HUME'S SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

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An Abstract to Mr. Atis Zakatistovs' M.A. thesis

"Hume's Science of Human Nature"

In my thesis I propose a new interpretation of Book I of A Treatise of Human Nature by David Hume. I claim that this Book must be read in the light of the Introduction to the Treatise. Thus, my interpretation revolves around Hume's intention of creating a new system of the sciences on the basis of his science of man. In this thesis I pay close attention to the following subjects: the analysis of the 'vulgar'; Hume's discussion about the impact of predispositions on our ideas; the distinction between the concept of causation and the process of causation. Finally, I discuss Hume's position on the question of the simplicity and complexity of ideas.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

It has not been emphasised enough in Hume scholarship that in the Introduction to the Treatise of Human Nature Hume states that his science of man will establish a new system of the sciences. Moreover, the question about the nature of the new system of the sciences has been generally ignored by commentators. In this thesis I attempt to accomplish two objectives. First, I discuss a number of well known interpretations of Hume's philosophy and criticise them for disregarding Hume's own design of the Treatise. Second, I present my own interpretation of the First Book of the Treatise which proceeds from the recognition of Hume's intention to establish a new system of the sciences by developing his science of man.

In recent years Hume scholarship has undergone a transformation. Traditional interpretations of Hume as the Great Sceptic have been challenged with constructive readings of Hume's philosophy. These new readings of Hume's philosophy revolve around his science of human nature. Hume's scepticism is seen here as the consequence of his constructive endeavours. Hume is critical of the philosophy of his time; he proposes a daring attempt to change this situation; he recognises also the strength of traditional systems, and as a consequence he is sceptical about the possibilities to implement his proposed improvements. I agree with this developing tradition in Hume scholarship and believe that the recognition of the constructive agenda in Hume's philosophy requires that we pay close attention to his own design for his writings.

In the Advertisement of the Treatise Hume writes that his "design in the present work is sufficiently explained in the Introduction". In the Introduction Hume clearly states the connection between his science of man and a new system of the sciences. To follow Hume's own guidelines in our attempts to grasp the nature of his arguments in the Treatise, we should examine them in light of what he tried to accomplish.

Although this approach seems to be the most natural of any, it has not been adopted in Hume scholarship because of the long tradition of sceptical readings. The

position that Hume never presents a coherent system is still routinely embraced by commentators. The impact of this position on the constructive readings of Hume's thought must be overcome.

In Chapter 2 I present the reasons that justify the introduction of the new approach towards the examination of Hume's arguments in the Treatise. Hume is a great philosopher who has his own original perspective in philosophical investigations. His arguments can be easily misrepresented if they are taken out of the framework of Hume's discussion. Moreover, they usually are misrepresented since commentators fail to believe that Hume's Treatise is a project where different doctrines contribute to the defence of the central thesis, namely, that the science of human nature establishes an alternative system of the sciences.

In Chapter 3 I discuss some recent interpretations of Hume's work and present a study of the manner in which different opinions about the nature of his overall philosophy influence interpretations of particular arguments within the Treatise. I contrast certain interpretations of central arguments of the Treatise with my own interpretation of the same arguments which arises from the assumption that Hume's arguments are guided by the design that he outlines in the Introduction. I conclude this Chapter by presenting a list of features that characterise Hume's system of the sciences.

Chapter 4 argues that human understanding for Hume is not a faculty of the mind, but instead is a collection of individual perceptions. Hume outlines a metaepistemic project by claiming that there actually exists a collection of perceptions which regulates every conceivable mental activity. He distinguishes this metaepistemic realm from the world. The science of human nature investigates only the manner in which our ideas are related to the collection of perceptions (impressions) in our understanding. Thus, Hume shows that our ideas about the world acquire their meaning in our understanding. This position confirms that our beliefs do not depict the world. We can not understand the processes in the world by the analysis of our beliefs. Only if we investigate the manner in which the world is related to the collection of perceptions in our understanding (which are impressions and not our ideas), can individual sciences capture the nature of some processes in the world. Hume's science of man establishes a new system of the sciences because it introduces a new subject for scientific

investigations. Science should not deal with the world as it is represented in the beliefs of the 'vulgar'. Instead, scientific investigations must deal with individual perceptions in our understanding -- abstract epistemic units whose complex internal structure can be revealed only by the science of human nature. I show also how Hume develops a method which makes a description of the internal structure of individual perceptions possible.

In Chapter 5 I present the theory of ideas in all its complexity. I there suggest that Hume develops a complex system of mutual dependence between simple and complex perceptions, and I deny that Hume's simple perceptions are psychologically simple. On the contrary, for him simple perceptions are epistemically simple: the simplicity and complexity of ideas is not a matter of their composition, but is rather a matter of interpretation. Simple ideas are copied (i.e. interpreted without any changes) from either individual simple or complex perceptions. Complex ideas, on the other hand, constitute misinterpretations of either individual simple or complex perceptions. This understanding of the theory of ideas undercuts attempts to read a foundationalist program into Hume's philosophy.

My conclusion is that Hume's Treatise has an inner structure which is hard to detect behind the immature terminology that Hume uses, and which has been obscured by the strong tradition of the sceptical interpretation. According to that tradition Hume's philosophy presents only a collection of doctrines. I claim just the opposite. In the Treatise Hume offers a complex and unified theory of human nature.

Chapter 2

THE 'DESIGN' OF THE TREATISE

"Human Nature is the only science of man; and yet has been hitherto the most neglected."

Treatise, p.273.

Among the disputes in Hume scholarship there is one whose influence reaches into all aspects of Hume's philosophy. Is Hume a sceptic, in which case his writings are to be interpreted primarily with this in mind; or is he a constructive philosopher whose innovative spirit has been overlooked? The spectrum of interpretations representing the essence of Hume's philosophy is wide. Traditionally, Hume is thought to be the Great Sceptic and his arguments are read as being related to a particular doctrine in a disordered collection of different theories. This perception of Hume's ideas changes in some recent interpretations, which find a 'non-sceptical' content in his writings. These readings define a dominant motive in Hume's philosophy and present arguments as contributing to a defence of one central thesis. The naturalistic reading of Hume's ideas has received wide recognition; more recently, the evaluation of his influence on modern science has given a particular perspective in re-interpreting the main notions of Hume's philosophy. In this thesis I shall argue for a particular reading of the constructive tendency in Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, namely, that the science of man establishes the system of the sciences.

In the Advertisement to the Treatise Hume writes that his "*design in the present work is sufficiently explain'd in the* introduction". There are two issues that dominate the Introduction: first, Hume's description of the connection between the science of human nature and an alternative system of the sciences; second, his initial attempt to define the predisposition which, providing that it is accepted, will resolve the tension between one's expectations to find certainty in science and the impossibility, as Hume claims, of reaching ultimate decisions. Hume's claim that these issues dominate the Treatise is not accidental and it should provide an interpreter with guidelines in analysing particular arguments of the Treatise.

Traditionally, Hume's arguments in the Treatise have not been approached by commentators from the perspective of the Introduction. What are the reasons for this neglect of the Introduction in Hume scholarship?

Many scholars are confused about the impact of the Introduction on the argument in the Treatise. The main reason for this confusion is the manner in which Hume's arguments in the Introduction are presented. The Introduction features the contrast between Hume's intention of reorganising the system of the sciences and his neglect of possible opponents. Hume claims that "there is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science"[1]. This statement shows Hume's involvement in a very ambitious project. In just a few lines, he states that his science of man will establish a unified system whose principles apply to any activity of mind. He goes on to suggest that our knowledge of these principles can bring radical changes to mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion: "'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding"[2]. If these two arguments are considered together, then Hume's position appears very daring. Not only does he claim that there is a unified system of the sciences that others have failed to discover, but he also expects a remarkable improvement in individual sciences if he succeeds in establishing the new system.

Given the scope of Hume's ambitions, it seems reasonable to expect the explication of the principles of his system, as well as a comparison between his own and other systems on the subject of human nature. The Introduction, however, does not pursue this method of exposition. Instead, after a couple of very strong statements about the science of man, Hume proceeds to a rather ironic dismissal of opposing systems: "I do not think a philosopher, who would apply himself so earnestly to the explaining of the ultimate principles of the soul, would show himself a great master in that very science of human nature, which he pretends to explain"[3]. The appearance of

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[1] Treatise, p. xvi.

[2] Treatise, p. xv.

[3] Treatise, p.xviii.

such indifference to contemporary philosophy in the Introduction is confusing. In a sense, the Introduction does not fit into the argument of the Treatise. Hume tries to distinguish himself from the rest of the philosophical tradition, while it seems to be obvious that the Treatise continues the tradition of English Empiricism.

The conflict between seemingly obvious origins of Hume's philosophy in English Empiricism, and his own attempt to distance himself from the philosophical tradition of his time, generates a direct response. Some commentators maintain that Hume's initial intention of creating an alternative system of the sciences can be ignored. They reason that, although this intention is clearly expressed in the Introduction, there is no proof that throughout the Treatise Hume tries to establish an alternative system of the sciences. This argument finds some support in the manner in which Hume tries to re-introduce his Treatise in An Abstract of the Treatise of Human Nature, where he does not stress the idea about the establishment of the new system of the sciences.

The claim that Hume's arguments in the Introduction play little role in his subsequent discussions cannot be easily dismissed. Nevertheless, we must try to overcome the impact of this claim on particular interpretations of the Treatise.

The main advantage of the position which overlooks the Introduction is its ability to present Humean philosophy as a part in the development of the tradition of English Empiricism. Certainly, it would be mad to deny the importance of such an influence on Hume's ideas. Without denying that influence I shall argue that there is something original and very important about Hume's early philosophy. Hume tries to develop a new approach towards the analysis of perceptions. He does not attempt to analyse perceptions by their relations within the system of beliefs, or by their origins. Instead, Hume investigates perceptions by the structure of their internal qualities. He writes that "[t]he qualities, from which this association [among ideas in individual perceptions] arises, and by which the mind is after this manner convey'd from one idea to another, are three, *viz.* Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect"[4]. He develops a position that we can have reliable knowledge about some process in the world only if we have understood the internal qualitative make-up of an individual

[4] Treatise ,p.11.

perception[5] that is the immediate result of the influences in the world. The aim of this thesis is to explain Hume's position. In this Chapter, however, I intend only to provide grounds for maintaining Hume's originality.

The failure in the Introduction to compare Hume's own system of the sciences to those of other philosophers is understandable. The design of the Treatise involves an unconventional approach to philosophical problems, so that he neglects to compare his approach to the debates of his time. He attempts to do something original, and there would have been no point in contrasting his intentions with the prevailing paradigm in philosophy before he had explained the principles of his science. Hume needs to present a coherent system which can serve as the only plausible alternative to the arguments from certainty which were the paradigm of the time. He must justify the claim that there can be no absolute certainty[6]. He is aware that it is useless to claim in the Introduction that there could be no absolute certainty, because nobody would take him seriously.

The suggestion that in the Introduction Hume recognises that the originality of his intentions will be rejected may seem to be circular. It is valid only if Hume has an original agenda, and establishes a new system of the sciences in the Treatise. This, however, is not at all obvious. We can deny that his science of man establishes a new system of the sciences and thus neglect his arguments in the Introduction. Or, we can give Hume credit for developing a new system of the sciences which is yet to be understood. We shall proceed by the latter path, and describe the context which explains the connection between the science of human nature and the alternative system of the sciences.

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[5] Individual perceptions for Hume are cognitive experiences. His position is often misrepresented due to the assumption that individual perceptions are simple 'atoms' of cognition. Hume wants to show that we have the ability to synthesise different causal influences in the world into one cognitive event -- an individual perception. Individual perceptions are not necessarily simple. They have internal qualitative structures which determine the nature of the connections between parts of individual perceptions. Hume's theory of ideas will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[6] Hume accomplishes this in his theory of ideas. He claims that there is no direct connection between the world and our ideas of it. Since our ideas acquire their meaning in our understanding, certainty of our ideas is determined by our impressions. Unfortunately, we have no direct access to our impressions either since they are abstract epistemic units whose mere existence must be inferred. We have to rely on the science of human nature which allows us to comprehend the internal structure of impressions. The science of man, however, cannot guarantee an absolute certainty.

Letters to Henry Home prove Hume's sensitivity about the novelty of his intentions. In December of 1737 he writes: "My opinions are so new, and even some terms I am obliged to make use of, that I could not propose, by any abridgment, to give my system an air of likelihood, or so much as make it intelligible"[7]. This quotation illustrates Hume's state of mind while writing his Treatise. The struggle to situate himself within the philosophical tradition characterises Hume and follows him throughout his life.

A number of philosophers have tried to clarify Hume's peculiar relation to contemporary philosophical and scientific traditions. Among them, the interpretations of J.V. Price and J.E. Force differ by clearly illustrating the environment which makes Hume uncomfortable. Force argues that the scientific tradition in the first half of the eighteenth century presented a synthesis of scientific and religious beliefs where new scientific discoveries were actually interpreted as proofs for the existence of God. The temptation to re-interpret scientific discoveries in terms of religious dogma arises from the impact that the cultural pressure brings into theoretical reasoning. Force argues that Hume intends to undermine the religious interpretation of scientific discoveries[8]. Price also acknowledges the impact of cultural pressure on scientific investigations. The adherence of scientific theories to religious dogma determined whether a given theory was accepted or rejected. However, Price shows that, unlike the rest of philosophers, Hume does not yield to the influence of this cultural pressure. As a nonreligious person, Hume was usually prejudged in a society which equated religious scepticism with moral degradation. Nevertheless, Price suggests that Hume never tried to revise his opinions because of cultural pressure, and that he developed an ironic manner in presenting some of his arguments to deal with it[9]. Hume observed that a set of beliefs -- in this case religion -- has a strong influence on the sciences. He believed that this influence brings nothing but confusion into the sciences. Moreover, he was certain that this cultural pressure should be overcome.

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[7] The Letters of David Hume (ed. J.Y.T.Grieg), vol.1, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969, Letter #6.

[8] Force "Hume's Interest in Newton and Science" in Hume Studies, Volume XIII Number 2, November 1987, pp.187-194.

[9] J.V.Price The Ironic Hume, pp. 4-18.

Hume was aware that his intention of analysing perceptions by their internal qualitative make-up differed considerably from the disputes in philosophy and science in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Introduction shows that he deliberately contrasted his own philosophical system to the array of contemporary problems which stemmed from the temptation to synthesise religious and scientific questions. Hume is, as one might say, deliberately original[10]. He insists that scientific questions be kept apart from the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar', and believes that the only way to insure this separation is to develop a new system of the sciences. Let us follow Hume in his description of the situation in the sciences of his time.

In the first three paragraphs of the Introduction Hume describes the poor state of the learned disciplines. He discusses the common manner of conducting scientific and philosophical disputes from two perspectives. First, he supports an 'educated'[11] claim that intellectual controversies exploit "principles taken upon trust, consequences lamely deduced from them, want of the coherence in the parts, and of evidence in the whole"[12]. Second, he proceeds with an observation of the manner in which the 'unschooled' perceive science. "There is nothing which is not the subject of debate"[13] in science and, although there are numerous disputes about every question, even the most trivial of them cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. Hume argues that, unfortunately, scientific discussions come under the influence of the evaluation of science by the 'unschooled'. The scientific process is being infiltrated by arguments that receive public approval by presenting 'extravagant hypotheses' with eloquence.

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[10] More information about Hume's early education can be found in Barfoot, "Hume and the Culture of Science in the early Eighteenth Century" in Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, where he explains that Hume's knowledge of debates in philosophy is thorough. Yet, regardless of his deep knowledge of the background, Hume still maintains the originality of his new system of the sciences.

[11] The idea to analyse the argument in the Introduction from the perspective of 'educated' and 'unschooled' persons was introduced by King in "Despair and Hope in Hume's Introduction to the Treatise of Human Nature", Hume Studies, Volume XX, Number 1, April 1994, pp. 59-71. King points out that the Introduction is written in straightforward and nontechnical language. Here, according to King, Hume lays the grounds for a framework in which he wants us to think about the basic tension of his work.

[12] Treatise, p.xiii.

[13] Treatise, p.xiv.

Hume introduces three characteristics that outline the nature of his science of human nature. First, all sciences are related to it; second, it presents a complete system of the sciences; and third, it is the only solid foundation for other sciences. The intention of creating a new system of the sciences cannot be expressed more explicitly. Although the poor organisation of the Treatise hides the intention to establish a new system of the sciences, it is important to recognise that in the Introduction Hume claims that the science of human nature is the only source of his new system of the sciences. Hume believes that the internal structure of perceptions is the only immediate result of the impact of the world on persons. Thus, only the analysis of the internal qualitative structure of perceptions can provide us with the subject for scientific investigations. The truth about processes in the world can be found only by considering the similarities in the internal make-up of individual perceptions that purport to represent these processes in the world.

This outline of Hume's philosophy does not fit into most of its traditional interpretations. A widespread neglect of the connection between the science of human nature and the new system of the sciences has become characteristic of Hume scholarship. In fact, even the problem about the coherence of Hume's system quite often slips away from the conceptual analysis of Hume's philosophy. There must be something wrong with the traditional interpretations of Hume's philosophy because they fail to account for a trivial fact, namely, Hume's attempt to establish a system of the sciences presents a new conceptual framework which is supposed to replace the contemporary intellectual systems.

We should claim that Hume follows a particular design because his theory of ideas underlines various discussions in the Treatise. Hume can be seen as an original contributor to the intellectual disputes of the time inasmuch as he proposes a unified account of the system of the sciences. Unfortunately, Hume is cheated of such credit for the originality of his system, not because of any lack of evidence of his intentions in the Treatise, but because of the false assumption that he is unable to provide a system that supports his arguments.

This situation in Hume scholarship was obvious to H.H. Price who appeals to commentators to remain open-minded about Hume's arguments, and to change their approach towards the study of his philosophy: "We must try to go behind his language,

and when he is obscure (which he seldom is)[14] we must try to make him clear. That is the spirit in which the works of Kant are commonly studied. ... I suggest that we should extend to Hume a portion of that charity -- indulgence if you like -- which we have long been accustomed to practise towards Kant"[15]. The following discussion approaches Hume in just this spirit.

We must answer three possible objections to the claim that Hume's intention of creating a new system of the sciences must be the first principle of any interpretation of the Treatise. First, it may be thought that Hume does not want to create a new system of the sciences by his science of human nature because to do so would conflict with the overall nature of his philosophy. Second, it may be thought that the Treatise contains only a collection of different theories, so it is neither necessary nor possible to present Hume's arguments as a system. Third, it may be objected that the claim that Hume is serious about establishing a new system of the sciences is empty because in the Treatise he never discusses the distinction between the old and new systems of the sciences.

The first objection arises from the belief that the rationality of the Universe is a presupposition of all our thinking. Hume is often accused of neglecting one fundamental fact with which he, as well as everyone else, must be intuitively acquainted: namely, that the Universe is rational. If the Universe were such that p and not-p were both true, then we would not be able to understand the Universe at all. Certainly, Hume is mistaken, so it is maintained by the proponents of the sceptical reading of Hume's philosophy, to ignore this fundamental truth. The system of our beliefs represents the processes in the Universe. If Hume claims that the connections of perceptions in the system of our beliefs are only habitual, then that, in principle, proves that the system of our beliefs does not depict the Universe. This conclusion allows for the possibility that the Universe is not rational, which is nonsense. Hume overlooks this basic truth about the Universe because of his assumption about the habitual nature of our cognition. The position that the rational nature of the Universe has to be presupposed in order for us to have any knowledge is the conceptual basis which underlines the sceptical reading of

[14] Price's own remark.

[15] Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp.3-4.

Hume's philosophy. The necessary presupposition about the rational nature of the Universe directly clashes, or so it seems, with Hume's sceptical doctrine that it is impossible to know the ultimate nature of the Universe.

In response to the first objection we can explain that we would wrongly accuse Hume, if his doctrine about the impossibility of knowing the ultimate nature of the Universe were to be understood as a presupposition that the Universe is not rational. Hume's main concern in the Treatise is science. Hume criticises intellectual systems of the period and expects that in science the use of any assumption, including the basic ontological and epistemic beliefs of the 'vulgar', will not be accepted unless it can be proven that such principles have natural foundations. Hume's doctrine that it is impossible to know the ultimate nature of the Universe is not a presupposition of his philosophy, since the critique of the use of such presuppositions in science is the exact point of his philosophy.

Hume's determination to create an alternative system of the sciences on the basis of his analysis of perceptions must be respected. He claims that the faculties and powers of the mind only establish connections among individual perceptions without considering their internal structure. Individual perceptions are cognitive events, i.e. the manner in which human beings react to causal influences in the world. Every individual perception has an internal qualitative structure which remains the same regardless of the way in which individual perceptions are later connected.

Under the influence of various predispositions, the powers and faculties of the mind establish connections between individual perceptions. In a sense, our understanding consists of a pool of individual perceptions each of which has a certain internal structure. These perceptions come under the influence of different predispositions which continually re-arrange our individual perceptions into different systems without considering the differences in their internal qualitative structures. These new connections are artificial because they do not respect the natural structure of perceptions, i.e. their internal make-up. We are strongly inclined to assume that the artificial connections of perceptions resemble mind-independent processes in the world. This is how we create fictions. The repetitions of the same arrangement of perceptions establish a habit which makes us believe that this artificial arrangement of perceptions resembles processes that are independent of our mental activities. Thus, at first,

regardless of the fact that they represent different causal influences in the world, individual perceptions with different internal structures are artificially joined together. Then, after numerous repetitions of these artificially connected perceptions, we believe that this arrangement of perceptions represents a single process (entity) in the world. The latter development introduces a fictional process (entity) which exists nowhere but in our minds.

Scientists must understand the nature of our belief systems, and accordingly must try to escape the circularity of different artificial arrangements of individual perceptions. Our beliefs tell us nothing about the genuine nature of the world because they ignore the internal make-up of individual perceptions. Scientific inquiry must be based on the understanding that only the internal qualitative structure of individual perceptions represents processes in the world. Scientists must try to explain the manner in which a particular internal structure of a perception is the result of causal influences in the world. They cannot simply assume that the artificial unity of perceptions in our belief systems corresponds to the genuine processes in the world.

These conclusions are open to the criticism that we do not find a clear statement of the above arguments in Hume's writings. This criticism represents the second possible objection which seemingly justifies Hume scholars in their neglect of the connection between Hume's science of man and the new system of the sciences. This objection will be fully answered by particular arguments which will be discussed and supported by examples in the following Chapters. At the moment, we are trying to establish whether an interpreter should believe that Hume establishes an alternative system of the sciences. If Hume's intention to develop a new system of the sciences is ignored, then many theoretical notions and arguments are simply overlooked. If, on the other hand, an interpreter tries to put himself into the framework of Hume's ideas, then there is no escape from a number of theoretical notions that previously have not been commented upon.

We can answer the second objection by listing theoretical notions which, while being used by Hume, can not be accounted for in traditional interpretations. Time after time Hume remarks that in the Treatise he presents a system. An interpreter finds Hume discussing quite obscure subjects, for example, about the existence of perceptions independent of the mind. Among the expressions that Hume uses, some

are very confusing. For example, he mentions 'the empire of the imagination', and the 'Universe of imagination'. The nature of these expressions cannot be explained by the sceptical interpretation which assumes that Hume's Treatise contains a disordered collection of different doctrines. Finally, one finds Hume's claims about the modesty of his philosophy beside electrifying pronouncements about a complete revolution in science. This odd combination presents a difficult challenge to any claim about the nature of Hume's philosophy.

But what about the objection that Hume never attempts to discuss the division between the old and new systems of sciences? We can answer the third objection by showing that Hume in the Treatise, in fact, does deal with the question about the new system of the sciences. Although the main emphasis of the Treatise is on the science of man, it is clear for Hume that it creates a new system of the sciences, regardless of the fact that only one individual science --geometry -- is examined by Hume.

The analysis of geometry has two parts. The first contains a critique of an existing approach to questions in geometry, while the second defines its place in a new system of the sciences. Hume's analysis of geometry demonstrates his expectation that a similar transformation will take place in all sciences. What then is Hume's understanding of geometry in the content of his new system of the sciences?

Hume calls for modesty in the evaluation of the extent of the application for geometry. He claims that no geometrical demonstration is sufficient to establish a precise account of the standard of equality allegedly employed in geometry. He explains that "when geometry decides any thing concerning the proportions of quantity, we ought not to look for the utmost *precision* and exactness. None of its proofs extend so far"[16]. Hume argues that an enumeration of the parts of a line or geometrical figure cannot serve as a standard of equality since it will always be open to the possibility of infinite regress. The process by which the mind judges equality inevitably requires reference to inferior quantities. We claim that two objects are equal if and only if they consist of the same number of parts. If we want to be sure that the parts, of which the objects are composed, are the same in size, we would have to look at the constitution of these parts of some yet smaller parts, and so on. This reference cannot be relied upon

[16] Treatise, p.45.

with certainty since the limited capacity of the mind cannot comprehend the possibility of an infinite regress of the number of parts in the units of measurement. Nevertheless, Hume readily acknowledges the accomplishments of geometry, since "[i]t takes the dimensions and proportions of figures justly; but roughly, and with some liberty. Its errors are never considerable; nor wou'd it err at all, did it not aspire to such an absolute perfection" [17]. Hume's main intention in his initial analysis of geometry is to draw a distinction between the imaginary, and the natural, senses of equality. This distinction is fully explained by the description of the processes that are involved in judging equality of parts.

Hume argues that geometry does not have to rely on the infinite regress of parts. Geometry instead rests on the natural ability of our vision to determine the proportions of bodies, i.e. we have a certain capacity to judge proportions of bodies. The mind assigns the names 'greater', 'less', and 'equal' to the variations in the appearance of objects. We compare two or more objects and pronounce them either 'equal' or not. The judgement in this case is based solely on the evaluation of appearances of two bodies. However, this initial judgement can undergo corrections if closer observation of objects presents different appearances, which will warrant a new judgement about their relation. The reliability of our judgement can be improved also by the introduction of an additional object in relation to which the size of another object becomes easily distinguishable. Hume concludes that "the very idea of equality is that of such a particular appearance corrected by juxta-position or a common measure"[18].

Hume continues his examination of geometry by analysing the manner in which it obtains the status of science by giving an account of cognitive processes that are involved in postulating a fictional subject for geometry -- enumeration of the parts in perfect geometrical figures. Numerous repetitions of judgements about equality establish a habitual need to employ a certain standard. Thus, after years of training, a musician "entertains a notion of a compleat *tierce* or *octave*, without being able to tell whence he derives his standard"[19]. A painter uses imaginary standards of light and

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[17] Ibid., p.45.

[18] Treatise, p.48.

[19] Treatise, p.49.

shade by characterising colours. A mechanic, according to previous experience, can distinguish whether motion is swift or slow. A similar process takes place in geometry. Although there is no exact method for determining the proportions of parts, yet, by employing our natural capacity to judge the appearance of objects, it is possible to develop the skill by which we distinguish different degrees of exactness.

The ability to recognise degrees of proportions makes us imagine a notion of perfect and entire equality. This imaginary standard is traditionally misused in geometry. A painter or a musician would not even think of using their ability to apply certain standards of, for example, light and shade beyond the limits of perceptions. In geometry, on the other hand, we find that the standard of equality is being applied to infinitely small and infinitely large bodies which clearly cannot constitute objects for our natural capacity to synthesise different influences in a judgement. Hume does not claim that infinitely small or large objects do not exist. He states that the relation among these objects cannot be inferred by imaginary standards that arise from the process of correcting a judgement from one appearance of an object, by another judgement from a different appearance of the same object. Hume stresses that since "the ultimate standard of these [geometrical] figures is deriv'd from nothing but the senses and imagination, 'tis absurd to talk of any perfection beyond what these faculties can judge of; since the true perfection of any thing consists in its conformity to its standard"[20]. Hume shows that the notion of the standard of equality arises from our ability to recognise the differences in proportions of appearances and explains that this standard is imaginary. The application of this standard in thinking about the proportions of objects that cannot become appearances is unjustifiable. This leaves the class of imaginable but unperceivable objects beyond the reach of geometry.

Hume believes that geometry is only one example in the tradition of 'rationalistic'[21] interpretations of scientific discoveries. He refuses to accept the concept of God and his powers into scientific arguments and attacks attempts to use the analogy of the perfect geometrical figure in discussing the 'frame of the Universe'. Hume warns that "in vain shou'd we have recourse to the common topic, and employ the supposition

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[20] Treatise, p.51.

[21] Closer analysis of 'rationalistic' interpretations of scientific discoveries will follow in Chapter 3.

of a deity, whose omnipotence may enable him to form a perfect geometrical figure"[22]. The attempt to introduce the concept of God into the sciences is received by Hume with hostility. He maintains that the tendency to present a finished scientific system that complies with the prevailing system of beliefs arises from the influence that comes into science with the expectations of the 'unschooled'.

Hume attacks the expectation that science must conform to the prevailing system of beliefs. He argues that our belief system is a complex arrangement of various perceptions. It is wrong to assume that it in some way contains a direct replica of the world. Our ideas are arranged into complex systems mostly by our own predispositions and not by processes in nature. The tendency to re-interpret scientific discoveries in a 'rationalistic' manner establishes a circle. Under the influence of different predispositions we simply re-arrange our perceptions into ever new complex systems. Hume believes that, by striving towards absolute certainty, scientists create a new predisposition which allows for a certain restructuring of the existing system of beliefs. He urges us to "fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible"[23]. It matters not if we think of the utmost limits of the universe, heavens, or any other object, we do not advance even a step beyond ourselves. The process of thinking deals solely with the manner in which perceptions appear to us. Thus, whenever we think of external existence, we cannot help but to remain in 'the universe of imagination'. Science needs new foundations to break this vicious circle and reach out to discover the genuine nature of the world.

Hume believes that science will remain in the 'universe of imagination' as long as the tendency of 'rationalistic' interpretations of scientific discoveries into a given system of beliefs prevails. This, most certainly, happens in geometry. It is assumed that the rules of equality will hold beyond what could, in principle, be experienced. One cannot think about external existence beyond the perceptions. Nevertheless, geometry claims that the regularities which are discovered only from the analysis of the appearances of objects will be applicable to all creations of God, regardless of whether they are infinitely small or large objects.

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[22] Treatise, p.51.

[23] Treatise, p.67.

Hume declares that "the nature and use of geometry [is] to run us up to such appearances, as, by reason of their simplicity, cannot lead us into any considerable error"[24]. This statement characterises his new definition of geometry in the alternative system of the sciences. To highlight the transformation of geometry under the principles of the new system of the sciences, it will be helpful to restate Hume's argument.

Hume's critique of the assumption about the existence of an independent standard of equality reveals two claims. First, we have a natural ability to judge appearances of objects. The result of these judgements are individual perceptions with a complete internal structure. By making judgements about appearances we also develop a habitual expectation that every particular case contains that relation with which we have become familiar. The continual correction of judgements about the proportions of bodies establishes such a habit in geometry. We are prone to expect the presence of an additional 'entity' that guarantees a correct judgement in every attempt to assess the proportions of objects. This 'entity' is assigned the status of the standard of equality. Second, Hume shows that this habitual expectation introduces only a relation among individual perceptions and tells us nothing about the structure of perceptions themselves. The assumption that the same relation that exists among perceptions will also hold in the world is thus unjustifiable. The standard of equality is a fiction of the imagination, i.e. it does not exist independently of our minds, and it is false to assume that it holds in relation to objects that cannot be perceived. Although the temptation to follow our habitual expectations is very strong, Hume argues that our knowledge of the fictional character of 'entities' invented to satisfy our expectations demands that we overcome this temptation. A scientist "may derive a more delicate satisfaction from the free confession of his ignorance, and from his prudence in avoiding that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypothesis on the world for the most certain principles"[25].

This new science of geometry investigates the relation between the structure of individual perceptions and the influences that create them. Individual perceptions represent the influences that are independent of what we think about them. Geometry

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[24] Treatise, p.72.

[25] Treatise,p. xviii.

should identify and describe those perceptions that represent objects and have the simplest possible internal structure, namely, geometry must describe our natural capacity to judge proportions of bodies.

This examination of geometry cannot alone explain the nature of Hume's system of the sciences. Nevertheless, it shows how one of the new sciences is constructed in the Treatise.

Let us sum up the main points of this Chapter. It is assumed too often that the nature of Hume's thought is, in general, well-known. Now and then, however, the Treatise can yield a shock upon discovering some arguments that cannot be accounted for in terms of its traditional interpretations. The argument from originality is the assumption that Hume in his Treatise presents a coherent system where his science of human nature establishes a new system of the sciences. Thus, he intends to present a new conceptual framework which should replace the contemporary intellectual systems.

The recognition of Hume's original intentions is an attempt at a conceptual re-evaluation of some principles in Hume's philosophy. The need for such a reconsideration arises since traditional interpretations cannot account for the variety of topics discussed in the Treatise. Among many themes that escape the scrutiny of an examination, Hume's intention of establishing a new system of the sciences generally remains neglected. The new system of the sciences is designed to solve the problems of intellectual systems in the early eighteenth century. The assumption of the originality in Hume's approach presupposes the constructive nature of Hume's philosophy, which is now increasingly recognised in Hume scholarship.

Chapter 3

SOME 'NON-SCEPTICAL' INTERPRETATIONS OF HUME'S TREATISE

All those opinions and notions of things, to which we have been accustom'd from our infancy, take such a deep root, that 'tis impossible for us, by all powers of reason and experience, to eradicate them; and this habit not only approaches in its influence, but even on many occasions prevails over that which arises from the constant and inseparable union of causes and effects.

Treatise, p.116.

The tendency to integrate Hume's 'sceptical' arguments within a more general conceptual framework is a growing trend in Hume scholarship. Norman Smith[26] was the first to draw attention to the 'non-sceptical' thesis of Hume's philosophy. He writes that "the establishment of a purely naturalistic conception of human nature by the thorough subordination of reason to feeling and instinct is the determining factor in Hume's philosophy"[27]. This interpretation has helped us appreciate the depth of Hume's philosophy, and the issue of its constructive nature has increasingly occupied interpreters, with the result that the constructive tendency in Hume scholarship has gradually replaced 'sceptical' readings of his work.

It has not been emphasised enough that Hume himself defines the focus of his arguments in the Treatise. The established science of human nature is his immediate goal, and he believes that on its basis it will be possible to establish a new system of the sciences. We can debate whether Hume's own account of the 'non-sceptical' content in his philosophy gives any advantage in our attempts to understand his system. In the previous Chapter I argued that we should overcome these reservations. We should recognise the originality of Hume's position and, this should enable us to organise the interpretation of his arguments.

Many scholars would agree that the intention of creating a science of man plays a very important role in the genesis of Hume's position. Nevertheless, the traditional 'sceptical' interpretation continues to influence new attempts at defining the 'non-

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[26] Smith, "The naturalism of Hume" in Mind, April 1905, pp.149-173, 335-347.

[27] Ibid., p.150.

sceptical' content of Hume's philosophy. Those who claim that Hume's philosophy is a random collection of different theories ask that its 'non-sceptical' content be proven. Given this challenge, commentators who favour the constructive interpretation can proceed cautiously, and highlight one particular topic in Hume's philosophy (for example, his naturalism). The general opinion about Hume's overall scepticism is not completely undermined by exhibiting his limited constructivism. On the other hand, we can and should claim that Hume sets particular goals for his philosophy and the manner, in which different theories are introduced, constructively leads towards the given goal. His sceptical arguments do not characterise the nature of Hume's system since he introduces 'sceptical' arguments only after evaluating the complexity of the system that he has developed. This latter approach shifts the focus of our analysis from the content of Hume's intentions to the nature of his arguments. The question about the lesson that can be learned from a particular reading of Hume's arguments is replaced by the question about the nature of a philosophical system that can support the creation of a new system of the sciences.

From this point my examination of Hume's system will proceed from his own 'non-sceptical' thesis of creating a new system of the sciences to an inquiry about the conceptual framework by which Hume justifies it. It will be shown that this conceptual system is capable of supporting his 'non-sceptical' claims, and is created for this purpose. This plan follows the suggestion of Price: "If we want to learn something from Hume's writings -- and if not, why read him at all? -- we must resolve to give him a fair run for his money, even when he appears most perverse and outrageous"[28].

In this Chapter I shall first provide a concise description of science in the early eighteenth century. Then I shall identify general characteristics of science, and distinguish the object of Hume's criticism. Later, I shall discuss some recent interpretations of Hume's ideas which fail to account for Hume's own design of the Treatise. By comparing Hume's arguments with this concise outline of the nature of science in the early eighteenth century I hope to draw an indirect description of his philosophy. Finally, I shall broaden this description with additional characteristics of his work from interpretations of Stroud, Strawson and Michaud.

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[28] Price, Hume's Theory of External World, p.3.

Science in the early eighteenth century was largely formed under the influence of Newtonianism. The importance of Newton's Principia has been acknowledged within intellectual disputes of the period; however, its relation to Deity and the soul created some confusion. Newton's natural philosophy grants that bodies are numerically identical from one time and place to another. The principle that only knowledge of the self over time constitutes our understanding of the identity of God[29] forms another principle of his natural philosophy. These principles create a framework which permits the synthesis of science and theology. Newton's conception of natural philosophy includes God as the Maker of the Universe[30].

Although Newton himself was hesitant to draw a priori inferences from the nature of causation to the existence of God, most of his followers found in his principles a missing link that completes the 'rationalistic' conception of the world. Newton's principles were tacitly present in claims that a priori arguments for the existence of God have found their confirmation in the discovery of the force of gravity. Newtonian discoveries served as the point of departure to infer even more general causes and ultimately a first Cause[31]. Clarke and others eagerly established a theologically based ethical rationalism that resulted in an argument for the existence of God as a self-existing and intelligent being.

Newton himself participated in the discussion of the mechanical and non-mechanical models of causation. We can follow this discussion to show that the experimental method of reasoning is independent of the framework in which experimental discoveries are subsequently presented.

The Cartesian theory of vortices introduces a mechanical theory of causation. This theory states that causation is simple in time since there is no action across a temporal interval. It is simple also in place since there could not be any interaction at a

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[29] See the discussion on the subject in Samuel A.Richmond "Newton and Hume on Causation: Alternative Strategies of Simplification", History of Philosophy Quarterly, vol.11, Number 1, January 1994, pp.37-52. and Newton, I. Newton's Philosophy of Nature: selections from his writings (ed. H.S.Thayer), Hafner Publishing, New York, 1953, pp.46-74.

[30] James Noxon in Hume's Philosophical Development writes that "for Newton the existence of God was no hypothesis but a certain truth manifested by the evidence of intelligence and choice in the design of the world", p.54.

[31] Noxon, Hume's Philosophical Development, pp.63-64.

distance. The principle that action is impossible without the contact of bodies was undermined by Newton's discovery of the force of gravity. His experimental method of reasoning allows "for explanations that are not mechanical, in the sense of being reducible to physical contact"[32]. Newton's position was not acceptable to many, and his principles were criticised. When accused of resorting to occult causes, Newton categorically denied this charge. The existence of the force of gravity in matter is not questioned by Newton. He denied the claim that gravity is an occult cause, for its existence can be inferred by general induction from phenomena. Moreover, gravity is species-neutral and applies to all kinds of bodies. Occult causes, according to Newton, are species-specific.

Newton's response to his critics, and the explanation of the distinction between occult causes and the force of gravity, separates the question about the existence of gravity from the question about its origins. Newton maintains that gravity should be inherent in matter. The existence of such inherent gravity is inferred from the phenomena of bodies having an impact upon each other. The question about the origins of this force does not concern Newton. However, if asked, he states that gravity must be caused by an agent who acts according to constant laws[33].

Newton's defence from the charge of introducing occult causes into scientific discourse shows that his natural philosophy is essentially independent of the experimental method of reasoning. Newton infers the operation of the force of gravity from experiments. He maintains that this fact cannot be questioned. Later, he tries to incorporate this discovery into some plausible system which happens to be the Universe as it was created by God. This essential independence of the experimental method of reasoning from its subsequent interpretation into some more general framework presents the context in which Hume's philosophy should be assessed.

There is little doubt that Hume comes under the influence of Newtonianism which infiltrates most intellectual discussions in the early eighteenth century[34]. Nevertheless,

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[32] McIntyre, "Hume: Second Newton of the Moral Sciences", Hume Studies, Volume XX, Number 1, April 1994, p.12.

[33] Richardson, "Newton and Hume on Causation: Alternative Strategies of Simplification", pp.38-39.

[34] Force, "Hume's Interest in Newton and Science", Hume Studies, vol.XIII, Nov.1987, pp.169-178.

its particular impact on Hume's Treatise is not obvious. Two positions emerge in the effort to grasp the connection between Hume's philosophy and the science of his time. First, Hume plans to rebuild philosophy according to the principles of natural sciences[35]. It is argued that Hume literally takes the experimental method of natural sciences and adapts it to the moral subjects. Second, Hume's approach provides a generalisation of Newton's position on the nature of gravity or Attraction among bodies[36]. Here Hume is seen as taking a particular kind of scientific argument and applying it to re-think the concept of causation and its application in scientific discussions.

Both positions can be clearly juxtaposed in the context of a system of the sciences. The first interpretation shows that Hume attempts to integrate moral subjects into the existing system of natural sciences. The second interpretation claims that Hume sets out new principles and expects that a new system of the sciences will be built around those principles.

We shall argue that Hume follows the latter path. Nevertheless, before we contrast this interpretation of Hume's ideas to others, we must prove that Hume indeed wants to establish an alternative system of the sciences.

Hume has a fundamental disagreement with Newton about the nature of his natural philosophy. Hume would deny the assumption that bodies are numerically identical from one time and place to another. For him the unity of the self throughout time is a fiction, and he denies that it should be a necessary precondition to acquire any knowledge. He observes, however, that Newton's discussion about the force of gravity is independent of his natural philosophy. This situation characterises the scientific spirit of the time. On the one hand, Hume believes that the intellectual systems of the period rely mostly on intuitive principles that are routinely adapted from the system of ontological and epistemic beliefs of the 'vulgar'. On the other hand, he is convinced that the principles of experimental reasoning are the only means by which the truth about the world can be discovered.

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[35] Many prominent interpreters of Hume have followed this line. See Passmore, Hume's Intentions, pp. 43-60., and Noxon, Hume's Philosophical Development, pp.121-123.

[36] McIntyre, "Hume: Second Newton of the Moral Sciences", Hume Studies, Volume XX, Number 1, April 1994, pp.12-15.

We can ask ourselves: What meaning can be assigned to Hume's intention to establish a new system of the sciences? The replacement of the system of sciences -- the world as it is created by God -- demands the introduction of a new understanding of existence and reality. It also involves the requirement that each and every belief comes under the scrutiny of reconsideration, according to the principles of the new system. The Introduction provides clear evidence that Hume considers this course of action. Hume insists that "there is no question of importance, whose decision is not compriz'd in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided by certainty, before we become acquainted with that science"[37]. Our understanding of reality and existence should not be exempt from the scrutiny of a scientific investigation. Hume intends to explain the manner in which the 'vulgar' apprehend reality and insists on replacing its use in science, since it proves to be inconsistent.

Hume's intention of providing a scientific evaluation of our understanding of existence becomes even clearer if his theory of belief is considered. Particular beliefs are described in the Treatise within the framework of an epistemic analysis. For example, Hume writes "[w]hen I think of God, when I think of him as existent, and when I believe him to be existent, my idea of him neither encreases nor diminishes"[38]. The epistemic analysis abstracts from the actual system in which the contents of the mind are connected. Hume refuses to accept the assumption that beliefs are perceptions of a different kind. We are not able to learn more about the world from beliefs than we can from any other perception.

Hume repeatedly stresses two principles of his philosophy. First, he insists that "[w]hatever is clearly conceiv'd may exist; and whatever is clearly conceiv'd, after any manner, may exist after the same manner"[39]. This principle refers to entities which are depicted in our ideas. Hume does not believe that every clear idea necessarily depicts a process in the world. It could be that our ideas represent some impression of memory which exists only in our understanding. These perceptions might exist in our minds, and yet they do not necessarily have corresponding entities within the world. If we clearly

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[37] Treatise, p.xvi.

[38] Treatise, p.94.

[39] Treatise, p.233.

conceive the idea of God, for example, we must acknowledge that this idea exists. It exists in the same manner as it is perceived, namely, it exists as a perception within the collection of perceptions of understanding.

Second, Hume asserts that "every thing, which is different, is distinguishable, and every thing which is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination"[40]. This principle points to the importance of the manner in which individual perceptions are joined into ever new complex arrangements. We have a natural ability to judge the appearances of objects. This judgement establishes individual perceptions. These perceptions are individual cognitive events, each of which has a different internal qualitative structure. In a sense, we have a natural ability to react to causal influences in the world by creating individual perceptions. Although individual perceptions represent different causal influences in the world, we have a tendency to join them in different arrangements without considering these differences. These new connections between perceptions are artificial because they ignore the natural internal structures of perceptions. The artificial connections are believed to represent a single entity in the world. Hume observes that this belief introduces a fiction about the world. The second principle of his philosophy draws our attention to the fact that internal structures of individual perceptions are independent from their subsequent involvement into some arbitrary connection of perceptions.

Human nature is the collection of perceptions in our understanding. This collection of individual perceptions can be continually re-arranged under the influence of our various predispositions. Scientists in Hume's new system must explain the connection between the causal influences in the world and the internal structure of individual perceptions. They should abandon the traditional approach which tries to compare the world to the existing arrangement of individual perceptions in the most recent system of beliefs.

Hume's philosophy is manifested in his intention to create a new system of the sciences. This project requires the reconsideration of moral and natural philosophy from the perspective of our ability to create cognitive events, i.e. individual perceptions with a complete internal qualitative structure.

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[40] Treatise, p.233.

Having outlined the initial description of the relation between Hume's science of human nature and the new system of the sciences, we can turn to the analysis of alternative interpretations of Hume's ideas. I will discuss the interpretations of Barry Stroud, Galen Strawson, and Yves Michaud.

Barry Stroud acknowledges Hume's achievement in undermining the rationalistic vision of the world: "If man, the rational animal, had to have good reasons to believe something before he could believe it, then Hume shows that no rational man would ever believe anything"[41]. Stroud claims that Hume's sceptical arguments make an important non-sceptical point. This statement characterises a new tendency in Hume scholarship which tries to answer the question of how Hume intends to use his severe critique of rationalistic thinking.

Stroud finds the answer in Hume's naturalism. He argues that Hume never denies that we believe all kinds of things. Therefore, Hume's 'non-sceptical' point is to claim that we cannot help it. This claim explains Hume's comments about the principles of reasoning, and illustrates a strong and distinct tendency in his thought. When Hume claims that "nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determin'd us to judge as well as to breathe and feel"[42], it is clear that he describes some predetermined order within the process of reasoning. Whenever we have found a constant conjunction between two sorts of phenomena, we will inevitably believe that the first one causes the second. The nature of Hume's treatment of the constant conjunction between phenomena introduces a certain determination. Stroud believes that Hume envisions the existence of natural determination which establishes his naturalism. From this overall opinion about the nature of Hume's philosophy Stroud proceeds towards the examination of particular arguments within the Treatise.

Stroud's interpretation assigns an important role to the fact that Hume establishes the science of human nature. He argues that Hume "seek[s] a general kind of explanation of the various ways in which men think, act, feel and live"[43]. This claim represents Stroud's position that Hume's science of human nature investigates the

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[41] Stroud, Hume, p.14.

[42] Treatise, p.183.

[43] Stroud, Hume, p.4.

processes which result in actual thoughts, behaviour, feelings, etc. Hume's theory serves in providing the basis for explaining everything in human affairs. Thus, Stroud maintains that "the task of the science of man is to discover empirically why those thoughts, beliefs, feelings and actions arise as they do"[44]. Since Hume's theory is deterministic, it contains "only empirical study of the way men contingently, however unchangeably, are"[45]. Stroud maintains that the 'revolutionary' part of Hume's science is his insistence that everything about man should become the subject of scientific and naturalistic investigation.

There are three objections to Stroud's position. First, the claim that Hume wants to know all the answers about human nature, and his science of man is able to provide them, contradicts the outline of the nature of Hume's philosophy in the Introduction, where we find Hume defending the position that it is impossible to explain the ultimate principles of the mind and of external bodies. He writes that "if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles should be esteemed a defect in the science of man, I will venture to affirm, that 'tis a defect common to it with all the sciences, and all the arts, in which we can employ ourselves, whether they be such as are cultivated in the schools of the philosophers, or practised in the shops of the meanest artizans"[46]. Hume continues that "if truth be at all within the reach of human capacity, 'tis certain it must lie very deep and abstruse"[47]. Finally, Hume acknowledges that he will "pretend to no such advantage [of assuming the existence of absolutely certain solutions to questions about human nature] in the philosophy I am going to unfold"[48].

Second, Stroud misplaces the weight of the argument in Hume's statement that "nature by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel". He focuses on the wrong part of this claim. Hume does not want to state that nature has established a certain necessity in the manner in which our

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[44] Ibid, p.11.

[45] Ibid., p.11.

[46] Treatise,p xviii.

[47] Treatise, p.xiv.

[48] Treatise, p.xv.

minds operate. To the contrary, he wants to stress that we actually have the capacity to judge the appearances of objects, i.e. we create individual cognitive experiences which have complete internal structures. Stroud believes that the necessity in Hume's account applies to the manner in which different individual perceptions are joined into complex arrangement. In fact, Hume claims that our individual perceptions are arbitrarily joined together by our imagination without any input from the world.

Third, Stroud misinterprets the role of the theory of beliefs in the system of Hume's philosophy. It is true that Hume acknowledges that it is not up to us to decide if we will have beliefs or not. It is trivial - human beings will always have beliefs about something. Stroud's position misinterprets Hume's theory of beliefs which plays its role when the content of perceptions is discussed. Hume wants to claim that truth or falsity of information captured in our perceptions is independent of our believing or not believing. Hume insists that beliefs are acquired by repetition. Thus, our beliefs inform us about the frequency in the occurrence of a particular perception. The truth or falsity of perceptions, regardless of whether they are beliefs or not, can be determined only by experiments. Hume argues that by assigning a special status to our beliefs we, in fact, establish an environment for fictions. His critique of education serves as an example. Repeatedly used theoretical concepts make us imagine, or so Hume claims, that a constant conjunction of psychological events corresponds to a constant conjunction of events in the world. Thus, we impose our theoretical convictions on a given situation even if our experience does not inform us about the existence of such a connection.

Stroud's assumption that naturalism constitutes the leading motive of Hume's philosophy makes him misinterpret Hume's arguments in the Treatise. Stroud's intentions for holding this view are good. He argues against those who wrongly accuse Hume of maintaining that the contents of the mind are chaotic since they are connected by the brute force of associations. Unfortunately, he falls into the trap that is set by the 'sceptical' reading of Hume. Stroud does not try to find in Hume's own writings any assessment of the arguments of the Treatise.

Galen Strawson in The Secret Connection suggests that the sceptical interpretation of Hume's philosophy confuses epistemological and ontological claims. He argues that associationism in Hume's epistemology does not amount to the denial of causation in the world. Hume's doctrine of 'natural belief' authorises the refutation "of

contemporary philosophers who believed in the true intelligibility of causal power"[49]. Strawson acknowledges that Hume's theory of belief is not incorporated into the rest of Hume's arguments to prove the existence of natural determination within us. Strawson accurately observes that Hume's theory of belief establishes the basis for his critique of the existing philosophical tradition. Indeed, Hume uses this theory to raise doubts about the existing tradition of using arguments from certainty. Strawson argues that Hume separates his epistemological and ontological concerns and "believes there is such a thing as Causation in nature, but that we cannot know anything about its nature"[50]. Hume's 'sceptical' theory has its limits. As Strawson puts it: "Hume was not - never - concerned to argue that it [independent causation in the world] did not exist"[51].

Strawson draws the following picture of Hume's philosophical system. Although Hume distinguishes the world from our knowledge of it, he discusses only epistemic procedures. Hume wants to prove that our perceptions are organised into complex systems of beliefs independently of what actually happens in the world. Strawson is convinced that Hume simply accepts the gap between Causation in nature and causation that organises our perceptions into complex arrangements.

Certainly, Hume acknowledges the fact that the gap between Causation in the world and our knowledge of it exists. Nevertheless, there is an important distinction that Strawson fails to recognise. The claim that we cannot know anything about the world does not follow from the assertion that we must distinguish Causation in the world from causation that organises our beliefs. There are numerous indications that Hume wants to deal with the problem about the gap between the world and our knowledge of it. His discussion about the special role that predispositions of an inquirer play in an investigation is just one example of this tendency in Hume's thought.

In the Conclusion to the First Book of the Treatise Hume argues that predispositions of scientists have a great impact on their investigations. Hume observes that: "[n]othing is more curiously enquir'd after by the mind of man, than the causes of every phaenomenon. ... We wou'd not willingly stop before we are acquainted with that

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[49] Strawson, The Secret Connection, p.2.

[50] Ibid., p.169.

[51] Ibid., p.3.

energy in the cause, by which it operates on its effect. ... And how must we be disappointed, when we learn, that this connection, tie, or energy lies merely in ourselves...?"[52]. Hume here indicates that scientists develop a powerful predisposition for finding the ultimate conclusions about the nature of every phenomenon. This predisposition makes them invent fictions about the world so that scientists can accomplish the task of finding ultimate causes. This conclusion is not surprising given Hume's theory about the arbitrary connections of individual perceptions in the 'universe of imagination'. Hume believes that there is a pool of perceptions that, in a sense, is waiting to be re-arranged into different arrangements under the guidance of different predispositions.

Hume wants to find the best course of action to overcome the problem of the gap between the processes within the world and our knowledge of them. If scientists expect to find a quick resolution of this problem, then, as Hume believes, most likely the theory about the processes within the world will be founded on the fiction that sequences of psychological events exactly correspond to sequences of events in the world. Hume condemns this approach. He suggests that the problem about disagreement between processes that form our knowledge and the events that are independent of them requires careful consideration.

Hume argues that scientists do not have to expect an immediate answer to the question about the essence of the world and its ultimate structure. This is by far the most general and consequently the most difficult question of all. Our minds are used to generating fictions about the essence of the world because it is useful and convenient. It is useful because we can act according to our beliefs. It is convenient since Hume believes that men are, in a sense, emotionally disturbed if a coherent system of beliefs cannot be established. These fictions are introduced into the scientific discourse through our expectations to find ultimate conclusions. The expectations of scientists result in the justification of their fundamental beliefs.

The argument about predispositions must be placed into the context of the Introduction. Hume's statement that he wants to establish a new system of the sciences shows that he does not adopt the fact about the existence of the gap between

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[52] Treatise, p.266.

Causation in the world and causation which organises our perceptions into belief systems. He intends to overcome this distinction in his attempt to show that the science of human nature establishes an alternative system of the sciences. Hume insists that scientific inquiry should be liberated from the impact of predispositions.

In his interpretation Strawson does not go far enough. He draws a clear and accurate picture of the conceptual framework of Hume's arguments against the intellectual systems of his time. Unfortunately, he believes that Hume's main interests lie in the analysis of causation. Strawson fails to recognise that the analysis of the concept of 'causation' is only one application of the principles of Hume's science of man. Ultimately, the science of human nature establishes a new system of the sciences.

Yves Michaud's analysis of the self-reflective nature of Hume's philosophy in "Hume's naturalized philosophy"[53] praises the innovative spirit of Hume's work. Hume's attempt to create the science of human nature is viewed by Michaud as a sincere effort to transform philosophy. If philosophy becomes a merely descriptive and empirical science, then the foundational character of the *philosophia prima* can no longer be justified. Hume's analysis of the 'vulgar', according to Michaud, is a challenge to transcendental philosophy. Hume argues that our experience is organised according to general rules. We expect that the future will resemble the past, and particular beliefs that, for example, the sun will rise tomorrow are constructed in accordance with this general rule. Michaud concludes that these claims prove that Hume endorses the position that the contents of mind are connected according to general rules, not transcendental principles.

The self-reflectiveness of philosophy, according to Michaud, arises as a major consequence of the supposition that perceptions are structured by general rules and not by transcendental principles. Philosophy is a product of the human mind, and deals with beliefs that arise from different general rules. As such philosophy requires constant re-evaluation of its relation to other sets of beliefs which stem from different and possibly contradicting general rules. Philosophical reflection comes under the influence of individual interests and common beliefs. It originates in our natural dispositions and, by studying the predispositions of human nature, philosophers must recognise its own

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[53] Michaud, "Hume's Naturalized Philosophy" in Hume Studies, Volume XIII, Number 2, November 1987, pp.360-380.

dependence on them. Michaud believes that Hume tries to convey this message by establishing his science of man. Thus, Michaud ends up with this description of Hume's science of human nature: "It is a strange discipline, empirical and self-referent, dealing with the various areas of human behaviour, in permanent danger of splitting up into special empirical researches, yet claiming to be the science of sciences"[54].

Michaud believes that Hume undermines the ambition of philosophers to present a coherent theory of the world. There is no perfect unity in the mind since we operate with various unconnected rules. Philosophers can and should investigate the origins of different beliefs in general rules. For example, it is the job of philosophers to identify why we do expect that the sun will rise tomorrow. Nevertheless, the answers to this question must not lead them to a presentation of a unified system of the world. Instead, they must outline a specific general rule which leads to a given belief.

Michaud's point is well taken. It is enough to consider some passages in the Conclusion to Book I of the Treatise to distinguish the self-reflective nature of Hume's thought. Hume rhetorically asks: "Can I be sure, that in leaving all establish'd opinions I am following truth; and by what criterion shall I distinguish her, even if fortune shou'd at last guide me on her foot-steps?"[55]. The self-reflective nature of Hume's philosophy is a consequence of his re-organisation of science. His new system is not based on certainty and, consequently, there could not be a certain criterion that in his new system he follows the truth.

Michaud, however, overemphasises Hume's insistence on the self-reflective nature of philosophy. He argues that Hume's analysis of different general rules of reasoning is the science of man. Michaud keeps insisting on the existence of a new conceptual situation where our beliefs are formed by general rules that act independent of each other. He claims that no transcendental principles apply to general rules because their connections are established by mere repetitions of various events. Hume's analysis of different beliefs identifies general rules which create a given belief. Michaud believes that this analysis is the whole of Hume's philosophy. Philosophers are not entitled to claim anything beyond the fact that our beliefs are created by competing

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[54] Michaud, "Hume's Naturalized philosophy", p.379.

[55] Treatise, p.265.

and unconnected general rules. General rules identify specific functions in our minds, the investigation of which establishes a specific research program for the empirical sciences.

Michaud's attempt to present Hume's philosophy as the reduction of individual beliefs to their origins in general rules overlooks two important points. First, Hume wants to insure that scientists are able to escape from the situation where different perceptions are continually re-arranged by general rules. Individual perceptions have an internal qualitative structure which is the immediate result from the causal influences in the world. This observation is at the bottom of Hume's position. Scientists must be able to classify individual perceptions into groups of similar qualitative structure so that they can identify some common causal influence in the world. Hume's science of man aims at providing a principle by which individual perceptions can be classified.

In his first attempt to explain the distinction between individual perceptions and relations among them Hume says: "[a]mongst the effects of this union or association of ideas, there is 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*"[56]. If the above quotation is taken seriously, as it should be, then it becomes obvious that for Hume relations, quite simply, are single complex ideas.

This observation reveals the deficiency in Michaud's interpretation. Michaud assumes that Hume explains ideas in terms of general rules that determine a particular kind of relation in which ideas are actually connected. For example, the general rule about the continued existence of objects makes us create an idea of an object even if there is no immediate perception of this object. If, however, Hume thinks of relations as single complex ideas, then he also wants to explain the causes of general rules. In our example, Hume would also want to explain the origins of a general rule that states the continued existence of objects. This means that Michaud is wrong in maintaining that Hume's analysis of the 'vulgar' presents the conceptual framework of his philosophy in its entirety. In the Treatise Hume's interests and intentions reach further than Michaud thinks.

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[56] Treatise, p.13.

Second, Michaud's interpretation of Hume's philosophy is faulty because Hume argues that we cannot obtain accurate knowledge of general rules that create ideas in another person. In the Introduction Hume states that experiments in his science will come "from a cautious observation of human life"[57], and behaviour of man in company, affairs and pleasures. He writes: "But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phaenomenon"[58]. Hume's main concern in trying to place himself in the case under investigation is to acquire similar cognitive experience. This cognitive event would provide Hume with his own interpretation about connections among perceptions and causal influences which establish these connections.

Hume concludes that an additional influence of premeditation would change the cognitive event and make it impossible to receive a just interpretation about the origins of an idea under investigation. The complexity of human nature makes a one-to-one repetition of a process that leads to a particular perception virtually impossible. Thus, we simply cannot identify general rules that are involved in the creation of an idea in another person. Hume never tries to establish the theory of human nature that identifies particular general rules. Observations, although mere substitutes for the real experiments, are satisfactory for Hume's project because the science of man establishes a general theory of ideas.

Michaud identifies an important feature in Hume's philosophy. The self-reflective nature of Hume's arguments is a consequence of the general thesis of Hume's Treatise -- the establishment of the science of human nature. However, in his attempt to describe it, Michaud removes Hume from the context of his time. Hume is an important figure in the early formation of empirical science. Hume believes that knowledge about human nature will enable us to reveal what exactly exists beyond our ideas. Michaud accurately observes that Hume is not involved in the foundationalist project of the kind where philosophical reflections determine absolutely secure grounds for scientific

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[57] Treatise, p.xix.

[58] Treatise, p.xix.

inquiry. Nevertheless, his theory of ideas is the science of all sciences since it allows us, or so Hume believes, to identify the only worthy objects for scientific investigations -- individual perceptions. Only by investigating the internal structure of individual perceptions can scientists comprehend the processes in the world. The tendency to give philosophy an exceptional place in the context of the sciences places Hume closer to the tradition of the Enlightenment than, as Michaud mistakenly argues, the tradition of modern empirical science.

Before examining Hume's science of human nature, let us list the features that characterise the nature of his philosophy. This list of features will establish the framework for the following examination of particular arguments in the Treatise.

(1) Hume intends to undermine the rationalistic interpretation of scientific discoveries which depicts new discoveries in science as providing decisive proof for the existence of God.

(2) 'Belief' for Hume is nothing more than vivacity of the contents of the mind. It is a part of human nature that our imagination reproduces those perceptions which appear in our thoughts more often than others. After numerous repetitions, we cannot help but 'believe'.

(3) Hume makes a distinction between ontological and epistemological claims. He does not doubt that there is Causation in the world. However, he claims that our knowledge of causation that establishes connections among perceptions does not correspond to Causation in the world. We are acquainted with the result of independent processes in the world only through the internal structure of individual perceptions.

(4) Hume deals with the problem about the gap between the world and our knowledge of it. The Conclusion to the First Book of his Treatise suggests that the solution to this problem lies in our ability to escape the impact of predispositions on scientific inquiry. Hume argues that we must enter scientific inquiry with no predispositions at all. How is this possible?

Chapter 4

THE SCIENCE OF MAN

I am concern'd for the condition of the learned world, ... I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and shou'd I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, *I feel* I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.

Treatise, 271.

A growing number of Hume scholars try to investigate his arguments in the Treatise as contributing to the defence of a 'non-sceptical' thesis. In the previous Chapter I explained that these interpretations fail because they ignore Hume's own design for the Treatise. The tendency to exhibit the constructive nature of Hume's arguments is praiseworthy because it undermines traditional 'sceptical' misinterpretations of Hume's writings. Nevertheless, to capture the true nature of Hume's thought we must try to absorb the framework of his ideas. In the Introduction to the Treatise Hume advances a proposal to institute a radical shift in scientific practise. He claims that the science of human nature will establish grounds for a new system of the sciences. If Hume claims to be attempting to establish a new system of the sciences, then we shall investigate how he constructs the science of man in light of this proposal.

At first, we shall outline Hume's critique of the intellectual systems of his time, and explain the nature of a metaepistemic system which justifies this critique. Then, we must investigate particular arguments of the Treatise in their connection to the proposed revolution in the sciences.

In the early years of the eighteenth century science was a synthesis of scientific, philosophical, and religious beliefs. Hume observes the great explanatory power of the emerging tendency of experimental reasoning in science. Nevertheless, he sees also that experimental discoveries receive 'rationalistic' interpretations within the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'[59]. Hume believes that experimental discoveries are independent

[59] Newton's discoveries, for example, receive an interpretation as the final proof for the existence of God. The force of gravity is thought to prove the existence of God since He is the only being that is able to

of the conceptual framework in which they are subsequently incorporated. He argues that 'rationalistic' interpretations of scientific discoveries are introduced into scientific discourse to satisfy the expectations of the 'unschooled'. The acceptance or rejection of scientific theories is in their hands. Scientific discoveries become accepted only if they can be adjusted to the existing system of beliefs.

Hume claims that scientists of his time surrender to the expectation that scientific discoveries must fit into the world as it is perceived by the 'vulgar'. He writes that at present "[d]isputes [in the sciences] are multiplied, as if every thing was uncertain; and these disputes are managed with the greatest warmth, as if every thing was certain"[60]. Eloquence in presenting scientific theories as being absolutely certain provides favourable colours to the 'most extravagant hypothesis'. Hume concludes that "the victory [in science] is not gained by the men at arms, who manage the pike and sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers, and musicians of the army"[61].

Hume wants to introduce an alternative system of the sciences which escapes the situation where experimental discoveries become incorporated into the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. He suggests replacing the conceptual framework in which experimental reasoning is being applied. Science in the eighteenth century comes under heavy influence from common ontological and epistemic beliefs that are routinely adopted by scientists. Hume, on the other hand, believes that experimental reasoning should be separated from the synthesis of opinions in possible systems of beliefs.

The situation in science, according to Hume, can be cured by a new system of metaphysics. It would be more accurate to describe Hume's metaphysical theory as a metaepistemic project. Hume wants to show that all our epistemic activities arise from one common ground -- a metaepistemic bedrock of reasoning. Hume argues that the internal qualities of single perceptions (the principles of association) can account for every conceivable activity of the mind, and believes that there exists a collection of

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influence bodies without actually touching them. If Newton claims that there is gravity in the world, then, the 'rationalistic' interpretation of his discovery would explain, it is undeniable also that the force of gravity embodies the actual intervention of God into the processes in the world.

[60] Treatise, p.xiv.

[61] Treatise, p.xiv.

individual perceptions in our understanding. Let us try to illustrate the nature of his metaepistemic project.

Our individual perceptions are cognitive events. They are created by our ability to judge the appearances of events in the world, i.e. we have a capacity to synthesise various causal influences that are originated in the world into one cognitive event. Every cognitive event is represented in our minds by an individual perception which is not necessarily simple. Each individual perception has an internal structure. Hume believes that internal structures of individual perceptions are independent from their subsequent arrangements into various complexes.

Hume claims that, regardless of the fact that our individual perceptions have different internal structures, we are as a matter of fact able to join them in our imagination into various arrangements. For example, we can create an image of a unicorn by joining different perceptions. Although we can have a clear idea of the unicorn, we believe, at the same time, that unicorns do not exist. Hume claims that our mere belief that unicorns do not exist while chairs, for example, exist cannot decide the matter. Our minds are filled with different arrangements of individual perceptions similar to that which establishes the idea of a unicorn. We believe that some of these arrangements represent objects in the world, while other arrangements do not represent objects in the world. Hume claims that our beliefs are created by repetitions of a particular arrangement of perceptions. Thus, if we believe that a given arrangement of perceptions represents an object in the world, then we in fact only state that this arrangement has been often present in our minds.

Hume states that we cannot decide on the basis of our beliefs which arrangement of perceptions represents genuine objects in the world. He proposes a new approach which should provide us with an answer to the question how to differentiate between ideas which exist for our own convenience and those which represent genuine objects in the world. We would be able to find the answer to this question only in one case. We have to be able to show that a given arrangement of perceptions is a cognitive event which naturally synthesises causal influences in the world into an individual perception.

Hume confesses that he deserves to be called an inventor for "the use [that] he makes of the principles of the association of ideas"[62]. After acknowledging the influence of imagination on our ideas about the world, Hume writes: "But notwithstanding the empire of the imagination [where individual perceptions are arbitrarily connected to each other], there is a secret tie or union among particular ideas, which causes the mind to conjoin them more frequently together, and makes the one, upon its appearance, introduce the other"[63]. Hume declares the existence of one common metaepistemic level that explains all our cognitive activities. There is a secret tie that, notwithstanding the diversity of different arrangements of perceptions in our beliefs, is common to all human beings. This secret tie is the internal qualitative structure of perceptions that determines the manner in which ideas become associated to each other in individual perceptions. The internal structures of individual perceptions truly are "the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object exterior to ourselves"[64]. Hume claims that beyond our beliefs about the world there exists a metaepistemic level where internal qualitative structures of perceptions remain "to us[65] the cement of the universe"[66].

The claim about the existence of an epistemic bedrock that bonds human beings in their understanding of the world justifies the polarity of descriptions that Hume assigns to his philosophy. On the one hand, the science of man establishes a new system of the sciences because Hume introduces the approach that reverses the traditional procedures in science and philosophy. Instead of explaining parts and processes in the system of beliefs that are conveniently presumed to depict the nature of the world, Hume suggests that scientists should accept a different strategy. Their principal concern should be the investigation of the manner in which causal influences in the world create internal qualitative structures in individual perceptions.

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[62] An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature, in A Treatise of Human Nature, edited by L.A.Selby-Bigge & P.H.Nidditch, p.661.

[63] Ibid., p.662.

[64] Ibid., p.662.

[65] The emphasis is mine.

[66] Ibid., p.662.

On the other hand, Hume can also claim without any hesitation that his philosophy is moderate regardless of the proposed revolution in science. The science of man reveals the actual, or so he believes, collection of perceptions in our understanding. In a sense, Hume does not invent anything new. There are no absolutely secure grounds which can originate the pursuit of truth. Therefore, instead of trying to find fundamental ideas Hume sticks to the already existing collection of individual perceptions.

Given this outline of Hume's metaepistemic project, we can now turn to the examination of particular arguments within the Treatise. I start with the analysis of the impact of predispositions on different arrangements of individual perceptions. Then I shall illustrate Hume's critique of the intellectual systems of his time.

In his description of the system of beliefs Hume assigns great importance to its agreeableness with our predispositions towards entertainment and pleasure. He wants to show that the nature of beliefs establishes an environment where systems of our beliefs satisfy us for the conduct of life. According to Hume, the impact of predispositions on particular arrangements of perceptions endows us with the power to select perceptions so that they fulfil our expectations. Any particular synthesis of perceptions is believed to represent an entity or process in the world because of multiple repetitions of the same sequence of perceptions. Thus, due to our ability to select, we mostly repeat only those arrangements of perceptions which satisfy us for the conduct of life. Then, after numerous repetitions of the same arrangement of perceptions, our belief systems acquire those characteristics which satisfy us for the conduct of life. In a sense, our nature is such that it makes us fool ourselves about the nature of the world so that we remain in good spirits. I "must yield to the current of nature, in submitting to ... my senses and understanding"[67] since nature leaves us with little choice.

Hume stresses, however, that we are able to separate our system of beliefs, which is ultimately organised so that it satisfies for the conduct of life, from another activity. The division between common life and science is absolutely crucial for Hume's science of human nature. When we intend to do science, we want to know the truth about the world. Hume juxtaposes two activities that follow different dispositions. Living

[67] Treatise, p.269.

'within the current of nature' conforms with the predisposition that satisfies us for the conduct of life. Hume claims that he can spend time either according to this predisposition, or by following another -- "a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern me"[68].

Common beliefs neither copy nor capture the processes in the world. To the contrary, in the system of beliefs the 'vulgar' select only such interpretations of individual perceptions that satisfy for the conduct of life. The world cannot be explained in terms of common beliefs since, what Hume calls, 'the universe of imagination' tells us only about what is merely agreeable. Hume maintains that the majority of perceptions, which are commonly believed to represent an individual object in the world, are as a matter of fact fictions. He writes: "In our arrangement of bodies we never fail to place such as are resembling, in contiguity with each other, or at least in correspondent points of view: Why? but because we feel a satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or the resemblance of situation to that of qualities"[69].

The following discussion outlines Hume's critique of two intellectual systems of the period: the philosophical theory of double existence[70] and, what Hume calls, the system of Theologians. Hume requests the replacement of both intellectual systems since they present fictional frameworks which rationalise beliefs of the 'vulgar'. The process where philosophy and science try to identify and explore particular procedures within the fictional portrayal of the Universe in the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar' is unacceptable for Hume.

Hume characterises the philosophical theory of double existence as "the monstrous offspring of two principles, which are contrary to each other, which are both at once embrac'd by the mind, and which are unable mutually to destroy each other"[71]. Imagination presents the 'vulgar' with agreeable portrayals of events "such as we

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[68] Treatise, p.270-271.

[69] Treatise, p.237.

[70] This theory is better known as Representational Realism. Hume's critique highlights the ontological nature of this theory.

[71] Treatise, p.215, (emphasis added).

embrace by a kind of instinct or natural impulse, on account of their suitableness and conformity to the mind"[72]. Contrary to this principle, by reflection we try to assess natural and rational foundations of a particular complex of perceptions.

Hume provides his readers with an analogy in terms of which he prefers to discuss both principles. He states that reflection must be natural "in the same sense, that a malady is said to be natural; as arising from natural causes [our curiosity to investigate the world], tho' it be contrary to health [since it proves that in our beliefs we capture fictions about the world], the most agreeable and most natural situation of man"[73]. According to Hume, the imagination has the advantage over reflection since, for their own convenience, men strive towards conformity in their beliefs. Although we are capable of examining phenomena by reflection, Hume explains that it is not an easy task. He stresses the strength of the impact of common ontological and epistemic beliefs on science. "As long as our attention is bent upon the subject, the philosophical and study'd principle may prevail; but the moment we relax our thoughts, nature will display herself, and draw us back to our former opinion"[74]. Hume requests that opinions reached by imagination be kept apart from conclusions that we reach by reflection. His main objection against the philosophical theory of double existence arises from the acknowledgement that beliefs of the 'vulgar' and conclusions about the origins of phenomena are embraced at once, and subsequently creates a system that incorporates both.

Hume concludes that the system which incorporates conclusions which we reach by reflection and common beliefs of the 'vulgar' introduces a fiction. The notion of 'fiction' is very important for Hume. We can clearly understand the meaning of this notion if we follow Hume's examination of poetry.

Hume is drawn into the analysis of poetry because it presents an ideal example of the manner in which fictional characters and objects are enlivened into a system of connections among perceptions. Hume intends to use the analogy with poetry in his description of the theory of double existence. He calls poets "liars by profession [who]

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[72] Treatise, p.214.

[73] Treatise, p.226.

[74] Treatise, p.214.

always endeavour to give an air of truth to their fictions"[75]. Poets strive to reach the will and passions of their readers which, according to Hume, cannot be done in any other way than by creating an impression about the truth and reality of poetical writings. Hume continues that "[p]oets have form'd what they call a poetical system of things, which tho' it be believed neither by themselves nor readers, is commonly esteem'd a sufficient foundation for any fiction"[76]. The trick, according to Hume, is to place fictional persona in a common situation. Readers become accustomed to fictional names and, "in the same manner as education infixes any opinion, the constant repetition of these ideas makes them enter into the mind with facility, and prevail upon fancy"[77]. The constant repetition of a character establishes a connection among perceptions which insures that their fictional nature is not questioned and the common situation assigns an air of likelihood to the plot. Such a 'mixture of truth and falsehood' establishes a poetical system.

The explanation of the manner in which fictions are accepted as systems of beliefs can be applied not only to poetry. He states that "[t]he vividness of the first conception diffuses itself along the relations, and is convey'd, as by so many pipes or canals, to every idea that has any communication to the primary one"[78]. Thus, the fact that the character of a poetical plot is fictional dissolves itself into the plausible situation and readers become touched by the life of a character as if the story were about some real person. A similar reaction happens in the sciences as well. The original problem that gives rise to an investigation gets diffused into an explanatory framework. Even fictional problems are approached as if they were real only because they are being explained within the framework of common beliefs. This process creates a mixture of truth and falsehood. For example, when philosophers attempt to explain the origins of objects as they appear to the 'vulgar', they split the fact that 'objects' appear in the form of perceptions from the content that this perception provides. These philosophers are right to claim that 'objects' in fact are perceptions. However, they are mistaken when

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[75] Treatise, p.121.

[76] Treatise, p.121.

[77] Treatise, p.121.

[78] Treatise, p.122.

they follow the assumption of the 'vulgar' that these perceptions are also independent objects in the world. This mixture of truth and falsehood creates the philosophical theory of double existence.

Hume's critique of the philosophical theory of double existence rests on the argument that this intellectual system is built around the arguments which convince us of the continued and independent existence of the body. Hume observes that we have a fundamental ontological belief about the continued and independent existence of bodies. We cannot prove that this belief corresponds to reality. Therefore, we create a fiction about the dual existence of bodies in the world and in our minds. This fictional theory justifies our belief in the independent existence of numerically identical bodies because it shows that, whatever is the case in relation to our perceptions, must be the case also in relation to the world.

The 'vulgar' believe that in our ideas we perceive objects, and there is no need to specify the status of our perceptions. They never try to reflect about the nature of our perceptions because, in case they do, they must face the question about the correlation between perceptions and objects. This question cannot be easily answered. Thus, if this question is asked, then the 'vulgar' cannot establish a coherent system of beliefs. The attempt to avoid the existence of such an unfinished system of beliefs establishes a predisposition to neglect the question about the nature of perception altogether. This predisposition creates such arrangements of perceptions that questions about the nature of perceptions do not emerge. It is clear for the 'vulgar' that we perceive objects and the activity of us perceiving them is totally irrelevant.

Hume continues his analysis of the philosophical theory of double existence with the analysis of the activities of philosophers. They agree that we should attempt to comprehend what exactly happens when we perceive objects. It is undeniable that our ideas of objects are perceptions. Philosophers establish the theory of double existence so that both positions are reflected. They assume together with the 'vulgar' that objects exist as they are perceived. Nevertheless, they claim that objects exist not only in the world, but also in our perceptions. This claim establishes the core of the philosophical theory of double existence: objects exist in the world and in our perceptions. Thus, since in our ideas we believe in the continued existence of objects, we can by analogy infer that in the world objects also have a continued existence. The theory of double

existence convinces us, or so Hume believes, that objects have individual and continued existence in the world.

Let us now turn to the examination of Hume's own position. Hume adopts the view that we cannot draw a distinction between perceptions of objects and objects themselves. There could not be justifiable claims about the nature of objects which at the same time would not be applicable to their perceptions as well. Hume reasons that objects cannot be distinct from perceptions since "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 [perception]. ... [Thus] we may establish it as a certain principle, that we can never, by any principle, ... discover a connection or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions"[79]. Thus, Hume believes that perceptions cannot be distinguished from objects.

Hume acknowledges also the validity of another principle. Although we cannot know anything about objects which at the same time would not appear in our perceptions, it is still common that some of our perceptions do not have corresponding objects at all. Thus, there is a lot more to perceptions than only their correspondence to events in the world. Hume maintains that "since we may suppose, but never can conceive a specific difference betwixt an object and impression; any conclusion we form concerning the connection and repugnance of impressions, will not be certainly known to be applicable to objects"[80]. What position should we take towards the multiplicity of connected perceptions in the situation where some of them might be originated by the processes in the world while others have their origins solely in our minds?

Hume's critique of the theory of double existence shows that he disapproves of the assumption that objects, although independent of perceptions, are in a one-to-one correspondence with perceptions that depict them. Hume wants to shift the analysis of the connection between the world and our perception of it to the internal structures of individual perceptions. We do not have to decide how a complex of perceptions is related to an object in the world. At first we must understand the internal structure of individual perceptions. This internal structure could reveal that under the impact of our

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[79] Treatise, p.242.

[80] Treatise, p.241.

predispositions we misinterpret the world. Our predispositions assign to perceptions of objects such characteristics that exist nowhere but in our minds. This position brings Hume to the critique of Spinoza and Theologians -- another attempt to explain the correlation between the world and our perception of it.

Hume's critique of Spinoza and the Theologians revolves around the fact that the arrangement of co-existing perceptions synthesises the influences coming from two sources: the processes in the world and our own predispositions. Spinoza and the Theologians share with Hume the claim that objects and impressions do not constitute two independent classes. However, their positions are at odds regarding the framework in which the claim about the correlation among objects and perceptions should be discussed.

Spinoza and the Theologians try to justify a fundamental epistemic belief that every effect must have one cause. They assume the simplicity of the Universe and the unity of the substance in which thought and matter inhere. Thus, although impressions differ from objects, they are, in principle, the same - two modes of one indivisible substance. Hume finds that the expectation that every effect should have one cause creates a predisposition that re-arranges perceptions into such complexes that it becomes possible to discover one cause to a given effect. He argues that the Theologians simply attach to any complex of perceptions an additional perception about this complex being a mode of one substance. Thus, not only do we have a complex of perceptions that represents a dungeon, for example, but also within this complex there is an additional perception of this complex being a mode of one substance. Given this new arrangement of perceptions, the Theologians believe that a given complex of perceptions of a dungeon represents an effect that is caused by one substance. The expectation of finding one cause to every effect makes the Theologians invent the fictional entity of substance that justifies the application of the argument from cause and effect.

Hume is opposed to this practise. The Theologians claim that the world and our perception of it are two modes of one substance. Thus, they assume the existence of a simple and uniform co-relation between the world and our perception of it. Hume claims that the Theologians invent the existence of such a uniform co-relation between the world and our perception of it for their own convenience.

Hume believes that the true picture of the co-relation between the world and our perceptions is different. We do not perceive the world in one uniform manner. We are able to select the manner in which we perceive objects. Hume claims that "betwixt a person in the morning walking in a garden with company, agreeable to him; and a person in the afternoon inclos'd in a dungeon, and full of terror, despair, and resentment, there seems to be a radical difference, and of quite another kind, than what is produc'd on a body by the change of its situation"[81]. It seems impossible to Hume that Spinoza and the Theologians can explain the difference in apprehending the same situation by having a different predisposition, for example, while in anger or in mellow spirits. The difference that arises when the same event is approached with distinct predispositions is real and requires an explanation.

Hume's critique of the intellectual systems of his time is followed by his proposal to remedy their deficiencies. In the following discussion we must identify Hume's method of dealing with the question about the connection between the world and its perception.

There is a famous sentence in the Conclusion to the First Book of the Treatise. Hume writes: "We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt false reason and none at all"[82]. This passage is intended as a conclusion to an argument whose premises are vaguely marked. In this argument Hume discusses the systems of Theologians and Spinoza, and the philosophical theory of double existence. On the basis of this critique he introduces his own approach that must replace intellectual systems of the time.

Hume compares philosophers who misuse the arguments from cause and effect to "angels, whom the scripture represents as covering their eyes with their wings"[83]. The Theologians, according to Hume, simply fail to accept the diversity of phenomena within the world and in our minds. In order to bridge the gap between the experienced complex of perceptions and the traditional interpretation of co-existing perceptions by cause and effect, they invent a fictional common substance whose modes account for the multiplicity of phenomena.

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[81] Treatise, p.245.

[82] Treatise, p.268.

[83] Treatise, p.267.

Philosophers who embrace the continued and independent existence of bodies end up, according to Hume, with the theory of double existence where understanding "entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life"[84]. Hume claims that the repetition of resembling perceptions gives raise to a belief in the existence of continued and distinct bodies while reason denies the possibility that our changing perceptions represent numerically identical bodies. Hume believes that as a matter of fact we assign the same identity to different arrangements of perceptions. This happens all the time because it is convenient and satisfies us for the conduct of life. Nevertheless, the fact that the 'vulgar' interpret different arrangements of perceptions as numerically identical bodies gives us no right to accept this practise as legitimate. Hume observes that the tension between the principles of imagination which claim the existence of continued and distinct bodies, and those of reason which deny it, is resolved by the theory of double existence. If we accept the existence of bodies in the world as well as in our perceptions, then we no longer perceive the opposition.

Hume condemns the practise of inventing the existence of fictional entities which is common to the intellectual systems of his time. He asks in despair "how far we ought to yield to those illusions"?[85] This question introduces his own technique of escaping the tendency to create fictional systems which emerge to justify basic epistemic and ontological beliefs, i.e. the belief that every effect has one cause, and the belief in the independent existence of numerically identical bodies over time.

The science of human nature is a system which arranges conclusions from a particular kind of reasoning. In reasonings of this kind Hume says that he "feel(s) nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view, under which they appear to me"[86]. Instead of imposing a particular interpretation on a given complex of co-existing perceptions we should pay close attention to its immediate appearance. If we observe that our ideas are influenced by our predispositions, then we should suppose that these predispositions make us re-arrange our perceptions. Hume explains

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[84] Treatise, p.267-268.

[85] Treatise, p.267.

[86] Treatise, p.265.

the principles of the new reasoning in this claim. "While a warm imagination is allow'd to enter into philosophy, and hypotheses embrac'd merely for being specious and agreeable, we can never have any steady principles, nor any sentiments, which will suit with common practise and experience"[87].

Hume's initial description of the proper way of conducting scientific investigations provides the context in which we must interpret his expression that we have "no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all". Common beliefs present individual cases which scientists explain by conducting experiments. "Whoever wou'd explain the origin of the *common* opinion concerning the continu'd and distinct existence of body, must take the mind in its *common* situation, and must proceed upon the supposition, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue to exist even when they are not perceiv'd. Tho' this opinion be false, 'tis the most natural of any"[88]. Hume requests that scientists start their investigations with an accurate description of a complex of perceptions in beliefs of the 'vulgar'.

At the same time, scientists have to keep in mind that a given complex of perceptions does not necessarily represent any process or entity in the world. The given complex of perceptions simply satisfies for the conduct of life. This assumption embodies 'a warm imagination which is allowed to enter into philosophy'. Hume does not deny that this assumption is 'false reason'. The unity of perceptions can be and often is established by principles other than their agreeableness. It indeed could be the case that in our perceptions we accurately depict an object that exists in the world. Nevertheless, if we assume that the given complex of perceptions is arranged in the manner that satisfies for the conduct of life, then we avoid temptation to investigate this complex within some more general framework of beliefs. Hume chooses the 'false reason' that the unity of perceptions is established only because it satisfies us for the conduct of life, over the mere assumption that the common interpretation of co-existing perceptions represents genuine events in the world. The latter constitutes 'no reason at all'.

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[87] Treatise, p.272, (emphasis added).

[88] Treatise, p.213.

The assumption that different arrangements of perceptions are united for our own convenience does not contain a philosophically important point about the nature of a particular phenomenon. Only a scientific investigation about the origins of any particular perception can describe its status, i.e. decide if it depicts an object in the world. Hume's science of man shows that, prior to an examination, we cannot correctly determine the nature of a perception. This conclusion will prove to be important in the context of the next Chapter where I describe Hume's theory of ideas. Traditional interpretations criticise Hume for introducing intuitive principles into his philosophy. They claim that Hume allows that it is possible to decide beforehand whether a perception is simple or complex. I claim that the manner in which Hume approaches different problems proves that he denies that we can intuitively know whether a perception is simple or complex. If it is simple, then it depicts some entity in the world. On the other hand, if it is complex, then it depicts only a metaepistemic perception in our understanding.

Hume follows his proposal to identify a common arrangement of perceptions of the 'vulgar' in all important discussions of the Treatise. At first, he describes the perceptions of the 'vulgar', and claims that they are connected for the purposes of our own convenience. Thus, he undercuts any possibility to introduce some more general framework of beliefs in terms of which a given collection of perceptions could be explained. After the subject of a scientific investigation is liberated from the assumed intuitive connections to various systems of beliefs, Hume proceeds to the examination of particular interpretations of the given collection of perceptions. Hume usually dismisses the most common interpretation of the co-existing perceptions where the 'vulgar' assume that the given collection of perceptions corresponds to some phenomenon either in our minds or in the world. Together with his critique of the common interpretation, Hume denies that a phenomenon (the process of causation, or personal identity, for example) can be approached from the perspective of the faulty interpretation. Hume then proceeds with the proper interpretation of the given collection of perceptions. This new interpretation establishes an account of what scientists should have inferred from the given collection of perceptions.

Hume's own interpretation of the given collection of perceptions not only differs from that of the 'vulgar', but it is also not about the same subject. For example, when

the 'vulgar' interpret the collection of perceptions which revolve around causation, the subject of their discussion is the process of causation. On the other hand, when Hume interprets the same collection of perceptions, he talks about the connections within the given collection of perceptions which exists in our understanding. We find that Hume later discusses the process of causation as well. This discussion, however, is not a consequence of his analysis of the common idea of causation. To the contrary, it presents a summary of the principles that emerge from his science of human nature. Let us consider the distinction between Hume's discussion about the common idea of causation and his description of the process of causation.

Hume starts the analysis of the common idea of causation by outlining the collection of perceptions that characterise the intuitive unity of the idea of cause and effect. The idea of cause and effect includes references to ideas of contiguity, production, succession, priority in time in the cause before the effect, necessary connection, etc. All of the above are different perceptions which are arranged into one complex because such an arrangement allows us to apply the same interpretation of every effect having one cause to various processes in the world. Hume states that "by this observation [that the intuitively simple idea of cause and effect represents a collection of perceptions that satisfies for the conduct of life] we reject at once all the vulgar definitions, that philosophers have given of power and efficacy"[89]. Hume believes that different definitions of causation do not define the process of causation. Instead, these definitions characterise the manner in which we approach causally connected phenomena. Hume claims that as a matter of fact different causes have different effects. The common idea of causation treats this variety of causally connected phenomena as instances of one simple phenomenon of 'pure' causation where every effect must have one cause. Hume believes that the temptation to approach the variety of causally connected phenomena in a uniform manner tells us more about our predispositions than about particular causally connected events.

By no means, however, can the description of the common idea of causation be taken to represent Hume's own position about the process of causation. Hume writes that "a general maxim in philosophy, *that whatever begins to exist, must have a cause*

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[89] Treatise, p.157.

of existence ... (is) suppos'd to be founded on intuition, and to be one of those maxims, which tho' they may be deny'd with the lips, 'tis impossible for men in their hearts really to doubt of. But if we examine this maxim ... we shall discover in it no mark of any such intuitive certainty; but on the contrary shall find, that 'tis of a nature quite foreign to that species of conviction"[90] [91].

Hume wants to explain why there is a constant connection among perceptions that characterise the common idea of cause and effect. It is done in the Section "Of the idea of necessary connection" where he explains that in our understanding exists a new internal impression in the mind whose copy is our idea of necessary connection. This internal impression is a metaepistemic perception because it alone creates the variety of definitions of cause. Notice, that Hume here talks about the fact that the unity of the arrangement of perceptions in the common idea of causation is always assumed, which is not the discussion about the process of causation. Since the subject of Hume's investigation is the idea of cause and effect in its common appearance, we would misinterpret his ideas if we were to think that he tries to explain the phenomenon of causation[92]. According to Hume, the common idea of cause and effect contains the expectation about the efficacy of causes. He claims that this determination rests in our mind and is an internal impression of the mind. All definitions of causation represent a metaepistemic qualitative structure of one internal perception of necessary connection. This perception, however, has no corresponding entity in the world.

Hume describes his own position about the nature of causation in a famous expressions that "all objects, which are found to be constantly conjoin'd, are UPON THAT ACCOUNT ONLY to be regarded as causes and effects"[93]. This expression is not connected to Hume's analysis of the common idea of causation. It presents the

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[90] Treatise, p.78-79.

[91] The present discussion focuses only on the procedures that Hume uses repeatedly in examining particular subjects. The main purpose of this exposition is to identify Hume's intent to deal with problems in a given and uniform manner.

[92] It was argued earlier that Hume differentiates between the process of causation and the common idea of cause and effect. He believes that the process of causation establishes causal relations among various phenomena and causal relations do not have to be constrained to the mechanical contact of objects and causal identity in a particular place.

[93] Treatise, p.249, (emphasis added).

conclusion that is reached by considering the principles of his philosophy. Any attempt to consider this position solely in the context of his analysis of the common idea of causation will fail to capture the nature of Hume's philosophy.

Hume argues that "to consider the matter *a priori*, any thing may produce any thing, and that we shall never discover a reason, why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however great, or however little the resemblance may be betwixt them"[94]. Our predispositions have a great impact on the manner in which we re-arrange different complexes of perceptions. Hume denies the use of any other assumption in scientific inquiry but the 'false reason' that understanding is a collection of different arrangements of perceptions which are brought together since their co-existence satisfies for the conduct of life. In the pursuit of truth Hume asks us to abandon all belief systems because they have a power to change our perceptions, and their influence on the mind arises merely from habits by which we most often interpret the appearance of co-existing perceptions.

This observation helps to adjust our expectations to the shift in the sciences. Hume himself is worried about our judgement of his system. In the Introduction he gives the recipe which is supposed to lead his readers to the acceptance of the new system. We must try to adopt his suggestion to comprehend the new system of the sciences. Hume urges his readers not to expect to reach the ultimate conclusions about the nature of the world.

In the early parts of the Introduction Hume clearly shows the importance of the pursuit of truth. This forms the predisposition towards the standards that characterise science. Hume does not want to tolerate in science conclusions that have no rational and natural foundation. The transition from this predisposition to the new one of not expecting ultimate conclusions might appear confusing. It seems that they contradict each other. We enter scientific investigations with either the predisposition to reach the truth about the subject matter; or, we assume that our success will be limited. Let us explain how Hume escapes this contradiction.

Hume's alternative system of the sciences shows that the ultimate subject of scientific inquiry is not the world, but our individual perceptions about the world. Our

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[94] Treatise, p.247.

perceptions do not copy processes in the world. These processes are only represented in our individual perceptions. Therefore, the ultimate nature of the world is beyond our reach. We cannot know the ultimate principles of the world from which particular cases can be inferred. Quite the opposite is the case. Our individual perceptions present us only with particular cases of the processes in the world. We can infer the general principles that govern the world only after a careful consideration of individual perceptions with similar internal qualitative make-up. Science revolves around individual perceptions and their internal structures. There is no other experience but our cognitive experience. Scientists must limit their expectations here. Thus, if we want to know the ultimate nature of the world, we must acknowledge that we are acquainted only with particular cases, and cannot expect to reach ultimate conclusions about the Universe. Hume concludes that "[w]hen this mutual contentment and satisfaction can be obtained betwixt the master and scholar, I know not what more we can require of our philosophy"[95].

The most important consequence of the supposition that perceptions are the ultimate subject of science is the liberation of the account of causation. In science we do not investigate the world of the 'vulgar'. Thus, causal connections whose existence is inferred in science do not have to conform to two principles which characterise the perception of causation by the 'vulgar'. Causation does not have to conform to the mechanical model of contact of one body against the other, and the causal unity does not have to be located at a particular place. These two principles emerge directly from the denial of the 'universe of imagination' as the framework for scientific inquiry. Science investigates the manner in which causal influences in the world originate the internal structure of individual perceptions. Whatever appears to be constantly conjoined in our beliefs can be regarded on that account only to be causally connected. If the Theologians think about the world in terms of a unified substance and its modes, then their expectation of finding the simplicity of the universe is causally connected to the particular arrangement of perceptions that they have. If the 'vulgar' consider that the world is exactly the same as communicated by their perceptions, then these perceptions are causally connected to the predisposition towards convenience and pleasure.

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[95] Treatise, p.xviii.

The context of the new system of the sciences provides the necessary background for Hume's controversial account of causation. Hume shows that the inconsistencies in the intellectual systems of the period arise from the temptation to incorporate scientific principles with the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. He argues that the only escape from these shortcomings is the system of the sciences that is entirely separated from the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. Contrary to the Sceptical interpretation of Hume's philosophy that claims his denial of the existence of causation altogether, Hume expands the class of causally connected phenomena. He maintains that "[p]assions are connected with their objects and with one another; no less than external bodies are connected together. The same relation, then, of cause and effect, which belongs to one, must be common to all of them"[96]. Causal connections in Hume's account are not constrained to any particular place or mechanical contact. Any perception that we find constantly conjoined to another is to be regarded as causally related on that account only.

We should not be surprised to find that Hume follows a similar procedure of defining the subject for an investigation in another discussion that is central to Hume's philosophy -- his theory of personal identity. Hume addresses the question about personal identity by trying to identify the collection of perceptions that this particular idea signifies. Most certainly, he cannot enumerate all the particular perceptions whose intuitive unity is assumed in the idea of personal identity and claims that "several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations"[97]. Hume concludes the introduction of the subject by claiming that "there is properly *no simplicity* in it [the mind] at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity"[98].

The continuation of the discussion is also typical. The particular interpretation of the collection of perceptions by the common idea of self is analysed and rejected. Hume continues that "we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our

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[96] Treatise, p.78.

[97] Treatise, p.253.

[98] Treatise, p.253.

thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves"[99]. Hume promises that he will provide a new interpretation of personal identity, and explain the natural foundations of the fact that we commonly exhibit the idea of self[100]. Thus, the fact that the idea of self exists has a natural foundation. The mistake of philosophers is to accept the common interpretation of the idea of self, even if it has no natural foundations. Hume explains that "[f]or my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception"[101]. Philosophers believe that the idea of personal identity represents some event in the mind that is related to our thinking. Hume claims that philosophers acquire this belief only by repetition of the common interpretation of the collection of perceptions. The repetition of the fictional idea of personal identity establishes the expectation about the existence of personal identity. Philosophers build, according to Hume, fictional theories about the world because they believe in the faulty interpretation of the co-existing perceptions by the 'vulgar'. Hume concludes that "when we attribute identity, in an improper sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confin'd to the expression, but is commonly attended with a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least with a propensity to such fictions"[102].

The analysis of the procedures that Hume commonly follows while discussing particular subjects yields an important conclusion which characterises his science of human nature. Hume defines the subject of the investigation by identifying the origins of an idea in the collection of perceptions in our understanding. He makes the distinction between the collection of co-existing perceptions and an idea since this idea only

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[99] Treatise, p.253.

[100] Hume provides this interpretation in the Book "Of the Passions". Again, we will not discuss the particulars of this argument since the intent of the present analysis of the argument about the personal identity is to identify the procedure which characterises Hume's argumentation.

[101] Treatise, p.252.

[102] Treatise, p.255.

interprets a given collection of perceptions, and re-arranges it under the impact of our predispositions. His analysis proves that our predispositions make us believe that our ideas directly depict entities in the world. This assumption cannot be justified. Hume then presents his own interpretation about the foundations that characterise a particular idea, and claims that the common idea represents an individual perception in our understanding. Thus, the common idea of cause and effect is proven to depict an internal impression of mind and not the process of causation. Hume's analysis of perceptions deals exclusively with the common ideas and not particular phenomena in the world that they are thought to depict.

We find that Hume also makes statements about the process of causation and the nature of the mind -- the very subjects that effectively are excluded from the examination of common ideas. The study of the procedure that Hume usually follows in his argumentation shows that his claims about the nature of causation and the mind do not arise from the analysis of corresponding common ideas. The examination of common ideas shows that their improper application introduces fictional entities and fictional systems about the world. On the other hand, Hume's own claims about the nature of the process of causation and the mind offer the summary of conclusions that are reached by the scientific analysis of various perceptions. Therefore, Hume's description of the process of causation and the nature of the mind should be separated from the examination of the intuitively simple ideas of personal identity and causation.

There are a number of important conclusions that have to be stressed in the summary of this Chapter. First, Hume believes in the existence of a collection of individual perceptions. He claims that these perceptions can be associated into complexes by either of two causal influences. On the one hand, their association can be caused by the internal qualitative structure of perceptions. On the other hand, perceptions can become associated by our predispositions. Second, Hume puts a great emphasis on the wide employment of our ability to re-arrange perceptions within the collection of perceptions so that this new arrangement suits our individual needs. He maintains that this tendency is common to most philosophers, scientists and the 'vulgar'. Every new arrangement provides some perspective about the processes in the world. Hume believes that this practise can never lead us towards knowledge of the genuine nature of the world. Third, Hume proposes a new system of the sciences where the

main task of scientists is to investigate the internal qualitative structure of individual perceptions. The internal qualitative structure of perceptions is the immediate result from the causal influences in the world. We synthesise influences in the world into one cognitive event because we are equipped with a capacity to do so. Notwithstanding the impact of our predispositions, the internal make-up of perceptions can determine the association of perceptions. Fourth, Hume believes that it is not an easy task to avoid the influence of our predispositions so we can identify individual perceptions -- the only subject of the new system of the sciences. Hume proposes a technique which can do the trick. He states that we have to accept a false assumption that all perceptions are arranged into complexes for one reason -- it satisfies for the conduct of life. Given this assumption, scientists avoid the temptation to re-arrange perceptions so that they fit into some more general framework. Thus, they can pay attention to perceptions themselves. Fifth, Hume argues that the conclusions of science should be completely separated from the portrayal of the world in the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. Thus, science must not contain any requirements about what can be causally connected. He introduces the liberation of causation -- the theory that everything that is found to be constantly conjoined is to be considered on that account only causally connected. Scientists do not have to expect together with the 'vulgar' that causally connected phenomena are constrained to the mechanical model of contact of one body against the other and the causal unity at a particular place. This theory brings us back to the first conclusion. We should believe that there exists a collection of individual perceptions in our understanding because we can infer its existence from phenomena of cognition. The world constantly changes. Yet, over time we ascribe the same identity to different combinations of events in the world. Hume argues that this constant conjunction of the same idea to different events introduces a causal connection between the prototype of an idea -- the individual perception in our understanding -- and the actual idea which is falsely believed to represent events in the world. Thus, Hume's metaepistemic project is outlined. There indeed exists a complex of individual perceptions that accounts for every conceivable activity of the mind.

Chapter 5

THE THEORY OF IDEAS

By the term of impression I would not be understood to express the manner, in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves; for which there is no particular name either in the *English* or any other language, that I know of.

Treatise, p.2, n.1.

In the Chapter 2 and 3 I argued that commentators must believe that Hume in his Treatise presents a coherent philosophical system where his science of human nature establishes a new system of the sciences. It is not an easy task given the influence of the 'sceptical' reading of Hume's philosophy. For a very long time it was simply assumed that Hume presents a collection of different theories and fails to incorporate them into one system. I explained in the Chapter 4 that the Treatise can be seen as a unified system of arguments that outline the central thesis of Hume's work -- his attempt to establish a new system of the sciences.

In this Chapter I intend to explain Hume's theory of ideas. The theory of ideas is the backbone of Hume's science of human nature because it describes the manner in which perceptions are arranged into complexes under the influence of our predispositions. Philosophers must untangle intuitively unified complexes of perceptions and show the origins of connections among particular perceptions. The theory of ideas helps to identify those connections among perceptions which are acquired solely to satisfy our expectations. By recognising these artificial connections among perceptions, we will be able to highlight the internal structures of individual perceptions. The internal structure of a perception is independent of its subsequent re-arrangement under the impact of our predispositions. Scientists must deal only with those connections among perceptions which are established by the internal qualitative structure of individual cognitive events.

Hume's method of scientific investigations requires us to assume that perceptions are connected only for our own convenience. We must adopt this assumption in order to avoid the impact of predispositions in scientific investigations. Nevertheless, we must have a clear understanding that for Hume this assumption is

false. He argues that perceptions are not entirely unconnected, for "'tis impossible the same simple ideas should fall regularly into complex ones (as they commonly do) without some bond of union among them, some associating quality, by which one idea naturally introduces another "[103]. The association of perceptions arises from the internal qualitative structure of individual perceptions. Hume explains that "this uniting principle among ideas is not to be consider'd as an inseparable connection"[104]. We are "to regard it as a gentle force, which commonly prevails ... nature [through our ability to synthesise influences in the world into one cognitive event] in a manner pointing out to every one those simple ideas, which are most proper to be united into a complex one"[105].

Hume's initial approach to the analysis of perceptions performs a strategic function. He believes that the biggest threat to scientific inquiry is to fall into the trap of fundamental epistemic and ontological beliefs that are routinely adopted by scientists. If scientists fail to acknowledge that their inquiries come under the influence of their predispositions, then they will end up defending that interpretation of particular phenomena which conforms best to their predispositions. The assumption that any intuitive unity of perceptions is established for our own convenience allows Hume to focus the investigation directly on a given collection of perceptions.

Hume believes that the world constantly changes, and the multiplicity of different influences makes it impossible that time after time phenomena in the world are created by exactly the same set of causal influences. Yet, in our minds we go farther than simply recognising the resemblance between two cognitive events that are created by similar sets of causal influences. We believe that two cognitive events are exactly the same and describe both of them with the same group of co-existing perceptions. The consistency by which we assign the same group of perceptions to resembling phenomena must be explained. Hume reasons that the complexity of the changing world makes it virtually impossible that the same set of causal influences would be precisely repeated by generating two identical cognitive events at different times.

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[103] Treatise, p.10.

[104] Treatise, p.10.

[105] Treatise, p.10.

Therefore, the reason for believing that two resembling phenomena are identical is located in our minds and not in the world. Hume believes that the constant conjunction of the same group of perceptions to resembling phenomena in the world allows the inference that there exists in our minds a metaepistemic collection of individual perceptions.

In the framework of an existing metaepistemic realm it is easier to denote what exactly is meant by Hume's initial distinction of perceptions into impressions and ideas. Perceptions in the metaepistemic realm are impressions while their copies in our thoughts are ideas. Hume emphasises the fact that both, impressions and ideas, are of the same nature -- units of cognition. He stresses also that in our thinking and reasoning we are acquainted only with ideas. Hume divides our perceptions into simple and complex perceptions. We shall now give an account of this division.

The simplicity and complexity of perceptions in Hume's initial analysis is very confusing. He introduces the distinction between simple and complex perceptions by claiming that it is a matter of composition. Perceptions are simple if they cannot be divided into parts, while complex perceptions are such that allow their separation into parts. This claim can be understood in two different ways. First, we can claim that in his description of the distinction between simple and complex perceptions Hume puts the emphasis on the analysis of perceptions. In this case, whenever we discover that no further division of perceptions is possible, we pronounce that we have found a simple perception. Second, alternatively Hume's description of the distinction between simple and complex perceptions can be understood as a part of his philosophical system. Hume argues that we have to recognise our natural ability to synthesise different causal influences in the world into one cognitive event. Philosophy identifies the internal structure of individual perceptions. Scientists, in their turn, must explain the manner in which influences in the world have caused in us the occurrence of a particular cognitive event. In this context the simplicity of perceptions is given by the fact of having a particular cognitive experience.

In the following discussion I intend to prove that, by the complexity and simplicity of perceptions, Hume does not mean their composition of absolutely indivisible parts. The simplicity of perceptions is assigned by our ability to perceive them as individual cognitive events. For example, perceptions 'blue' and 'apple' are both simple in the sense that they

are individual cognitive events. We define the cognitive event of perceiving the blue colour with one perception 'blue'. We define the cognitive event of perceiving an apple with a constant conjunction of a number of perceptions.

Hume wants to show that we are endowed with the ability to interpret perceptions in a manner that increases their complexity. We can either copy metaepistemic perceptions in our ideas, in which case they remain simple in the sense that they clearly define some cognitive object. Or, we can re-interpret metaepistemic perceptions by adding to the definite description of some cognitive object some additional features that allow us to show that our cognitive object belongs to some more general explanatory framework. These additional features are superfluous and do not clarify the nature of a cognitive event. Nevertheless, they are incorporated into the cognitive event because it makes possible the transition from the given cognitive event to a more general system of beliefs. The distinction between the complexity and simplicity of perceptions in Hume's theory of ideas draws the attention to our ability to create the complexity by misinterpreting our cognitive experience.

Hume writes that the "application of ideas beyond their nature proceeds from our collecting all their possible degrees of quantity and quality in such an imperfect manner as may serve the purposes of life"[106]. When we identify a group of perceptions, this group itself presents us with a description of a single cognitive object. Hume differentiates between simple and complex ideas on the basis of their origins. Hume's theory of ideas does not describe the composition of our perceptions. On the contrary, it organises them into two classes. Simple perceptions present us with accurate descriptions of cognitive events. These perceptions can be used by scientists in their inquiries about the world. Simple perceptions have a particular internal structure that is the immediate result of the causal influences in the world. On the other hand, complex perceptions are misinterpretations of cognitive objects. In complex perceptions we impose additional features onto our description of cognitive objects so that we can present our cognitive objects as part of some general class of, for example, objects in the world. These perceptions cannot be used by scientists because they contain fictional features that for our own convenience are imposed upon them and, what is most important, exist nowhere but in our minds.

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[106] Treatise, p.20.

Traditionally, Hume's theory of ideas is identified only with his explication of the correlation between simple impressions and simple ideas. Commentators have been preoccupied with Hume's claim that simple ideas are copies of simple impressions. It is usually implied that Hume's main objective is to explain perceptions either by exhibiting their ultimate simplicity or their composition out of simple elements. Such an interpretation disregards the possibility that there is a mutual dependence between complex and simple perceptions within Hume's philosophy. While it is true that simple ideas are preceded by simple impressions, we must also recognise that simple ideas can be copies of complex impressions, and that complex ideas can be preceded by simple impressions, and so on. The real test of Hume's theory of ideas is not to provide an account about the simplicity of perceptions but, quite the opposite, to deal with their complexity.

Hume intends to establish an account about the dynamic correlation between simple and complex perceptions. The system of our cognition becomes dynamic when we acknowledge that we are able to form our cognitive objects. Not only are we able to synthesise various influences into one cognitive event, but we are also able to create a new cognitive event on the basis of the original one. By repetitions of the same misinterpretation of our initial cognitive experience we establish a habit that introduces a completely new cognitive event.

Let us discuss one example. If we examine the cognitive event of us perceiving an apple, we can draw the following picture. At first, when we obtain a cognitive experience of an apple, we define a cognitive object 'apple' by a constant conjunction of two perceptions - colour and form. This description establishes a metaepistemic phenomenon - a simple impression 'apple'. We can copy this simple impression that consists of two perceptions into our ideas. If we acknowledge that we have a cognitive experience of a particular form and colour, then we present a simple idea of the cognitive object 'apple'. We can, however, misinterpret a given simple impression by claiming that not only we do have a cognitive experience of a particular form and colour, but we also in our cognitive experience depict a Macintosh apple. In this case we present a complex idea of our cognitive object 'apple'. It is possible that, by repetitions of a given misinterpretation of the cognitive object 'apple', we establish a habit by which we recognise Macintosh apples from others. If this happens, then we have acquired a new cognitive

object 'a Macintosh apple'. As an individual cognitive event 'a Macintosh apple' is a simple impression. Nevertheless, the cognitive object 'a Macintosh apple' is a complex impression in relation to our cognitive object 'apple'. Our system of cognition becomes dynamic because, on the basis of existing cognitive experiences, we by repetitions always establish new cognitive objects.

Hume criticises the intellectual systems of the period for accepting misinterpretations of our cognitive experience as descriptions of genuine objects in the world. In turn, this acceptance introduces new fictional theories about the world. Hume shows that our predispositions make us re-arrange a given collection of perceptions into a complex which allows the application of one accepted interpretation. Hume characterises the mutual dependence between impressions of sensation and those of reflection as a dynamic system where the medium of ideas establishes the bond between both kinds of impressions. He explains that impressions of sensation are copied, for example, in our ideas of pleasure or pain. These ideas produce "the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflection, ... These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which perhaps in their turn give rise to other impressions and ideas"[107].

The outline of the dynamic nature of Hume's theory of ideas allows for the following conclusion. He introduces a metaepistemic project where the existence of a collection of individual perceptions accounts for our epistemic activities. Hume does not, as it is usually supposed, try to explain perceptions by exhibiting their ultimate simplicity or their composition out of simple elements. We shall now present an example of the traditional interpretation of Hume's theory of ideas which will be criticised later in the Chapter.

Constance Maund in "Hume's Treatment of Simples"[108] provides an excellent critique of Hume's position. She proceeds from the assumption that Hume wants to explain the nature of perceptions by reducing them either to simple ones or by

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[107] Treatise, p.8.

[108] Maund, "Hume's Treatment of the Simples", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol.XXXV, 1934-35, pp.209-228.

presenting their composition out of simple perceptions. Maund clearly illustrates the disagreement between Hume's presentation of the theory of ideas and the philosophical importance of the reductionist project. I shall claim that her analysis reveals the inadequacy of the interpretation that Maund assigns to Hume and not the inconsistency in Hume's theory of ideas.

Maund blames Hume, and rightly so, for being preoccupied with certain problems "which seemed particularly important to him that he did not realise that he came to apply the words which he originally attempted to use in one specific sense, to a number of different kinds of elements which it was most important for him to distinguish"[109]. Hume indeed is more concerned with his critique of the intellectual systems of his time than a clear outline of his theory of ideas. Thus, he fails to clearly define theoretical notions that are used in his theory of ideas.

Maund points out that, as a consequence of Hume's preoccupation with a different project, he confuses a number of important theoretical notions. For example, Hume applies the notion 'object' indiscriminately as a synonym to simple impressions and in reference to external objects which, in principle, present us with a complex of perceptions. Although Hume differentiates between two senses of the word 'object', it is only from the immediate context that we can determine in which sense he is using the term 'object'. Hume implies, as Maund accurately observes, that there is a connection between both senses of the notion 'object', i.e. the fact that objects in the world present us with a complex of perceptions is in some way connected to the term 'simple impression' in the theory of ideas. She believes, however, that Hume cannot establish the exact relation between both senses of the notion.

Maund accuses Hume of confusing psychological and epistemological problems. If Hume uses the term 'object' in reference to simple impressions, he refers to objects as epistemically simple units. If, on the other hand, he discusses 'objects' as a complex of co-existing perceptions, then he talks about the composition of the complex idea out of psychologically simple units. Thus, Hume's failure to distinguish between psychological and epistemological questions prevents him from acknowledging that "to say that

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[109] Ibid., p.211.

something is simple is to say nothing until you have explained relatively to which complex or to which enquiry it is simple"[110].

Maund continues to reveal inconsistencies within Hume's theory of ideas by pointing to an ambiguity in the use of the terms 'sensation' and 'simple impression'. On the one hand, Hume refers to the simplest elements in our awareness as simple sensations. For example, our awareness of something being blue is nothing else but the sensation of blue. On the other hand, sense-impressions are described as simple impressions and signify epistemological abstractions. The sensation of blue establishes a simple impression 'blue'. The latter reference is logically simple because we arrive at it by the analysis of our perceptions. The former one, on the other hand, is psychologically simple for we cannot help but have the sensation of blue.

Maund rightly claims that meanings of the term 'sensation' and 'simple impression' should not be confused. Epistemically simple sense-impressions are simple in the sense that they are unanalyzable epistemological abstractions. Psychologically simple sensations, on the other hand, can and should be analysed since our awareness of sensations and sensations themselves are not the same. Moreover, simple sensations themselves, so described, are not perceptions at all. We do, for example, have a sensation of our heartbeat. Nevertheless, this sensation might not be a perception at all. Maund praises Hume for putting his finger on a very important distinction between psychologically and epistemically simple entities. Nevertheless, she criticises Hume's attempt to link psychologically simple sensations to epistemically simple impressions. Maund argues that it is highly unlikely that our awareness of simple sensations will be that of epistemically simple impressions - the unanalyzable units of our experience. Such an interpretation of simple sensations is required since otherwise Hume's attempt to establish a certain link between both fails. She concludes that Hume is mistaken to suggest a connection between psychologically and epistemically simple units since he fails to realise that the simplicity of an entity is a context-dependent notion.

Maund argues that Hume's arguments suggest that he comes close to, but never really realises, a very important principle. Something can be declared simple only if it is

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[110] Ibid., p.217.

explained relatively to which inquiry it is simple. Moreover, he identifies the distinction between epistemically and psychologically simple entities, but fails to incorporate this insight into the theory of ideas. Both of these positions require analysis and it might turn out that Hume is guilty only of not being able to communicate his ideas clearly, instead of, as Maund maintains, failing to realise the above theoretical principles.

Maund's analysis of Hume's theory of ideas is enlightening since she pays close attention to Hume's text and his concepts. Nevertheless, she does not try to make sense of, and build upon, the conclusions that are reached during her analysis of Hume's theory of ideas. Instead, she contrasts these conclusions with what she believes Hume should have said in his description of the theory of ideas. Her analysis misses the framework in terms of which Hume's explication of particular theoretical notions should be comprehended.

We do not have to look far for such a framework. Hume explains that the full examination of the correlation between simple and complex perceptions is the focus of his Treatise: "Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes and which effects. The full examination of this question is the subject of the present treatise"[111]. This examination includes the possibility of the connections between:

1) simple impressions and simple ideas;
2) simple impressions and complex ideas;
3) complex impressions and simple ideas;
4) complex impressions and complex ideas;
5) simple ideas and simple impressions;
6) simple ideas and complex impressions;
7) complex ideas and simple impressions;
8) complex ideas and complex impressions.

We shall investigate Hume's theory of ideas in relation to the above framework of different connections between complex and simple perceptions. This will enable us to show that Maund's critique of Hume is inadequate.

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[111] Treatise, p.4.

There is no doubt that Hume deals with simple impressions. But his interest in complex impressions is a subject that has not received the attention that it deserves. Therefore, we shall start our examination of Hume's theory of ideas with the analysis of his position about complex impressions or impressions of memory. We shall explain how complex impressions stand in relation to simple and complex ideas.

The argument about the impressions of memory is a discussion about the possibility of the existence of perceptions in our understanding if they are not present in the mind. Hume writes that "as the *appearance* of a perception in the mind and its *existence* seem at first sight entirely the same, it may be doubted, whether we can ever assent to so palpable a contradiction, and suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind"[112].

Hume wants to remove any doubt as to whether independent existence of perceptions in our understanding is possible. In order to succeed with this project, he has to undermine the assumption about the unity of the mind; only then does he explain the manner in which cognitive objects in understanding are either copied or misinterpreted in the mind. This process is hidden from us due to the false assumption about the perfect simplicity of the mind.

Hume states that the mind is "nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos'd, tho' falsely, to be endow'd with a perfect simplicity"[113]. The analysis of the structure of this statement reveals a lot. Hume never wants to claim that the mind is not unified because it is, in fact, a collection of perceptions. The true counterpart to the assumption that the mind is unified is the third part in Hume's statement -- it is falsely supposed that the mind is endowed with a perfect simplicity. The first part of his statement reveals that the mind is only a collection of different perceptions. This assertion must be read along with the second part of the sentence, in which he maintains that the perceptions are united by certain relations. The first and the second parts together provide the grounds for the third claim, namely, that the mind is not perfectly simple because it presents a collection of perceptions where different groups of perceptions are connected by certain different relations.

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[112] Treatise, p.206.

[113] Treatise, p.207.

The above statement is traditionally misrepresented in the claim that Hume believes that the mind is nothing but a heap different perceptions. This interpretation commonly suggests that for Hume perceptions are totally unrelated. This clearly is not true. Hume believes that perceptions are indeed related to each other, and only denies the assumption about the simplicity of the mind in a perfect personal identity. Thus, his argument here is not about the nature of the system of ideas within a rational subject. Instead, it is a response to a dispute over the interpretation that can be assigned to the fact that human beings arrange their perceptions in a systematic manner.

Hume believes that every arrangement of perceptions of the 'vulgar' is assembled so that it satisfies us for the conduct of life. We can clearly define our place in the world if we present an individual as the focus of any particular arrangement of perceptions. Thus, for our own convenience we as a matter of fact attach to any particular collection of perceptions a new perception in which we state that this collection of perceptions is perceived by an individual. This new perceptions is completely superfluous. Nevertheless, it supports the assumption about the simplicity of the mind. Then, to justify the simplicity of the mind, we must create a fiction about the independent existence of personal identity.

Let us put Hume's statement about the nature of the mind into the context of the science of man. The first claim that the mind is a collection of perceptions corresponds to the first principle of Hume's science. Whenever we observe the unity of perceptions it must[114] be assumed that this unity exists simply because it satisfies for the conduct of life. Hume has no doubts that this is a false assumption. Therefore, he continues with the second claim that agreeableness is not the only reason for our perceptions to be united. He states that perceptions are connected in cognitive events which have certain internal qualitative structures. We cannot, however, understand this internal structure without the analysis of various connections of perceptions within a given cognitive event. This interpretation of the first two claims in Hume's statement provides grounds for his subsequent denial of the assumption about the perfect simplicity of the mind. The perfect simplicity of the mind cannot be accepted without the examination of particular connections among perceptions.

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[114] Hume believes that science should be divorced from the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. This can be done only by the false assumption that perceptions are united for no other reason than their agreeableness.

Since the simplicity of the mind cannot be assumed, one has to look for an explanation of the tendency that makes us ascribe identity to different objects. Hume answers this question by arguing that perceptions exist in our understanding even if they are not present in the mind, and illustrates this position by using the distinction between simple and complex impressions. He explains that "[e]xternal objects are seen, and felt, and become present to the mind; that is, they acquire such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions, as to influence them very considerably in augmenting their number by present reflexions and passions, and in storing the memory with ideas"[115]. Simple impressions have an impact on our ideas through three channels. First, they have an immediate transition to ideas in our reflection. Second, they can influence our ideas through impressions of reflection and passions. Third, they can appear in the mind when the impressions of memory are copied. "Our memory presents us with a vast number of instances of perceptions perfectly resembling each other, that return at different distances of time, and after considerable interruptions"[116]. The resemblance among stored perceptions gives the propensity to consider these interrupted perceptions as the same. Although the impressions of memory in our understanding are not immediately accessible, we can infer their existence, "since without the remembrance of former sensations, 'tis plain we never shou'd have any belief of the continued existence of body"[117].

Numerically identical bodies in the Universe do not determine the relative stability of the connections among perceptions[118]. Everything in the world constantly changes. Our minds give stability to the changing Universe by assigning the same

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[115] Treatise, p.207.

[116] Treatise, p.208.

[117] Treatise, p.210.

[118] If one thinks that Hume only criticises the intellectual system of double existence, then the conclusion that Hume simply denies that external bodies (understood in the terms of the theory of double existence) determine the stability of the collection among perceptions is warranted. However, if Hume's scientific system is allowed into the discourse, then it becomes clear that Hume does not deny the possibility that the sequences of events in the world have an impact upon the connections among perceptions. Hume believes that sequences of events in the world do have an impact on the identity of our ideas. However, this process is mediated by the impressions of memory where sequences of events in the world are intermingled with the sequences of events in our minds. Hume realises that our ideas of objects arise from this mixture of events in the impressions of memory.

identity to resembling events in the world. Hume draws an illustration of a potentially flexible system. There are a number of possible origins to any connection between ideas in the mind. They can be connected by repeated experience of some sequence of events in the world, or also from the repeated connection of perceptions in our minds. The more complex connections among perceptions are present in a cognitive event, the more possibilities of intermingled origins for these connections emerge.

The flexibility of the cognitive system is embedded in the fact that we are able to select which arrangements of perceptions are repeated, and thus have a certain control over connections among perceptions. Hume is concerned about the influence of persistence and imagination on our perceptions. Hume's description of poets, children and ancient philosophers, focuses on the manner in which imagined connections reach impressions of memory, i.e. our metaepistemic perceptions. He writes about the ancient philosophers: "the same habit, which makes us infer a connexion betwixt cause and effect, makes us here infer a dependence of every quality on the unknown substance. The custom of imagining a dependence has the same effect as the custom of observing it wou'd have"[119].

Let us put Hume's argument about the existence of impressions of memory in our understanding into the framework of his theory of ideas. The existence of the complex impressions of memory is inferred from the fact that men do assign over time the same arrangement of perceptions to cognitive events with different internal structures. For example, changing cognitive events receive the interpretation of the 'vulgar' that they depict an independent and numerically identical body. These interpretations of the 'vulgar' are complex ideas, since they are misinterpretations of given cognitive events. Nevertheless, over time we accept this misinterpretation since it satisfies for the conduct of life. It is easier to characterise our changing cognitive events as numerically identical bodies. Given cognitive events are each complemented with ideas of their independent external existence and numerical identity. These complex ideas are memorised and their repetition establishes the impression of memory -- a new cognitive event. This metaepistemic perception explains the fact that the same identity

[119] Treatise, p.222.

is assigned to the appearance of different perceptions time after time. Thus, Hume illustrates the manner in which complex ideas create complex impressions.

We can continue the explication of Hume's theory of ideas by looking for the arguments that outline different relations among simple and complex impressions and ideas. Hume's discussion about abstract ideas provides us with an example where simple ideas establish complex impressions.

Hume explains the origins of the idea of a globe of white marble and stresses that we are not able to consider only the figure of the globe since ideas of the figure and colour always appear together. The fact that the ideas of the figure and colour never fail to appear together means that "we accompany our ideas with a kind of reflexion [our natural ability to synthesise different influences in one cognitive event], of which custom renders us, in a great measure, insensible"[120].

We are able to distinguish resembling figures and colours in the following manner. The variety of colours and forms is memorised. This is the manner in which simple ideas create simple impressions. On this basis we are able to form a cognitive event of, for example, a globe of white marble where the perceptions of the form and colour are placed in constant conjunction with each other. This is the context in which simple ideas create the complex impression of the globe of white marble. The existence of this impression is not apparent, however, it can be inferred from the fact that both ideas always are connected in our interpretation of a given cognitive event.

The existence of the impressions of memory in our understanding explains the ambiguity in Hume's use of the notion 'object' which was regarded by Maund as an inconsistency in Hume's theory of ideas. Indeed, Hume occasionally uses the term 'object' to refer to both, fictional objects or complex ideas and simple ideas. There is no real difficulty if we understand that Hume differentiates between cognitive objects as events in our cognition, and objects that exist in the world.

Let us continue our analysis of the complex of perceptions of the globe of white marble. The idea of the globe of white marble is simple if it is approached only as a cognitive object which is defined as a collection of two constantly conjoined perceptions: form and colour. The 'vulgar', on the other hand, interpret this collection of perceptions

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[120] Treatise, p.25.

as an independent and numerically identical body - an object in the world. The idea of the globe of white marble in this interpretation becomes complex because it misinterprets the cognitive object 'the globe of white marble'. The dynamic nature of the mind proves that the cognitive process does not stop here. The 'vulgar' can believe by repetitions that their misinterpretation of the given cognitive object is valid. In this case the initial cognitive event 'the globe of white marble' is replaced by a new cognitive event 'the numerically identical and independently existing globe of white marble'. The initial cognitive event consists of the conjunction of two perceptions -- form and colour. The new cognitive object conjoins three perceptions -- form, colour, and an external existence.

If the new complex impression of the globe of white marble is copied in the interpretations of the 'vulgar', then it would be again the simple idea of the globe of white marble. Nevertheless, Hume shows that some philosophers misinterpret this collection of perceptions in a manner that establishes the theory of double existence. They claim that the impression 'the numerically identical and independently existing globe of white marble' lacks the recognition that this cognitive object is a collection of perceptions. This misinterpretation establishes a complex idea in relation to the cognitive event 'the numerically identical and independently existing globe of white marble'. Here the existing collection of perceptions is joined with the perception that the external body of white marble is depicted in our minds by a collection of perceptions. This interpretation, by repetition, could grow into the third generation cognitive object 'the numerically identical and independently existing globe of white marble which is depicted in our perceptions' of what originally were the collection of two perceptions of form and colour.

The dynamic nature of the system of beliefs specifies the context for Hume's system of the sciences. Hume expects that in their investigations scientists take the most common idea and treat it as if it assigns unity to the collection of perceptions only because it satisfies for the conduct of life. This assumption allows the investigation of connections between different perceptions independent of any system of beliefs that interpreters themselves might have.

In terms of his theory of ideas, Hume requests that scientists start their investigations with simple ideas. They should identify which perceptions are connected within a given intuitively unified idea. Then, scientists have to check on the origins of

each connection within the given group of co-existing perceptions. If, on the other hand, scientists avoid the common idea and present its new interpretation, they establish a complex idea which imposes on a given complex of perceptions a different framework and ultimately some additional perceptions. By his science of man Hume tries to put scientists into the position where they will be able to avoid establishing new fictional connections among perceptions. Hume hopes that this procedure will break up the mixture of truth and falsehood within the existing systems of beliefs.

We have briefly sketched the connection between particular arguments in the Treatise and their possible interpretation within terms of Hume's theory of ideas. So far we have outlined all but one of the possible connections among simple and complex ideas and impressions. To complete our examination of Hume's theory of ideas in terms of the framework of possible connections between simple and complex perceptions, we must investigate also the dependence of simple impressions on complex ideas. We will find that this relation between simple and complex perceptions is discussed in the argument about the missing shade of blue.

Hume claims that there is a phenomenon which "may prove, that 'tis not absolutely impossible for ideas to go before their correspondent impressions"[121]. Hume shows that it is possible and indeed quite common that the collection of perceptions of different colours receives the interpretation where these perceptions are arranged by "the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it"[122]. The continual gradation of shades presents an environment in which simple impressions of different colours become misinterpreted as complex ideas.

For example, a particular cognitive event 'blue' is misinterpreted in this context in a complex idea of 'a particular shade of blue within an ordered gradation of shades'. Hume explains that these complex ideas of colours within an ordered gradation of shades can establish a simple impression of some colour. Let us suppose that we have not seen a particular shade of blue. Without ever experiencing it, it would be impossible for us to have an impression of this shade of blue. Nevertheless, we can become acquainted with the particular shade of blue in the context of an ordered gradation of

[121] Treatise, p.5.

[122] Treatise, p.6.

shades, if we know the neighbouring shades on this scale. Thus, complex ideas of different shades of colour reveal a gradual change of shades. On this scale of the gradual change it is possible that we find a spot where one shade succeeds another in the manner that differentiates the gradual succession of changing shades. Hume believes that this spot reveals a particular shade of blue, for example. In this context we can create a simple impression of a particular shade of blue even if we have no previous cognitive experience of this colour. This example concludes the examination of all possible relations among simple and complex ideas and impressions.

After this presentation of Hume's theory of ideas we can turn to the question about the interpretation that can be assigned to Hume's distinction between simple and complex perceptions. Maund presents a tradition which interprets Hume's theory of ideas in relation to the process of analysis. Simple perceptions are only those which cannot be divided into parts. We have argued in this Chapter that, for Hume, simple perceptions are individual cognitive events which could, in principle, consist of a number of perceptions.

If Maund's interpretation of Hume's theory of ideas is correct, then Hume's main error is his attempt to establish a direct link between simple psychological units of sensation and simple epistemological units of perceptions. Maund acknowledges that Hume differentiates between simple sensations and perceptions. Nevertheless, she concludes that Hume fails to explain the manner in which simple perceptions -- the unanalyzable elements of cognitive experience -- can become interpretations of simple sensations. Thus, it creates confusion about Hume's position that simple sensations themselves are simple impressions.

The explication of the connection between simple sensations as psychological entities and simple impressions as epistemological entities unfortunately is neglected by Hume. Nevertheless, we can draw a description of this neglected connection between sensations and perceptions from Hume's analysis of cognitive events and his proposal to establish a new system of the sciences. Hume claims that when he "receiv'd the relations of *resemblance, contiguity* and *causation*, as principles of union among ideas, without examining into their causes, 'twas more in prosecution of my first maxim, that we must in the end rest contended with experience, than for want of something specious

and plausible"[123]. It is possible to investigate the origins of the internal structure of individual cognitive events in our sensations. This is the reason why Hume tries to establish a new system of the sciences. Scientists can and should identify the manner in which the internal structure of cognitive events is created.

Hume believes that the relation between sensations and perceptions must be explained by scientists. This relation, however, has nothing to do with Hume's science of human nature. Maund completely misses the nature of Hume's thought by trying to incorporate sensations into the theory of ideas. Hume's science of man investigates only epistemical units -- our individual cognitive events.

Hume even outlines the manner in which natural scientists can investigate the connection between sensations and perceptions. He proposes to make an imaginary dissection of the brain. This would establish a naturalistic account about the origins of associations among ideas and show "why upon our conception of any idea, the animal spirits run into all the contiguous traces, and rouze up the other ideas, that are related to it"[124]. The continuation of Hume's description of the flow of animal spirits within the brain is not important for our present discussion. We can stress two conclusions which emerge from Hume's indirect analysis of the connection between sensations and perceptions. First, Hume states that his theory of ideas deals only with our cognitive experience. Second, the new system of the sciences requests that scientists investigate the connection between different causal influences (including sensations) on their synthesis in our cognitive experiences.

In his theory of ideas Hume deals only with our cognitive experience. Maund misrepresents Hume's position by assuming that in his theory of ideas he discusses our sense-experience. Although he may give the impression that his theory of ideas deals with our sense-experience, a closer examination proves that this impression can attributed only to Hume's failure to communicate his ideas clearly. Hume concludes his discussion about the relation between sensation and perceptions by claiming that "the

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[123] Treatise, p.60.

[124] Treatise, p.60.

examination of our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral; and therefore shall not at present be enter'd upon"[125].

We can blame Hume for not explaining the motivation that leads to the discussion about the relation between sensations and perceptions. If he had shown that he discusses this relation for the purposes of the new system of the sciences, then a lot of misinterpretations that have followed Hume's theory of ideas would have been avoided. Certainly, Hume should have made it clearer that perceptions are epistemological units. However, we cannot agree with Maund that Hume did not realise the theoretical principle that in order to claim that something is simple, it must be stated in relation to which complex it is simple. Hume's new system of the sciences is an attempt to bring this principle into practise. Hume believes that science can explain the world only in the context of our cognitive experience. The theory of ideas plays a major role in Hume's intention of creating a new system of the sciences. It lays grounds for a complete separation of science from the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar' because it divides our cognitive events into two classes: complex perceptions that involve the impact from our predispositions and simple perceptions that are created by our ability to synthesise different causal influences.

[125] Treatise, p. 8.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

A Treatise of Human Nature has an inner structure which is hard to detect behind the immature terminology and the various intentions which correspond to multiple levels of argumentation within this work. Hume claims that his Treatise revolves around the intention of creating a new system of the sciences. This intention is clearly expressed in the Introduction and links together various subjects dealt with in the discussion which follows. The doctrine of beliefs, the description of the nature of our cognitive experience, the critique of the intellectual systems of the period, the theory of ideas and finally the analysis of the 'vulgar' -- these topics are essential in the defence of the central thesis of the work. Hume argues that science must be liberated from the influence of presuppositions, including the most influential ones that establish the core of the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar', namely, the belief in the existence of a perfect personal identity and the belief about the uninterrupted existence of numerically identical bodies. The recognition of Hume's initial intention of establishing the new system of the sciences helps to comprehend the connections between various arguments in the Treatise.

Science, according to Hume, should be built solely upon principles that have rational and natural foundations. Hume believes that a new system of the sciences cannot be established unless scientific practise is entirely separated from the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar'. The main reason for such a separation is, or so Hume believes, our ability and a strong tendency to re-arrange our perceptions into complexes that are satisfactory for the conduct of life. Science should investigate the connections between the contents of the mind that are established prior to such a re-arrangement where perceptions of different origins are mixed together into an intuitively unified idea. Hume acknowledges that this shift in scientific practise is hard to achieve since not only do we re-arrange our perceptions, but we also believe that this interpretation corresponds exactly to a particular phenomenon. There is little control over beliefs that we hold because they emerge as by-products during the process of employing our cognitive abilities. Numerous repetitions of the same collection of perceptions establish its

relation to other complexes within the relatively flexible system of perceptions. We cannot help but to believe that this collection of perceptions in its exact appearance corresponds to some phenomenon outside of the mind.

These reasonings introduce the basic tensions within the Treatise. First, Hume recognises that science comes under heavy influence from our common beliefs. Scientific discoveries are integrated into the system of common convictions which cannot be done without inventing some fictional objects. Second, Hume's analysis of the 'vulgar' shows that their beliefs are acquired for their own convenience and are accepted since these beliefs satisfy for the conduct of life. Third, Hume believes that science must be entirely separated from the system of common beliefs. This is the only chance to avoid the pursuit of fictional phenomena since they arise whenever scientific discoveries are adjusted to the system of common beliefs. Science can and should deal with individual phenomena. Only by careful generalisations of the conclusions that are reached in particular investigations, can scientists describe principles of the mind or forces that govern the world.

The importance of the Introduction to the Treatise has yet to be appreciated. Hume's attempt to establish a system of the sciences puts into perspective various doctrines of the Treatise. To name just a few, here are some of the topics that deserve to be studied in the context of Hume's new system of the sciences. First, there is the distinction between the analysis of the common idea of causation and Hume's arguments about the process of causation. Hume's analysis of the common idea of causation is an investigation of a defined subject which is a particular collection of perceptions and not the process of causation. Thus, Hume's position on the process of causation is not a consequence of his analysis of the common idea of causation. His theory of causation emerges as a summary of the conclusions that are reached in his science of man by analysing various collections of perceptions. Similarly, the investigation of the common idea of personal identity does not characterise Hume's position on the nature of the mind. Second, the recognition of Hume's intention of creating a new system of the sciences reveals that he is critical about the use of the arguments from certainty in science. Hume believes that there is no standard of absolute certainty. If scientists are willing to claim that their conclusions are more certain than those of the 'vulgar', then they should be prepared to justify the principles

which are used in scientific reasonings by pointing to their natural and rational foundations. Third, the role of the theory of ideas which underlies all discussions in the Treatise should be reconsidered. Hume expects that the theory of ideas will provide a basis for the system of the sciences by offering a thorough classification of different perceptions and their origins. This observation can remove the tension that builds around the suggested connection between sensations and perceptions.

Finally, Hume's arguments within the Treatise might regain their importance in contemporary philosophical discourse. A number of his doctrines bear a close resemblance to influential positions in contemporary philosophical disputes. Hume's analysis of the nature of our cognitive experience calls to mind Quine's theory of causation. His examination of the 'vulgar' has some common grounds with Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations. The flexibility of possible connections between impressions and ideas, simple and complex, links together Hume's analysis of our cognitive experience with his account of the nature of the system of beliefs of the 'vulgar' in order to introduce a new system of the sciences. Hume claims that his approach establishes a system where both doctrines complement each other. If Hume's position is understood, it can inspire reflection about contemporary discussions in philosophy from the Humean perspective.

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