Realism or another. Hume the philosopher is a sceptic on this issue as well.

Hume does not at least explicitly discuss Locke’s Causal Representative Realism in that form how Ayers interprets it. Here it may be repeated, though, that Hume could not accept it. In light of his theory of causality, it is not possible that sense-impressions are signs of the existence of Real entities because causes and effects are completely distinct according to it. Thus, although Hume does not reject Causal Representative Realism in a more general form, he would reject a specific version of it.

In the end, we are under some necessity to draw negative and sceptical conclusions concerning Hume’s philosophical attitude to the theories of perception that he discusses in the first Enquiry. He rejects Direct Realism in both its forms. Its perception-theoretical component is irrational, misleading or even false. Nevertheless, this does not entail that he rejects its ontological element, that is, Metaphysical Realism. He follows his sceptical attitude to it in suspending his judgment on both Resemblance and Causal type of Representative Realism. Hence, the first Enquiry seems to make the impression that Hume does not have any theory of perception because these are the theories of perception that he discusses. So there are good reasons to disagree with Bricke, Wright, Garrett, Morris, and Weller, for instance, who think that Hume adheres to a Metaphysically Realistic

\[245\] Here I would like to draw attention to the remarkable circumstance that, as far as I know, Hume does not anywhere claim that impressions represent their Real objects.
theory of perception. However, I would like to emphasise that this is only what we can conclude on the basis of mainly Section 12 and the two profound arguments. Possible further textual evidence cannot be discussed here.  

Though the different theories of perception are philosophical constructions, something can be remarked of Hume’s view of the issue as a common man. It would be natural to conclude that he endorses Direct Realism. His point is that every one of us is a Metaphysical Realist in our everyday life at least and it is the same natural instinct that causes us to believe in it and Direct Realism. The situation is complicated, however, by how strong a conclusion Hume sees Conscious Mentalism to be. Can we really, according to him, still believe in Direct Realism after we have realised that Real entities are not present to the mind in sense-perception? It may be replied to this that the irrationality of Metaphysical Realism is equally strong, mainly inductive conclusion. Yet Hume thinks that it can be and actually is overcome by the natural instinct in everyday life. Philosophical inductive reasonings are forgotten in the midst of everyday tumult. It is therefore reasonable to believe that Hume the common man firmly believes in what is in philosophy called Direct Realism.

While reconstructing the first profound argument, some points were made concerning the question of the nature of Humean perceptions. As it is documented by Yolton, for instance, one of the philosophical discussions that Descartes inspired in the 17th century was the debate over ideas (in the broader pre-Humean sense): how we should understand this technical, philosophical term (Yolton 1984; see also Ayers 1998b). The discussion started with the objections and replies to Descartes’ *Meditations* and continued in Arnauld, Malebranche, and Locke. It culminated in Reid’s sharp criticism of the theory of ideas in the second half of the 18th century.

To be informed of the extension of this discussion is relevant for us in two respects. First, it is so extensive that here we do not have any chance to go into it. Second, a comprehending study of Hume’s notion of perception would call for approaching it

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246 But then again, in the sceptical reading of Hume’s philosophical position, the following hypothetical thesis by Hume can be easily accounted for. The sceptical reading does rule it out that materialism is the true metaphysical picture because the matter is a possible entity according to it.

“They likewise teach us that nothing can be decided *a priori* concerning any cause or effect, and that experience being the only source of our judgements of this nature, we cannot know from any other principle, whether matter, by its structure or arrangement, may not be the cause of thought. Abstract reasonings cannot decide any question of fact or existence.” (E, IS, 591)
from the perspective of this controversy. Thus, here it is only possible to gather up
the observations that were defended earlier in this dissertation rather than to pretend
treating the problem in an all-inclusive manner – not to speak of presenting a
definitive answer to it. It would also require considering all the relevant passages in
Hume’s corpus, which is not possible in this work.²⁴⁷

The first defended point of Humean perceptions is that they belong to the category
of what exists, that is, to entities. They have at least temporary being, they exist in
time. It must be acknowledged that this is quite ambiguous, but here it is not justified
to go any further. Soon I will consider the third observation, in what sense some of
them can be said to exist even in space. At this point, the best that we can do is to
say more or less vaguely that Humean perceptions are at least temporally existing
objects of thought and sense-perception.²⁴⁸ Even so, the second observation is
actually one of the key tenets of the dissertation and we have taken pains to
substantiate it. Hume holds that perceptions are mental in their ontological status:
they depend on perceiving. That is what his Conscious Mentalism states and sense-
variations establish.

The spatial, that is, concrete being of perceptions is connected to the question
proposed in reconstructing the first profound argument: does Hume reify, to use
older vocabulary than his, ideas? This problem involves two questions. (1) Does
Hume understand perceptions as concrete entities in some relevant sense? (2) Are
they distinct from Real entities, on the one hand, and from the mind or soul, on the
other? As we recollect, Yolton and Ayers claim that the reification happens in
Malebranche and Berkeley follows his footsteps closely. So it is an interesting
question whether Hume agrees on this with these close predecessors of his.

Regarding the first question, it can be observed that I have established that in
Hume’s view, some perceptions, of tastes and aesthetic qualities, for instance, cannot
even conjoin with the perceptions of concrete entities. According to him, it is equally
absurd that a taste is a point or that it is extended and has a shape, one of which the
local conjunction would require (T 1.4.5.13-4). It is thus quite clear that Hume does
not reify all perceptions in the sense that they are concrete, the necessary condition
of which is spatial location. However, if the bundle theory of the perception of
concrete particulars is the correct interpretation, it is true that for Hume some
perceptions are concrete. They have at least a spatial location (points) and many of

²⁴⁷ Besides, I have some doubts whether Hume really had any final answer to the question of the
nature of perceptions.
²⁴⁸ Recollect that this is close to Locke’s definition of “idea”, according to Chappell.
them are extended having a magnitude (things). Extended perceptions are therefore more or less well-bounded entities (distinct from the other perceptions of concrete particulars). It is to be pointed out, nevertheless, that now we are speaking merely in terms of the so-called apparent or relative space. From this it does not follow that perceptions are concrete in Real or absolute space, that they are, say, substantial bodies in the brain consisting of the material substance (stuff), that there is literally a triangle in our brain when we see one, for instance.

The second question in the reification problem is therefore whether Hume commits to the so-called veil of perceptions view. Does he think that perceptions are distinct from Real entities and the mind? I have defended the interpretation that Hume takes perceptions to be distinct from Real entities hypothetically. If there are Real entities, they are distinct from perceptions for two reasons. The first profound argument shows that perceptions are mental and cannot be numerically identical with Real entities (the table argument).

Our answer to the question hangs therefore on the relation between perceptions and the mind. The answer defended in this work must be negative for the plain reason that we do not have any basis to think that the mind is distinct from perceptions in Hume’s opinion. The only doctrine of the mind that Hume ever defended was the notorious bundle theory of the Treatise, in which the mind consists of perceptions. In this theory, the mind is not therefore a distinct entity from perceptions; it is composed of them. The crucial implication of this is that the picture it paints is not of three distinct types of entities: the mind, its perceptions, and Real entities. Rather, it distinguishes only perceptions from Real entities. Thus, it does not imply any three-part distinction but the distinction between two categories of beings: perceptions and Real entities (hypothetically). In this sense, thus, it can be said that Hume draws a veil of perceptions and blocks any intellectual access to the possible Real entities behind the curtain.

At this point, it is necessary to emphasise again that this does not imply the Reid-Green interpretation that there are only perceptions. There is no textual evidence that Hume denies the existence of Real entities. For him, Real entities are possible beings at least. Besides, we have not established that he rejects the substantial mind, that is, the soul. The bundle theory merely presents the picture of how things seem to be in light of our intellectual capacities. It presents what we can represent to ourselves or is represented to us of the world. There is therefore difference between this and Reid’s interpretation since Reid states that Hume commits to the ontological picture that the bundles of perceptions exhaust the category of actually existing entities (Reid 2002, 162).
The justified observations about Humean perceptions can therefore be summarised as follows. (1) Humean perceptions are special entities because they are the objects of our understanding that have temporal existence at least. (2) Hume reifies some perceptions in the sense that the perceptions of concrete particulars have spatial location or even magnitude in apparent space. (3) He can be said to reify them also in the sense of drawing a veil of perceptions in front of Real entities, a premise of which is the distinction that perceptions are mental and Real entities perception-independent in their ontological statuses.

The question that hangs in the air at the moment is whether this interpretation entails that Hume is a phenomenalist. Phenomenalism has not been very much in fashion in philosophy after Roderick M. Chisholm’s (1916-1999) attack on it (Chisholm 1948). Recollect that Strawson, for instance, is dismissively hostile towards it. It is appropriate, then, to say something about this matter shortly. The first crucial question here is whether phenomenalism involves denying the existence of Real entities, the matter, and substantial bodies. That was the form of phenomenalism that H.H. Price attributed to Hume back in the 1940’s (see Introduction). I think that I have been successful in showing that it is not justified to interpret Hume as a phenomenalist in this sense of involving negative dogmatism regarding Real entities. It suffers from the same problem as any Idealistic interpretation: there is no textual evidence for Hume rejecting Metaphysical Realism.

Instead, if we understand phenomenalism in the sceptical manner of not embracing the denial of Metaphysical Realism, at least one form of it has good claims of being a good interpretation of Hume’s philosophical position – presuming that the interpretation defended in this work is correct. This form of phenomenalism, sketches very briefly, consists in the following propositions. First, from the point of view of our understanding, physical objects, that is, concrete particulars are reducible to the bundles of the perceptions of properties (the organisation of the bundle included). Second, when we are speaking about physical objects, our reference is to perceptions or to the imperceptible explanatory entities or principles that satisfy certain conditions (e.g. imperceptible power). Third, it is possible that there are Real entities beyond perceptions, but we cannot have any understanding of them.249

249 This does not, of course, constitute a full case for the phenomenalistic reading. Yet I hope I have been able to establish that this line of interpretation should be considered again in Hume scholarship and calls for further research. We should also pay attention to the fact that the so-called bundle of tropes theories, which are one category ontologies, are in focus in the contemporary philosophy (see Loux 2002). They have made the bundle theories of concrete particulars (substances) philosophically plausible again.
5.5 Hume’s programme

This book may be finished by making some observations how well the sceptical positive dogmatic interpretation coheres with Hume’s general, philosophical programme. If it does, the interpretation gets corroboration. In that case, it satisfies the principle of coherence that we are following; it supports the consistency of Hume’s thinking. Another point is that every good interpretation of a great philosopher must satisfy the minimal criteria for philosophical plausibility. Therefore we have to discuss two possible, elementary objections to the sceptical reading of Hume’s philosophical position.

The first objection is that the distinction between philosophical position and common life beliefs is unsustainable. One cannot so neatly separate in time when one is being a philosopher and when one is being a common man. One can have latent beliefs even when they are not actively being entertained. It may therefore be the case that even as philosopher Hume must hold the everyday belief in the existence of Real entities and cannot suspend judgment. For instance, his acts may presuppose the belief in Metaphysical Realism.

The proper defence of my Hume interpretation against this worry would require taking a position in the discussion on the possibility of radical sceptical philosophies – whether some beliefs are absolutely involuntary -, which has been going on from ancient times and is quite intricate. Besides, it invites the question whether everyday actions can be explained by Idealistic metaphysical systems; for if the belief in mind-independent entities is suspended, an Idealistic account (of concrete particulars) is still possible. Unfortunately, addressing these questions is beyond the limits of this book.

In addition to the remark concerning Idealism, certain points already made in the dissertation can be reiterated and elaborated here. In the first place, if we operate within the Humean framework, under deep reflection his theory of belief allows momentary suspension of this belief. The second point is, however, the most significant. It is namely entirely possible that philosophical and everyday moments or moods change instantly – that neat separation of them is indeed possible.

In order to see that, let us consider the case that Hume is engaged in deep philosophical thinking and is suspending his belief in Metaphysical Realism. Suddenly, somebody knocks on his door. Hume’s frame of mind changes immediately and he believes and acts as every human being does in the situation: he goes to open the door entertaining the belief that there is a fellow human being with Real body knocking the Real door. When he opens the door, he finds his landlord
who passes him a letter and shuts the door. As Hume is in the middle of fervent philosophical thinking, he does not want to stop it and goes back to work without opening the letter. He is in the philosophical mood again and aware that although an instant ago he believed firmly in the existence of Real entities, now he ought not. Therefore he continues writing his philosophy without assenting to Metaphysical Realism. Of course, this is only one illustration of philosophical and everyday frames of mind, but it can at least suggest that changing between them is indeed possible.

The second objection arises from a consideration of the potential philosophical implications of the sceptical interpretation. It may be outlined briefly in the following way. The sceptical reading leads to epistemological relativism because it rules out any objective standard of truth. As all objects of the understanding are mental and subjective, there cannot be any subject-independent foundation on which propositions may be judged. The sceptical interpretation of Hume’s attitude to Metaphysical Realism would be held at the cost of epistemological realism.

The first thing to do in answering this objection is to justify an interpretation of the criterion of truth according to Hume. Naturally, here it is not reasonable to go into an extensive justification or into the many interpretations and wide discussion on this issue. Yet strong textual evidence can be presented for the account that experience is the standard of truth for Hume. In two central places in his mature work on the understanding, Hume claims unambiguously so:

“A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full proof of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: He weighs the opposite experiments: He considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments: To that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgment, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability.” (EHU 10.1.4)

“It is only experience, which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge, and is the source of all human action and behaviour.” (Ibid. 12.3.29)

Two qualifications are appropriate of these two passages. Let us first pay attention to the circumstance that both passages speak about inductive inference and its conclusions, inductive beliefs. In Hume’s view, inductive inference is the third, though main source of factual beliefs and knowledge. The senses and memory may also supply this kind of beliefs and knowledge. In addition, factual beliefs and knowledge form the other spike in Hume’s famous fork distinguishing matters of fact or existence from relations of ideas (EHU 4.1.1-3). The first qualification is thus
that Hume is speaking here about a major class of the other category of perceptions and propositions that have truth-value, to use the 20th century terminology.

The second specification is that in the first passage, Hume’s point is also to make the distinction between “proof” and “probability”, which are forms of inductive arguments. As it was noted above, Hume draws this distinction on the basis of experience as the foundation of the inductive inferences. “Proofs” are founded on invariable experience, whereas “probabilities” are backed up by contrary experiences. However, for our purposes, this part of the passage is relevant for making it explicit that “evidence”, to which the wise proportions his belief, means experience. In it, Hume is thus really stating the epistemological norm that we ought to base our inductive beliefs on experience. The latter passage makes the same claim.

After these qualifications, we are justified in judging that according to Hume, the standard of truth of inductive beliefs is experience. Besides, it is quite reasonable to claim that it is the case regarding any judgment. According to Hume’s fork, the sources of the other kinds of perceptions and propositions with truth-value are the senses, memory, intuition, and demonstration. It is easy to see that the judgments made by the senses and memory are judgments of what we experience at the moment. When we intuit relations of ideas, these ideas must be present to the mind and are therefore experienced (T 1.3.1.1-3). Demonstrative inference is based on intuitive relations of ideas and thus on experience (Ibid. 3-7). Experience is hence the foundation of the judgments of the senses and memory, on the one hand, and on relations of ideas, on the other. For Hume, then, experience is also the criterion of truth of the other perceptions and propositions with truth-value. Experience is therefore the standard of truth on which we ought to judge any perception and proposition in Hume’s view.

The second thing to do in answering the relativism objection is to argue that the sceptical interpretation of Hume’s philosophical position on Metaphysical Realism does not rule this out. It is best to approach this issue by means of analysing Hume’s central term “experience” briefly. Regarding this question as well, we can only be succinct and sketch the relevant points for our purposes.

As it is clear that experience relevant for the senses, memory, intuition, and demonstration consists of perceptions (relations reducible to them, organisation

\[250\text{It is somewhat controversial whether this doctrine of the } Treatise \text{ can be extended to the first } Enquiry \text{ (see Millican 2002c, 117-9, and 132-6 compared with Owen 1999, 83-112). Here it is assumed that this extending is permitted (EHU 4.1.1-2 and 12.3.27).} \]
included), we may focus on experience as the evidence for inductive inferences and beliefs. There are many passages where Hume speaks about this experience, but here the following two are most telling:

“What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? […] having found, in many instances, that any two kinds of objects, flame and heat, snow and cold, have always been conjoined together; if flame or snow be presented anew to the senses, the mind is carried by custom to expect heat or cold, and to _believe_, that such a quality does exist, and will discover itself upon a nearer approach.” (EHU 5.1.8)

“‘Tis therefore by EXPERIENCE only, that we can infer the existence of one object from that of 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 a regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them. Thus we remember, to have seen that species of object we call _flame_, and to have felt that species of sensation we call _heat_. We likewise call to mind their constant conjunction in all past instances. Without any farther ceremony, we 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)

The first thing to be observed of these passages is that it is justified to read the first with the help of the second. They are from a similar context, make identical claims, and Hume even uses the same example of flame and the heat that it produces. The crucial point that the passages make is that experience as evidence for induction consists of remembering that two “kinds” or “species” of objects or events have been constantly conjoined. In Hume’s framework, memories are ideas (T 1.1.3.1) and kinds or species resembling objects or events (T 1.1.7.7). Experience for induction is therefore composed of two sets of similar perceptions, between which there is the relation of constant conjunction (conjunction between each of their correspondent members, ordered pairs). For example, we have experience that similar events “heat” have succeeded similar objects “flame” in time and place.

It follows from this that the only thing that is required for the standard of truth of Humean inductive judgments is that we have perceptions of similar objects or events. Its necessary condition is not that we have perceptions of numerically identical objects or events. It is hard not to exaggerate the significance of this conclusion, for it entails that there is no principal obstacle to the objective standard of truth for inductive judgments in the inter-subjective consensus on the kinds of objects or events. Let me explain.

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I also take the same implication to follow in the case of experience behind the other sources of perceptions and propositions with truth-value.

I write the term in this way in order to emphasise that it means ‘between subjects’.
According to Conscious Mentalism, nothing can be present to the mind but mental perceptions. Moreover, Hume is a nominalist in the sense that no perceptions have multiple existences in time. It follows from this and Conscious Mentalism that not only my perceptions are distinct from each other; yours is also from mine, in addition to your other perceptions. Hence, we do not have any access to each other’s perceptions.

However, this does not entail that our perceptions cannot be similar. So it is possible that they form species of the perceptions of similar objects or events. What this importantly entails is that we can agree on the species of objects or events. For instance, even that kind of elementary consensus is possible that we agree on seeing a white paper at the moment. It is also completely possible on these premises – and a common sensical fact indeed – that we agree that similar objects “flame” are constantly succeeded by similar events “heat” (in certain conditions). Thus, there can be an inter-subjective consensus on the kinds of objects or events and the relations. That is all that is required of there being the more than subjective standard of truth for Humean inductive beliefs.

This line of thought shows that a form of epistemological realism, according to which there is an objective standard of truth, is completely coherent with the sceptical interpretation of Hume’s philosophical position on the existence of Real entities. Suspending judgment on the existence of Real entities does not rule out the possibility of the objective standard of truth in inter-subjective consensus. It does not lead to epistemological relativism. The foundation on which we judge non-present things is merely construed on the consensual and empirical basis instead of a human-independent criterion in Real entities and their nature. In the end, we are able to conclude that the sceptical interpretation is coherent with Hume’s declared standard of truth in experience. As he himself observes in the *Treatise*:

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253 This way of putting it simplifies things a little; the perceptions of primary qualities, for instance, are not distinct from the perceptions of sensible qualities as we recall.

254 This also implies that there is no principal obstacle to causation between different minds in the same way as there is between perceptions and the entities with non-mental ontological status. If Hume holds the bundle theory, the minds are composed of perceptions and there can be intelligible causal relations between perceptions.

255 It also establishes that the sceptical interpretation does not undermine Hume’s inductive-empirical view of philosophy and science, the main method of which is inductive inference from particular observations to general explanations (EHU 4.1.11).
“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)

The sceptical interpretation may be further supported by observing that it coheres well with Hume’s philosophical general programme. Accordingly, I finish the dissertation with two remarks on this issue. The first is more particular as it concerns Hume’s famous argument on induction in Section 4 of the first Enquiry. We should pay attention to the fact that when Hume recapitulates it in the Pyrrhonian, philosophical argument against induction in EHU 12.2.22, he does not speak about “secret powers” anymore. Instead, in EHU 4.2.21, there is an argument against the possibility that “secret powers” could found factual inferences to the unobserved in the following way. First we infer from the impressions of the concrete particulars to they having certain “secret powers” to produce certain effects. When we observe these objects again, we are entitled to conclude that they will have the same effects because of the secret powers. For example, I have observed that the earth attracts this pen when I drop it. Thereby I infer that the earth has the secret power to attract the pen. In the next observation of the same case, I am therefore entitled to conclude that the earth will attract the pen because it has the secret power of attraction. Hume’s point in this argument is that this putative inference would work without presuming that future will resemble the past. In that case, it would not be inductive, that is, presupposing the Uniformity Principle (unobserved uniform with experience).

The philosophical argument against induction comes after the two profound arguments in Section 12. Hume establishes by means of these arguments, if my interpretation is accurate, that we should suspend our judgment on the existence of Real entities in philosophy. Above, I have argued that Hume means Real powers by “secret powers”. He thus thinks that we ought to suspend our judgment on the existence of the secret powers. The possibility to found factual inference to the unobserved on them is hence ruled out and Hume does not have any need to repeat it anymore. The profound arguments against the senses corroborate then Hume’s argument on induction.

The other observation on Hume’s programme is more general. It consists in how well Hume’s professed objects of study concur with the sceptical interpretation of

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256 For future research, attention may be drawn to Hume’s views of testimony in EHU 10, his remarks how experience can be communicated through language (books) (EHU 9.5.n.20, lines 30-1; E, SH, 566), and how he considers experience to be accumulating (DNR 1, 36).

257 The same point applies to Hume’s other, famous argument on causality (EHU 7.1.6-8, 21, 25, and 26).
his philosophical position on Real entities. Thereby, I finish the book by arguing shortly that this interpretation is plausible from the point of view of what he actually examined.

Hume started his philosophical career with the project of an all-comprising enquiry of human nature, of which he left, at first hand, the three books of the Treatise to posterity. As he declares in the Advertisement to the first two books:

“My design in the present work is sufficiently explain’d in the Introduction. The reader must only observe, that all the subjects I have there plann’d out to myself, are not treat’d of in these two volumes. The subjects of the Understanding and Passions make a compleat chain of reasoning by themselves; and I was willing to take advantage of this natural division, in order to try the taste of the public. If I have the good fortune to meet with success, I shall proceed to the examination of Morals, Politics, and Criticism; which will compleat this Treatise of Human Nature.”

It is common knowledge that after the Treatise Hume changed his manner of exposition to essays, enquiries, dissertations, and histories, which is the subject of continuing controversy in Hume scholarship together with the relations between the later works and the Treatise. What is certain, however, is that in his intellectual career, as his object of research, Hume never abandoned human nature in its various manifestations. The later works complete his general project by studying criticism (aesthetics); politics and political economy; history of religion, arts, sciences, constitutions, monarchies, and politics. In the Introduction to the Treatise, Hume also mentions natural religion (T intro.5) and his celebrated treatment of rational religion is the posthumous Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.

Hume’s enquiries cover thus a wide-range of human phenomena from the understanding to the character of Britain’s first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745) (E, CSRW). We should pay attention to the circumstance that the objects of his research are therefore almost without exception causally dependent on human minds, perception, and existence. Regarding traditional substances in the independent sense - God, the soul, and the matter – Hume holds highly critical stance. In this light, it is only plausible that his philosophical position is to suspend his judgment on the existence of human perception independent, external, and continuously existing, Real entities.

Yet this should not blind us to the fact that Hume the common man, like every one of us, according to one of his insights, firmly believes that there is a realm that does not depend on our frailty existence. As Hume elegantly encapsulates his human conception of philosophy in the sixth paragraph of the first Section of the first Enquiry:

“Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.”
6 References

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