STUDIES IN METHOD AND RELIGION IN HUME'S
'SCIENTIFIC OF HUMAN NATURE'

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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By

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*** *** ***

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Prospect

The general area of this study is David Hume's treatment of religion. My chief concern is the problem of how to understand and interpret Hume's treatment of religion.

My inquiry in this general area began as an attempt to find answers to two questions: What was Hume's thought, position, and method concerning religion? And, what relation is there between his thought, position, and method with regard to religion and his thought, position, and method with regard to "more philosophical matters" or, as it is more often put, his "general philosophy"? I determined to exclude whatever was not directly relevant to these problems and to their solution. At first, even this seemed to constitute a problem, for it seemed that there was very little that was not relevant.

However, closer examination of these two questions and of the material in light of the questions disclosed three further factors or concepts that were implied or presupposed by the questions and that had a basis in the
materials of the area. These three concepts at once serve three functions. They are delimiting factors for inquiry and relevant context in the area, and they serve well to bring my study into focus. They are crucial concepts for understanding and for interpreting Hume's treatment of religion. And they are of significant aid for considering the interpretive adequacy of other proposed solutions to the area.

It became increasingly clear to me that no soundly based answer to any of the number of questions and problems in the area could be achieved or even undertaken until a more fundamental problem was dealt with satisfactorily. (Although partially contained in the two questions above, this is a logically prior problem; answers given to these two questions presuppose that an adequate answer has been given to the logically more basic problem.) This problem can be put in the form of a question, a third question: What are the conditions that are appropriate and requisite for understanding and interpreting Hume's treatment of religion? This, then, serves as my chief concern; the other two questions serve as termini of inquiry.

The two other delimiting factors and significant, crucial concepts are method and context. I consider method to be a constant factor in all three questions. The proper context, the context appropriate to the problem, contains the principles for understanding the area. A
clear and accurate understanding of method, found in and based upon the appropriate context, results in (at least the basis for) an answer to the question of conditions, which, in turn, serves as the prerequisite for answering the other aspects of the other questions. Hume's treatment of the area becomes more understandable and more accurately understood when due attention is given to those principles that are contained in the relevant context and that are adequate to explain both sides of the "evidence" rather than just one side of it.

Neglect and/or distortion of these concepts and principles (viz., conditions, method, proper context) constitute the principal reasons why even the interpretation that for so long has been considered the only interpretation is inadequate for understanding Hume's treatment of religion. Norman Kemp Smith's interpretation, still reigning as "definitive", involves methodological and interpretive errors that make it no longer philosophically tenable. Not only does it produce erroneous conclusions, but more fundamentally, his interpretation is based on an inappropriate procedure and an inadequate context for the problem. These errors include: a misunderstanding of the method that Hume used in the area; a misunderstanding of the context relevant to deal with the problem; and, a misunderstanding of the relation of the area of Hume's treatment of religion and the method that Hume used there
to the area that Kemp Smith calls Hume's "general philosophy" and the method that Hume used there. He is mistaken also in his interpretation of that part of Hume's work from which he derives his interpretation for the area; here Kemp Smith is mistaken in the significance he attaches both to the individual work itself (Hume's Dialogues) and to the relation of that work to the other works in the context in which Hume dealt with religion. Such errors as these produce considerable distortion of the area.

If my assessment of these points of the Kemp Smith interpretation is correct, then—regardless of the force of "custom"—neither the problem of how to understand Hume's treatment of religion nor the significance of the Dialogues has been "solved conclusively". Then there is considerable reason to re-examine the area and the conditions requisite for understanding it. This is not simply or only a matter of seeking different conclusions, for different conclusions, "opposing" conclusions, can be defended by means of the same method and context of inquiry that Kemp Smith employs to establish his conclusions. Rather, something more is needed. What is needed is perspective—a point of view that will permit the position and works of Hume to be considered in their order of proportional importance. This, after all, is the point of the scholar's obligation not to impute to a philosopher what he clearly did not hold.

Since the more traditional approach does not permit
Hume's work and works to be seen or considered in perspective, a different basis or set of conditions is requisite and appropriate for understanding the area. This basis should not be arbitrarily selected or invented but should be found in Hume's works. Results of my study, which, by permitting Hume's work and works to be seen in perspective, provide a more appropriate basis for understanding his treatment of religion, include the following. (Compare these with the list in the second paragraph above.) Rather than using a different method in his work on religion from that which he uses in his so-called "general philosophy" Hume uses the same method in both areas; the "experimental" method, or more properly, the experiential method. Indeed, this way of speaking about Hume's work on religion and his "general philosophy" is misleading, for it implies the division of two distinct and not essentially related areas. Hume's treatment of religion is really a paradigm of his philosophy, his central, continuing concerns, and his philosophical method.

The appropriate context includes Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, of course. And, in a more important way than is sometimes thought, it includes The Natural History of Religion and Sections X and XI, "Of Miracles" and "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State", respectively, of An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding. (For the sake of brevity and because I mention
the work so often, I will refer to the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*. In this "Prospect", by the generally accepted abbreviated form *Inquiry cHU.* Inclusion of the *Inquiry cHU* itself, and not only of Sections X and XI, in the context is of even greater importance for understanding Hume's work and works on religion. The *Inquiry cHU*, not the *Dialogues*, is the appropriate point of beginning. The two sections ostensibly "about religion" are of significance for Hume's work on religion. At the same time, however, they are integral parts of the *Inquiry cHU*, not odd, attention getting devices that add nothing to the meaning of the work. The *Inquiry cHU*, rather than a loose collection of essays grouped together only by a title, is a unity. This *Inquiry cHU* is Hume's mature, revised, and approved treatment of the "logics" of his inquiry into "moral philosophy". Here he examines and exemplifies the methodological and epistemological principles upon which his "inquiries" proceed. Here Hume examines and exemplifies the "experimental method" and considers it adequate for inquiry into the whole of "moral philosophy". That "religion" and "religious belief" were included in this scope is clearly shown: by the meaning that Hume gives to "moral philosophy, or the science of human nature" (the first phrases in Section I of the *Inquiry cHU*) in his works; by "religion" being a phenomenon of "human nature", and the frequency with which Hume used examples from the area, and
referred to it as such; and, by the fact that religious
claims, claims of argument, proof, evidence, and belief,
constituted just those types of claims and concerns that
interested Hume.

The structure of the method examined and exempli-
fied in the Inquiry chU is precisely that which is exem-
plified in Hume's treatment of religion. The works on
religion and his "general philosophy" are related methodo-
logically, at least; the grounds or methodological propae-
deutics are the same for both. At most, as noted above,
the works on religion constitute a paradigm of his philos-
ophy and method. Human nature, belief, and evidence, cen-
tral concerns of his philosophy, are central in his writ-
ings on religion. These writings are not adjunct to some-
thing called Hume's "general philosophy" and not an adjunct
that relies on something other than Hume's "experimental
or experiential/ method".

The Dialogues is one part of Hume's treatment of
religion, not the whole of it. The Dialogues exemplifies
one part or aspect of Hume's method, not the whole of it.
And, the Dialogues itself is far from unambiguous. Rather
than deriving an interpretation of the Dialogues from one
of two strands of emphasis in that part and then using
that interpretation for the whole area of Hume's treatment
of religion, the significance of that part and of the
other parts, as well as of the whole, becomes clear only
through attention to the structure of the whole area.

These points affect the emphasis and soundness of some conclusions often drawn from considering the area in a different perspective. The "results" briefly stated above are posed in relation to those difficulties with the reigning approach that were noted earlier. I will mention some other results of my study, even more briefly, and then consider my study in two other frames of reference, the order of dependence and the order of exposition.

Before an analysis and explication of Hume's method can be given, some attention must be given to the matter of scepticism. This seems fitting, however, since he adopts a sceptical style. Hume himself offers us a "guide" about the kind of scepticism he adopts; it is not extreme scepticism. It is a mitigated scepticism, framed between the "credulity" of the vulgar and the sceptical opposition of arguments produced by a priori argument, between utter reliance upon the senses and total distrust of the senses, or "excessive scepticism" "corrected by common sense and reflection". The details of analysis of method include the operation of method on two levels, a process of selection and confirmation, a major source of "experiments" beyond the senses and memory, how this source is dependent upon confidence in human testimony, and the degree of certainty with which Hume tended to treat his "experimental" conclusions. Also, there is a specific structure that Hume sets
up in the Inquiry and which he duplicates in the stages of the major works on religion, not in one but in the group.

First rank in the order of dependence goes to the context and analysis of the evidence found within it. My basic claim is that the context of Inquiry, Dialogues, and Natural History contains within it the principles by means of which that context can be understood. If I am correct in this claim, then the understanding of the writings within the context is dependent only upon the internal evidence, that is, "evidence" internal to that context. And, then no justification is needed for not having included any other works. The "results" that I have listed above as following from my study follow from an analysis and explication of this context. Once the principles of method presented in the Inquiry are noted, it is merely a matter of keeping the method in mind and turning to the works on miracles, the Dialogues and the Natural History, and there recognizing the reproduction of the same structure. "Special devices" then do not mask the methodological structure of the works. (However, I fear that the simplicity of the explanation of this procedure may "mask" the difficulties that I experienced, over a long term, of being unable to break out of a traditional mindset long enough to consider Hume's works in this perspective and to consider that this was the way in which Hume
had structured his works.) These are chiefly the concerns of Chapters III, IV, V, and VI, although the general and specific contexts are first presented in the early parts of Chapter II. Then, after this perspective is achieved, the force of criticisms of the traditional approach can be fully appreciated. These criticisms are a major concern of Chapter I.

The order of exposition is somewhat different. First, of course, an overview of the whole study and my proposal, the need for the study and major results of the inquiry—"Prospect". In the second part of Chapter I, I examine the chief lines of emphasis of Kemp Smith's interpretation, and similar emphases, and then his interpretive structure. In examining these proposed solutions, I show the need for reconsideration of the area and present the general lines of my proposal.

In Chapter II, I present the general and specific contexts of the study and of the problem. Attention to these is relevant to appreciate Hume's concept of his work and method and of the scope of his work and method. The general context is "moral philosophy, or the science of human nature". This includes religion. The scope and meaning of "moral philosophy" has some bearing on a thesis of Kemp Smith concerning the source or "gateway" by means of which Hume came into philosophy.
The specific context is Hume's Inquiry onU, Dialogues, and Natural History. Although citing the context, indicating the textual similarities, the similarities in concerns, arguments, problems, illustrations, and the methodology in these works, viz., matters of internal evidence, is all that is needed for my central themes, I refer to relevant "external" evidence. Here the external evidence adds force to the concept of a "mature philosophy" of Hume and the relatedness of these works within this specific context.

The concept of a "mature philosophy" suggests that Hume's directions that the Treatise is superseded be taken seriously and that the Inquiry onU be examined to find if it is indeed a unity and basis for inquiries in "moral philosophy". Also, since religion is included in the Inquiry onU, apparently as an integral part, it is a matter of some curiosity what the relation of religion and method was in the earlier years of Hume's intellectual development. I refer to biographical data and the introductory part of the Treatise for what seems indicative of a general pattern of methodological development. This is a probable order for the origin of method in Hume's interest in religious arguments and "proof" claims. The Treatise, in the introductory section, shows a continued hope that his method will be applied to religion. And, since this was frustrated in the Treatise period, there is some possibility
that his works on religion were the fulfillment of earlier plans. This seems to be consistent with the works themselves, for their (internal) structure and their concerns show them as paradigmatic of Hume's philosophy and method.

The probability of the interpretation of the external evidence does not handicap the central theses. My central theses do not depend on these external evidences.

Chapter III deals with problems and elements in Hume's method and its interpretation. These include the question of "scepticism". Analysis and exposition are dependent upon the Inquiry cHU, although in the early part of the chapter I suggest the consistency of the facts in the Inquiry cHU with the probable interpretation of Hume's early struggle with religious argument structures. Regardless of the origin or first basis of scepticism and method, the Inquiry cHU does not support an "extreme scepticism". Rather Hume gives us a "guide" through the area and that guide points to a "mitigated scepticism". The methodological interpretation is derived from that work that Hume proposed as the methodological and epistemological basis for all inquiry into "moral philosophy". This is the Inquiry cHU, and since it bears this weight—with Hume's approval—a consideration of the work as a unity and more seriously structured basis is appropriate. Although a departure from the usual way with this work, examination of it in this perspective seems worthwhile. Chapter IV
presents an interpretive sketch of the Inquiry eHU as such a unity. This further supports, as well as constitutes an extension of, my analysis of Hume's method and epistemology in Chapter III.

Chapters V and VI consist in showing that Hume's works on religion, at least these major works included in the specific context, are structured upon the methodology explicated in the Inquiry eHU. No one work is claimed to perfectly constitute this structure, but his treatment of religion, through these works taken together, does.

In these works Hume deals with "revealed religion" and "natural religion". His method in the Inquiry eHU is to start with a belief stated by man, a basic fact of experience. Then the question of how that belief is established is considered. The basis of the belief in argument, a priori and a posteriori, the certainty claims and the evidence for them, are examined. Then Hume proposes reconstructed criteria for judgment, "corrected by common sense and reflection". If the belief persists, then why it persists, and how and why it arises in "human nature" are next examined. In this step Hume operates according to his reconstructed standards for judgment, and the success of his discoveries is taken to be a vindication of these standards. Then, Hume considers the value and consequences of the belief. At this point, as all through the other steps, regularity and the efficacy of causal reasoning
are presupposed. In quite brief form these are the major steps of the method of the Inquiry of the moral philosophy, the methodological and epistemological basis for inquiry into the whole of "moral philosophy". And these are the major steps of the methodological structure of that group of writings that constitutes Hume's treatment of religion.

Hume uses the same method in his treatment of religion as he uses in what is sometimes called his "general philosophy". And his treatment of religion involves the central concerns of his philosophy, combining critical rigor with elegant style—a paradigm of Hume's philosophy.

So much, then, for the "prospect" of this study. Now let us turn directly to the more detailed development of those points that I have sketched briefly above.

The Problem and Proposed Solutions

David Hume received harsh treatment in the name of religion. He was not excommunicated. Much to the dismay of the Highflyers, the motion was lost when finally brought to a vote in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. What puzzled this Popular Party of the clergy was how some of their brother clergymen could have 'aye's' and not see to whom this devilish sceptic should be consigned. The Highflyers had been preparing their case against Hume for a number of years and had pursued their labors with no little enthusiasm. Twice before they had
brought their influence and charges to bear on Hume. Hume was considered for two university professorships in philosophy, once at Edinburgh and once at Glasgow. He was dropped from consideration in both cases. The charges against David Hume included atheism, deism, heresy, and scepticism.¹

But how did Hume treat religion? This is a question of considerable interest. The dominant answers and approach to this question, rather standardized in philosophy since about 1935, are interesting also. Both a standard approach and interpretation and a philosophic mind-set reign in these matters. Anyone who raises questions about the understanding and interpretation of Hume's treatment of religion should be fully aware of the existence of both and should be prepared to take both into account. Although the mind-set probably cannot be dealt with directly, the standard from which it derives can and must be. It is unfortunate that this reigning interpretation distorts the area of Hume's treatment of religion and prevents the philosophic activity of Hume and his works on religion from being considered in their order of proportional importance.

The Philosophic Problem

The question "how did Hume treat religion?" should be rephrased to include the facts that Hume was a philosopher and pursued philosophy according to a method. Re-phrased into more philosophically relevant terms, these very general concerns take the form of two questions. What was Hume's thought, position, and method concerning religion? And: What relation is there between his thought, position, and method with regard to religion and his thought, position, and method with regard to his so-called "general philosophy"? These questions will serve as the termini of my inquiry.

Examination of the standard type interpretation, in an attempt to find the answers proposed to these questions, shows answers that are misleading or erroneous and that produce a distortion of Hume's works on religion, of the method that he uses in the area, and of the relation of this area to his "general philosophy". These consequences are sufficient to render the answers untenable. However, the conclusions of the interpretation depend on and follow from acceptance of a set of equally untenable procedural and interpretive conditions: an inappropriate starting point, an inadequate context, and methodological difficulties, including inappropriate interpretive procedure and a misunderstanding of Hume's method. This is a
logically prior difficulty and must be dealt with satisfactorily before any soundly based answers can be given to the first two questions. This concern with conditions can be put in the form of a question, a third question: What are the conditions that are requisite and appropriate for understanding and interpreting Hume's treatment of religion? This problem, then, is my chief concern.

When the "chief concern" of an inquiry is with "the conditions that are requisite and appropriate for understanding and interpreting" an area, expectation that the inquiry will or should present a complete interpretation, a fully detailed treatment, of the area is out of place. It would be more reasonable to expect that the inquiry will present a basis upon which such an interpretation can be developed, or the prolegomena, the necessary prolegomena, to such a treatment. In this inquiry I will not present a complete interpretation; I will not present a complete set of answers to the first two questions. However, I will present the necessary prolegomena, the basis and the general lines upon which more detailed and complete answers can be developed—and something more. When I present an adequate, or more adequate, set of conditions, that is, an answer to the third question, this also provides some rather definite answers to significant parts of the first two questions. This especially involves method, context, the relation of the "two areas", i.e., Hume's treatment of
religion and his "general philosophy", and the basic structure of his work in "both". Method and context are two important points of error in the accepted interpretation. Method is a constant factor in all three questions and is decidedly important in Hume's thought and works. Context is of importance in dealing with method. And these are both important for considering the relation of the areas and the methodological and epistemological grounds upon which each is structured.

Now to matters of procedure immediately at hand. I noted above that there is a standard interpretation in this area, that I would have to take it into account before presenting grounds for a more adequate interpretation, and also the way I would examine the accepted interpretation. In the next section I will indicate first the general points that will be shown by examining the standard interpretation and a more recent version of it for answers to my first two questions. I will comment quite briefly on one or two of these points. Then, with some critical comment, I will present what I believe to be a fair statement of the relevant parts and highlights of these interpretations: the standard, that of the late Norman Kemp Smith; the version, that of A. H. Basson. After a few comments on Basson's version, I will consider the more important interpretation of Kemp Smith in a somewhat more critical way. I will indicate how and why this
interpretive form produces restrictions in understanding and inquiry into the area of Hume's treatment of religion, noting some of the subtleties of the approach that make the technique seem so convincing and impossible to refute or supersede. Then I will state the conditions that are both requisite and appropriate for understanding Hume's work and works on religion and for permitting them to be considered in their proper perspective. It is with the explication of these conditions that the rest of the study is concerned.

Proposed Solutions: The Standard and One Version

The two questions serving as termini of my inquiry are: What was Hume's thought, position, and method concerning religion? And: What relation is there between his thought, position, and method with regard to religion and his thought, position, and method with regard to (what Kemp Smith calls) his "general philosophy"? Using these two questions as guides of interrogation, an examination of the interpretations of Kemp Smith and Basson discloses the following points. (Other points will be dealt with in later sections, as noted above.)

The correct starting point is Hume's Dialogues. If Hume wrote any other works on religion that are worth considering, interpret them and the area on the basis of the interpretation derived from the Dialogues. This is quite justified since the Dialogues contains, if not all, all
that is really essential of Hume's treatment of religion.

Hume was completely sceptical concerning religion. This is, after all, "what we would expect". This extreme scepticism involves not just his distaste for all forms with which he was acquainted, but all possible forms or "religion as such".

The method that Hume uses in treating religion is an indirect and deviative one, completely different from that method that he uses in his "general philosophy". And, these two areas, then, are separate and not essentially related.

Although I will consider these answers and related difficulties in some detail following examination of the two interpretations, some comments are not inappropriate at this time. Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion was published in 1779, posthumously. Philosophers have recognized that "the Dialogues are the last words of the philosopher Hume". This work, as one might infer from the title, is written in the form or style of a dialogue. In what is intended to be the introductory letter, itself a part of the work, one of the participants of the dialogue is said to display the quite striking "character" of a

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Hume: Selections, ed. Charles W. Hendel, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), p. xx. This is in an introductory section by Hendel and bears the title "The Philosophy of Hume".
"careless scepticism," Fairly early in his work with the Dialogues Hume was concerned greatly about the possibility that he was not maintaining a balance in the argument between the characters, at least in the portions of the Dialogues that he had written at that time. How well he succeeded may be indicated by the following.

Indeed, it is not too much to say that no finer philosophical dialogues exist in English, and that the argument is sustained at a level even higher than that of Berkeley's Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, which is its only close competitor.

Let us grant that the Dialogues, published posthumously, are Hume's "last words". Let us, also, grant that the Dialogues displays the balance of argument and philosophical excellence attributed to it. However, if too much emphasis is placed on this work as being Hume's "last word" on the matter of religion, it is easy to be misled in two ways. This may result in under-valuing or placing too little emphasis on the other works that Hume produced in his treatment of religion. He did produce other works.


Hume, Dialogues, ed. Aiken, p. xiii. This is Aiken's comment in his "Introduction".
Also, this may result in neglect of the fact that Hume began work on the Dialogues during the same period of his life in which he produced some of his most striking mature works and most of the major works on religion. Further, if the Dialogues is so philosophically excellent and balanced in dialogue, these very characteristics might be taken as reasons for considering it questionable procedure to derive an interpretation of this work from a part of the dialogue and then use this interpretation as the interpretation for the whole area. However, such matters have constituted more of a challenge than cause for caution. And, the Dialogues is put forth as the key by means of which Hume's treatment of religion, the area, is to be understood. Then, when we find "what we would expect", viz., that there is a sceptic in the Dialogues, this seems to assure us that we are on the right track. This fits well with a sometime belief that Hume was a sceptic in his philosophy; or, on the other hand, it fits well if we contend that Hume was a sceptic in religion, even if he was not in his "general philosophy", and take this to mean that he uses a different method when he deals with religion.

Kemp Smith's "definitive" interpretation.—The late Professor Norman Kemp Smith has been more instrumental in our century than any other Hume scholar in setting the standard interpretation of Hume, especially of Hume on religion. His works on Hume have been hailed as "masterly,"
"masterpiece," "entirely convincing," "revolutionary," and "definitive." 6

6 The following are indicative of the general response of the philosophic community to Kemp Smith's works on Hume. (Kemp Smith's Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, first published in 1935, includes an extensive "Introduction" in which he interprets Hume's treatment of religion; The Philosophy of David Hume was published in 1941.) "But the justice of this identification /"that the sceptic Philo is Hume himself"/ has recently been placed beyond all reasonable doubt by the cogent evidence assembled by Professor Norman Kemp Smith in his excellent introduction to his edition of the Dialogues . . . There is no need to enumerate here Professor Smith's arguments; his general contention . . . may be accepted unquestioned." Ernest C. Mossner, "The Enigma of Hume," Mind, New Series, XLV (July, 1936), 334. Later, in response to B. M. Laing, who had taken issue with Professor Kemp Smith, Mossner writes: "Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion are still very much with us. What appears to be the definitive edition was published by Professor Norman Kemp Smith in 1935 with a learned introduction . . . The present purpose is solely to indicate certain unhistorical bases of Dr. Laing's attack on the more traditional view so ably championed by Professor Norman Kemp Smith." Ernest C. Mossner, "Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion: An Answer to Dr. Laing," Philosophy, XIII (Jan., 1938), 84-85. "That temporal priority /of Hume's "ethical interest"/ and many features in Books II and III of the Treatise, have led Professor N. Kemp Smith, in a masterly work to which I am deeply indebted /Phil. of D. Hume/, to put forward the revolutionary judgment that these Books were thought out, and to a large degree written out, before the famous Book I. The detailed evidence which he has marshalled is to me entirely convincing." T. E. Jessop, "Some Misunderstandings of Hume," Revue Internationale de Philosophie, VI (Sommario, 1952), 159. Referring to interpreting the doctrines and associating the characters of the Dialogues with the ideas of Hume, another writer says: "I find the definitive treatment of the subject to be that of Norman Kemp Smith . . ." R. H. Hurlbut, III, "David Hume and Scientific Theism," Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII (1956), 486. And, Antony Flew: "It will be obvious to all who know this definitive and revolutionary edition of the DNR how much I, like all students of Hume, am in Kemp Smith's debt." Ref. Antony Flew, "Hume and 'the Religious Hypothesis'," The Rationalist Annual (1959), p. 35, n. 1. Cf.
In his intriguing "Introduction" to Hume's Dialogues Kemp Smith ostensibly presents an interpretation of the Dialogues. In reality, however, he does much more— and the philosophically perceptive recognized this. Kemp Smith presents a way of reading the Dialogues and an identity of the sceptic as Hume that constitutes an interpretation of the whole of Hume's writings on religion. Indeed, Kemp Smith selects portions of other sources to make just this point. This is the force of the interpretation, and it took—it registered in the philosophic community.

Examining Kemp Smith's interpretation by posing the first of the two questions, the answer comes as an insistence that:

Hume paid an outward deference to current beliefs and practices . . . /but/ in the Dialogues he is

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Antony Flew, Hume's Philosophy of Belief: A Study of His First 'Inquiry' (New York: Humanities Press, 1961), chap. ix, "The Religious Hypothesis," p. 216, where reference is made to work done "by Kemp Smith in his definitive edition." Cf. also, Charles W. Hendel, Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume (New Edition; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Library of Liberal Arts, 1963). Reference to "the great works on Hume by Norman Kemp Smith" and their "definitive" nature abound in Hendel's additions in his "New Edition." Cf., e.g., p. ix, and also, p. xxxix: "It has not been sufficiently appreciated that Kemp Smith's masterpiece was . . . no less revolutionary than his Introduction to the Dialogues. . . . The significance of this new view of Hume's own course of development has scarcely been realised at all, or acted upon by scholars." Note also the number of sacrifices of his earlier interpretation of Hume on religion that Hendel now considers he must make in concessions or alterations, in favor of Kemp Smith's interpretation: there are many, but ref. esp., pp. 47n, 177n*, 257n*6, 272, 336n*23, 344n*2, 351, 369n*8. Cf. pp. 395, 396, 399, 401.
doing what was above all else forbidden, namely, to make a direct attack upon the whole theistic position.\(^7\)

Hume's destructive criticism of the argument \(\text{"from design"}\) . . . was final and complete.\(^8\)

He professes to be attacking only what he describes as being its \(\text{"religion's"}\) popular, superstitious, fanatical forms . . . \(\text{"but"}\) what he calls 'true religion' is . . . little more than a repudiation of all superstition, alike in belief and practice.\(^9\)

\(\text{\textit{Hume}}\) quite definitely concluded that religion is not merely an ambiguous but in the main a \textit{malign influence} . . . \(\text{\textit{and that religion is}}\) preposterous in any form.\(^10\)

The teaching of the \textit{Dialogues} is much more sheerly negative than has generally been held . . . \(\text{\textit{Hume}}\) is, consciously, and deliberately, attacking "the religious hypothesis," and through it religion as such.\(^11\)

Kemp Smith emphasizes the primacy of the \textit{Dialogues} as characteristic, if not as giving all that is essential, of Hume's attitude and thought on religion. He examines or selects portions of other sources as giving corroborating

\(^7\text{Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, ed. with an Introduction by Norman Kemp Smith (2nd ed., with Supplement; New York: Social Sciences Publishers, 1948), ref. "Introduction," pp. 41 & 43. Cf. also this same work: (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Library of Liberal Arts, n.d. Copyright date, 1947, given and Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., listed). In both of these, pagination and unnoted errors are the same.}\n
\(^8\text{Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 30.}\n
\(^9\text{Ibid., pp. 19 & 20.}\n
\(^10\text{Ibid., p. 11.}\n
\(^11\text{Ibid., "Preface" to 1st ed., p. vi.}\)
evidence to this conclusion which he holds that the manuscript of the Dialogues itself indicates.

Such evidences as can be gathered from Hume's other writings, including his Letters, and not least from his treatise which he composed almost simultaneously with the Dialogues, his Natural History of Religion, corroborates the conclusion to which the clues in the manuscript would appear to point, namely, that the Dialogues is much more sheerly negative than has generally been held . . . He is consciously, and deliberately, attacking "the religious hypothesis," and through it religion as such . . . Their influence, that is to say, has been of the same far-reaching character as, by universal consent, has been exercised by Hume's no less negatively inspired Treatise of Human Nature and his Enquiries. Hume's philosophical gifts may be depreciated as being exclusively analytical and critical; what cannot be challenged is that they are supreme in their own kind.\textsuperscript{12}

The quotation above is from the "Preface" to the first edition, it is true. However, no essential alteration of these views is made in the "Preface to Second Edition" or in the second edition itself, which was published more than ten years later. Kemp Smith does note again that "certain questions bearing on Hume's general philosophy" "I have dealt with in a volume" published between the dates of the two editions of Hume's Dialogues.\textsuperscript{13} In the "volume"

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., "Preface" to 1st ed., pp. vi-vii.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. vii. The edition to which I have been referring is the second edition: "Preface" dated March, 1946; first edition "Preface" dated June, 1935.
to which he refers, Kemp Smith states:

... I have said all that I have to say about "Hume's views on religion" in my introduction to Hume's Dialogues. 14

The point is clear: Kemp Smith says that his analysis, conclusions, and interpretation of Hume on religion, as these are presented in his introduction to Hume's Dialogues, constitute what he has to say about this area. Thus, it does not appear unfair to take the views expressed in this introduction as having the import that Kemp Smith himself judges them to have. This includes Kemp Smith's analysis and conclusions with respect to Hume and religion as being based primarily on the Dialogues. Kemp Smith says that he appeals to other sources only for "corroborating evidence" for the theses that he finds contained in the Dialogues itself. Hume's intention, plan, goal, and conclusions, as well as his attitude, concerning religion are found in the Dialogues; this work displays a conscious and deliberate, plotted destructive attack upon the "very citadel of religion" and this "destructive criticism" was "final and complete." This destructive attack was made against "the whole theistic position," against "religion as such" or religion in principle.

Now in an attempt to be utterly fair to Kemp Smith I must say that he may have been somewhat facetious with

respect to portions of the last two sentences or comments in the extended quotation above (p. 26), viz., concerning Hume's Treatise and Inquiries being "no less negatively inspired" and Hume being "exclusively analytical and critical." But Kemp Smith was not being facetious with respect to any of the other comments and he was not being facetious with respect to the last two comments as they applied to religion.

So much, then, for the chief highlights and emphases of Kemp Smith's statements of Hume's thought and position and attitude concerning religion. But, what about Hume's method? Here, also, Kemp Smith's account is interesting and intriguing. Concerning method and also the second examining question, Kemp Smith insists that Hume employed a complicated literary technique and used "special devices" in the execution of his "sheerly negative" destructive work. The true character of the Dialogues, as far as argument is concerned, more nearly resembles a hodge-podge of grossly untenable religious arguments, presented in, at most, only a semi-serious way, and not even worthy of that. Kemp Smith explains that Hume proceeds "evidently with mischievous intent" and uses "special devices" to make "playful sallies, partly ironical, partly mischievous" against religion which he considered to be

16 Ibid., p. 65.
"preposterous" in any form. Kemp Smith tells us that it is "so evident" that Hume employs "his indirect method of expressing his distaste for religion as he knew it in his day."\(^{17}\) and that Hume felt "constrained to resort to an indirect method of statement."\(^{18}\) Apparently Kemp Smith insists that any possible instances seeming to indicate that Hume may have had even reserved sympathy for religion in any form or in principle are to be explained away as "only his indirect method" or as merely prudent safeguards.

Here we have the essence of Kemp Smith's commentary on Hume and on his thought, position, and method concerning religion.

The search for a more complete answer to the second question, viz., the relation between Hume's thought, position, and method in treating religion and in treating "more philosophical matters," discloses a most interesting situation. In his work on what he calls Hume's "general philosophy," Kemp Smith later discovers that Hume was not "sheerly negative" in his "general philosophy." Rather, he finds that Hume was positive also. He further discovers that:

\[\text{The} \quad \text{doctrine of natural belief is one of the most essential, and perhaps the most characteristic doctrine in Hume's philosophy.}\]\(^{19}\)

He finds that Hume definitely and clearly does, and

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 13.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 10.

\(^{19}\)Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, p. 86.
indicates that he does, "part company with" the sceptics. Commenting on a quotation from Leslie Stephen (English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, I, 43ff) that ends with "and Hume, therefore, is a systematic sceptic," Kemp Smith now remarks that:

it would be difficult to compile a more misleading summary of Hume's actual teaching. 20

Kemp Smith also discovers that, in his "general philosophy," Hume does not employ an "indirect" method; that here Hume is not entirely analytical and critical; that he is not totally destructive; and that here Hume's works are not entirely "negatively inspired." 21 But that any of these discoveries could, would, or did apply to Hume and his treatment of the area of religion, Kemp Smith nowhere notes; apparently he did not consider such a thing to be either appropriate or possible.

Especially in light of this, Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume becomes even more interesting when we consider the following. In the "Preface" to his later work (Phil. of D. Hume), Kemp Smith says, concerning "Hume's views on religion," that "on this part of his philosophy, I have said all that I have to say in my introduction to

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20 Ibid., p. 82.

Hume's Dialogues." Then, rather strangely, he states:

And the positions for which I have there argued are implied in the views which I have continued to take of the character and intention of the 'mitigated' scepticism by which he supports and supplements his positive, naturalistic teaching.\textsuperscript{22}

Now, this seems rather strange to me because I do not see the implication. And, if I have been at all correct in reading his treatment of Hume on religion, there is a disturbing absence of evidence that could be used to support the claim that such "views" are involved in this treatment and that such "views" "have continued" from the interpretation of Hume on religion found in the introduction to Hume's Dialogues. Granted, Kemp Smith refers to "a naturalistic interpretation" and a naturalistic "manner" with which Hume is involved, and comment on naturalism with respect to Hume both makes sense\textsuperscript{23} and is a long term contention of Kemp Smith. But in the introduction to Hume's Dialogues such references are put forward to "note why Hume could himself positively approve the virtual ignoring" of moral experience in relation to basic religious argument

\textsuperscript{22}Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, "Preface," p. vii.

\textsuperscript{23}This makes a lot of sense, more sense, for example, than too great an insistence on the quasi-psychological reaction interpretation of Hume, viz., that Hume, as a child, had such a force-fed over-dose of religion, in its least attractive form, that he rebelled violently and completely to become the Pyrrhonistic sceptic opposing all religion or religion as such. Cf. Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, chap. i, for a version of this.
and why he "rejected" certain religious beliefs as "unsupported." Although "positive" is used in two very interesting different ways in these locations, in the introduction to Hume's Dialogues the force of references to Hume's "naturalistic" tendencies is to explain why he is so negative, so extremely sceptical, about religion. However, "naturalism" is not the point of the quotation from the Philosophy of David Hume.

The point of the remark is "the views which I have continued to take of the character and intention of the 'mitigated' scepticism" and that "the positions for which I have argued" in the introduction to Hume's Dialogues "are implied in" these views. True enough, Kemp Smith does use the term "mitigated" in reference to Hume's "scepticism"—once. The force of this reference is to show how quite innocuous to his completely sceptical position the seeming concessions made by Hume would be even if "mitigated scepticism" were to be used for interpretive purposes. Kemp Smith admits that if we limit ourselves to what Hume says, then Hume presents "what amounts to a virtual denial of religion. A virtual denial" for he continues to use religious terms "in expounding his scepticism." Thus, there can be no doubt that Hume is using these terms deviously,

24 Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, pp. 30-34.
25 Ibid., p. 20.
26 Ibid. Ref., also, pp. 19-23.
that he employs seeming concessions only as prudential safeguards for assurance of publication, and that he uses special phrasing for ironic purposes. He uses them to pretend that he is not consciously and deliberately attacking religion as such; but this is pretense only, for there can be no doubt of the "quite negative character of his views."

This does not seem like the work or project of a mitigated sceptic. It seems more like the work of a Pyrrhonistic sceptic skillfully using the ambiguities of language to his own "sheerly negative" purposes. While his real meaning is hidden by "special devices" he makes his point but makes it in the prudential safety of obscurity. And, in his interpretation of Hume on religion, this is what Kemp Smith describes—not a mitigated sceptic.

The prevailing tone of the Kemp Smith interpretation, including discussion of Hume's intention, goal, scepticism, and devisive procedures, argues for the reality of a basic division between the two areas. That is, it seems to follow from Kemp Smith's treatment of Hume on religion and on his "general philosophy" that the areas are methodologically distinct and methodologically separate. According to Kemp Smith Hume uses a different method and his position concerning religion is entirely sceptical while it is not sceptical in his "general philosophy." Then there is a fundamental difference, distinction and separation between Hume's thought, position, and method concerning
religion and his thought, position, and method concerning his so-called "general philosophy."

Basson's version.—Mr. A. H. Basson has written more recently on David Hume. Since his interpretation of Hume on religion is a more recent version of the Kemp Smith "definitive" interpretation, a brief consideration of his views is worthwhile. Evident similarities include emphases given to the starting point, emphasis given to the Dialogues, negative scepticism of Hume, hidden meanings, and differences of method.

Basson asserts that when Hume considered religion "his attitude was one of unqualified enmity." Further, "Hume's conclusions in these matters are entirely sceptical." Mr. Basson gives us the explanatory counsel that:

> When we want to understand a philosopher it is a good plan to ask what were his aims, and what methods did he use to pursue those aims. We cannot take these things for granted in philosophy, as we can in other subjects.

Now this is true and indeed instructive. Basson continues

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28 Ibid., p. 18.
29 Ibid., p. 107.
30 Ibid., p. 19.
with more that would be instructive also, if it were cor-
rect.

The short answer with Hume is that his aims were revolu-
tionary, and that like all revolutionaries he was prepared to use almost any method that pre-
sented itself.\textsuperscript{31}

True, quite early in his career Hume considered his "dis-
coveries" and "inventions" "new" and "novel" and revolu-
tionary.\textsuperscript{32} But was he "prepared to use almost any method that presented itself"? Almost as if thinking this too harsh a pronouncement, Basson qualifies it, only to qualify the qualification, in turn. He says that Hume did not under-
stand those arguments that he actually used and that Hume did not state very clearly at first what his aims were.\textsuperscript{33}

Mr. Basson puts the matter as follows:

Of course, this does not mean that he \textit{Hume} was at all disingenuous: he was certainly not prepared to use arguments which he privately considered to be invalid. A more detailed answer is hard to give, partly because Hume seems to have misconceived somewhat the nature of the arguments he in fact used, and partly because his real aims are not at first clearly stated.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.

duction by J. M. Keynes and P. Sraffa (Cambridge: The Uni-
versity Press, 1938).

\textsuperscript{33}Cf. Hume's \textit{Dialogues}, ed. Kemp Smith, "Preface," p. v; Hume's "intentions are by no means always evident on the surface."

\textsuperscript{34}Basson, \textit{D. Hume}, p. 19.
So much for Hume's vagueness, his lack of understanding, and his caprice in choosing a method, all with regard to his "general philosophy." But what about his treatment of religion? Here Basson rather surprisingly states that:

religious philosophy was amongst the earliest of Hume's interests, and may well have antedated his interest in pure morals. Indeed, it is not too much to say that Hume's attitude to religion was one of the chief factors in all his philosophical thinking.55

There seems reason for great hope that the present issue will receive a more complete and "new" answer—until we read the very next sentence, viz.:

His attitude was one of unqualified enmity.36

This last sentence, though obviously not the first two,37 sounds quite like Kemp Smith. However, all three are given in an assertive form, i.e., made as assertions, with little to support them, and of the three it is only the third that receives significant further attention or development.

But what about method? Mr. Basson continues:

Hume's works on religion exhibit two distinct lines of argument. In the Natural History he sets himself

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35 Ibid., p. 18. There may be some relation between these first two sentences and n. 16 to Basson's chap. 7, p. 127. How much relation Basson saw or intended, however, is not known.


37 Since, that is, Kemp Smith, in Phil. of D. Hume, contends that "pure morals" constituted the "gateway into philosophy" for Hume. There seem to be at least some difficulties involved in this theory. Ref. below, chap. 11.
the task of giving an account of the origin of the idea of God, and of the origin of the belief in the existence of gods. This is carried out independently of any consideration of the validity of such beliefs. It might be expected that he would use the methods of analysis elaborated in the Treatise, but this he does not do. Instead, he gives a purely anthropological account, which, both in method and in its display of classical learning, reminds one forcibly of the works of Sir James Frazer. The object of the Dialogues, on the other hand, is to examine and assess some arguments which have been brought in favour of the existence of God. The argument chiefly considered is the so-called argument from design. This is also the subject of Section 11 of the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding. Section 10 of the same work deals destructively with the possibility of miraculous events.

After this promising beginning, and after apparently catching a fleeting glimpse of the central place of religion in Hume's life and thought, Basson returns to Hume's treatment of religion in the context of "Reason and Morals." Here he follows lines similar to those of Kemp Smith and makes several points that Kemp Smith has made. Basson's comments specifically on "Hume's reflections on religion," presented in the body of his text, consist in a severely limited, sketchy, approximately three-page treatment of the Dialogues only.

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38 Basson, D. Hume, p. 18.
39 This is my insistence, not that of Basson (except for the assertion previously noted, above p. 36) and obviously not that of Kemp Smith, who holds that "pure morals" not religion was Hume's earliest and prominent interest. Ref. below, chap. II.
40 Basson, D. Hume, chap. 5 (v).
However, a careful, or perhaps persistent, reader will discover that Basson does mention two of Hume's other works on religion again. Yet the importance that Basson judges these "other sources" to have and his opinion of their relevance for understanding "Hume's reflections on religion" are indicated rather clearly by the extent and lines of treatment that he (Basson) gives them and the location to which he assigns this treatment. The location is a footnote, in the back of his book.\(^4\) The extent of the treatment consists in an identifying sentence and one paragraph, partly devoted to the \textit{Natural History} and partly devoted to "EHU 10." The lines of treatment of these works largely follow those remarks quoted above (p. 37), with the exception of two interesting twists. I will note these before continuing with his comments on the \textit{Dialogues}.

Following his remark, in the text, that "Hume's reflections on religion take the form of a dialogue . . ."\(^5\) Basson remarks in this footnote: "Other sources of Hume's views on religion are: the \textit{Essay on the Natural History of Religion} (NHR), and EHU 10, 11."\(^6\) He mentioned these works earlier, as I have indicated (p. 37 above). No further discussion of "EHU 11" is indicated, apparently since Basson believes that the subject of the \textit{Dialogues} is also

\(^4\)\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 169-170 n. 11.  
\(^5\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 106.  
\(^6\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 169.
the subject of Section 11 of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. He also said earlier that:

In the *Natural History* he sets himself the task of giving an account of the origin of the idea of God, and of the origin of the belief in the existence of gods. This is carried out independently of any consideration of the validity of such beliefs. It might be expected that he would use the methods of analysis elaborated in the *Treatise*, but this he does not do. Instead, he gives a purely anthropological account...45

And, in this later footnote he comments:

In NHR Hume tries to show how religious beliefs in fact originated. The value of such work was naturally limited by the anthropological data available in the eighteenth century.46

Note well: this is a "purely anthropological account," and "the value of such a work is naturally limited by the anthropological data available in the eighteenth century"; yet "Hume's reflections on religion take the form of a dialogue"; and yet Basson says that "Hume's" "final attitude to religious beliefs, that is to say his conscious and reasoned attitude, is summed up"47 in this "purely anthropological account." Only a short time later, in his discussion of the *Dialogues*, Basson explicitly states:

...we should have expected Hume to give some account of the origin of our belief in the existence

of God, independently of the truth of that belief. . . . But he does not attempt this. 48

The second interesting twist concerns Basson's comments about "Section 10" or "EHU 10." Early in his text Basson says that "Section 10 of the same work deals destructively with the possibility of miraculous events." 49 In the later footnote he states: "In EHU 10, Hume argues that no amount of testimony can suffice to prove a miracle." 50 The question of the possibility of an event occurring, miraculous or otherwise, and the question of testimony proving that event are different, not the same.

But let us return to Basson's text, to his treatment of certain points of the Dialogues only. It is this work that he considers the important one.

Hume's reflections on religion take the form of a dialogue . . . 51

As might be expected, Hume's conclusions in these matters are entirely sceptical . . . But the most interesting feature of Hume's treatment of religion is the abandonment of his usual analytic method. 52

Here, again, is the insistence that on matters of religion Hume uses a method utterly different from the method that

48 Ibid., p. 108.
49 Ibid., p. 18. Kemp Smith also refers to this section as "Hume's argument against miracles." Ref. Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 45.
51 Ibid., p. 106.
52 Ibid., p. 107.
he uses in his so-called "general philosophy." Basson interprets Hume's so-called "first principle" in the fairly popular way, viz., that to be meaningful a word must stand for an idea and that idea must have a corresponding impression, and proceeds to say what "judging by the methods employed in the T
Treatise, we should have expected" Hume to do in his treatment of the area of religion. Granted that it is not at all difficult to forget some remark one has made sometime before, still this next move by Basson merits special attention. Apparently completely forgetting what he has said distinctly twice before, once earlier in his text and once in a footnote to the section he is now discussing, he continues:

Then we should have expected Hume to give some account of the origin of our belief in the existence of God, independently of the truth of that belief. In short, we should have expected his treatment of God to follow the lines laid down in his treatment of causation, the material world, and the self. But he does not attempt this. All he does is to consider some ancient arguments for the existence of God, and expose their weaknesses, and conclude that belief in God is not rationally founded, and this is the most interesting and original part of his work. Thus Hume's treatment of religion is disappointing, since it is only a prolegomena to a full treatment on Humean lines. It is hard to see what caused him to miss this

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54 Basson, D. Hume, p. 169. Cf. above, pp. 38-39. Aside from the contradiction, Basson may have been misled by the fairly common, but mistaken, practice of considering the Natural History as a "purely anthropological account." Ref. chap. v, below.
opportunity for contributing something really original to natural religion.55

There is an additional location in which Basson mentions Hume and religion, viz., Chapter 7 "The Sceptical Philosophy," and its footnotes.56 This is an interesting chapter, and, if taken by itself, or with some things that Basson says, a highly informative one. However, if considered as a part of Basson's text and his total treatment therein, which indeed it is, certain difficulties arise.

Basson recognizes the need for greater clarity of meaning when we label someone a sceptic. He attempts to solve the matter in Hume's case by considering classical cases of meaning and scepticism. Here is some highly enlightening work. Derivatively the first or original meaning was "to look at carefully, to consider," and "thus a Sceptic was simply one who inquired or investigated carefully."57 But these original meanings became perverted and

55 Basson, D. Hume, p. 108. Apparently Antony Flew also caught the strange ring of the first sentence of the above quotation from Basson. However, Flew seems to have missed further difficulties involved in Basson's account. Flew attends to what Hume "explains in the 'Introduction'" to the Natural History, and then rather pointedly remarks: "This, by the way, makes it remarkable that a recent interpreter of Hume should express himself disappointed over a failure 'to give some account of the origin of our belief in the existence of God, independently of the truth of that belief,' (Basson, p. 108)." Ref. Flew, Hume's Phil. of Belief, p. 24.


57 Basson, D. Hume, p. 140.
the terms came in disrepute. Basson notes that: "Hume himself is at some pains to distinguish his kind of scepticism from what he calls 'Pyrrhonism,' and this demands some explanation." Basson proceeds along lines similar to those already mentioned, viz., tracing to original meanings and then to perversions. But difficulties arise from these points if they have relevance for what Basson has said earlier. Even after his explanation, it is not entirely clear what meaning then should be attached to remarks made earlier. For example, consider: "Hume's conclusions in these matters are entirely sceptical." Or: Hume's "attitude was one of unqualified enmity." Or: "he was prepared to use almost any method." Or, consider Basson's remarks about "religious philosophy" and the place of "Hume's attitude to religion": "religious philosophy was amongst the earliest of Hume's interests . . . Indeed, it is not too much to say that Hume's attitude to religion was one of the chief factors in all his philosophical thinking."

Suppose Basson's point is granted that "Pyrrhonism" was originally a "good" term and that "the Sceptics aimed at peace of mind and the undogmatic acceptance of common

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58 Ibid., p. 175.
59 Ibid., p. 107.
60 Ibid., p. 18.
61 Ibid., p. 19.
62 Ibid., p. 18.
sense."63 And grant further that: "The term became de-
ased in meaning by a confusion of Scepticism with the
opinions and methods of the later Sophists."64 The Sceptics
used a method of "counter-balancing arguments," but Hume
"tries to define the limits of human knowledge": "in this
sense Hume was not a Sceptic, for he did have a dogma."65
Furthermore, Hume's aims were "revolutionary."66 Thus far,
then, Hume had a dogma, he had aims that were revolutionary,
he had a procedure that was different from the Sceptics—as
these other points also are. Now, Basson says that "the
Sophists" were ready to use "whatever means lay to hand" to
achieve their aims.67 Since Hume "was prepared to use al-
most any method,"68 this makes him seem to be more of a
Sophist than a Sceptic.

Basson speaks of Hume's opposition to superstition
and enthusiasm, noting that he had good reason to oppose
them, and that they meet in philosophy and religion. Fur-
thermore, these do not characterize organized religion.69
This seems to be different from Kemp Smith's emphasis and

63 Ibid., p. 175, n. 8.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 145.
66 Ibid., p. 19.
67 Ibid., p. 175.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., pp. 150-152.
argues for Hume holding a moderate or soft scepticism; it seems almost to take Hume's remarks concerning such opposition seriously. However, perhaps the earlier remark that "Hume's conclusions in these matters are entirely sceptical" needs to be reinterpreted to say that this now means that he emphasized that common sense should be our limit, but superstition and enthusiasm, being "false religion", should be opposed, and "true religion" should not. Such a moderate sceptic hardly seems to be one who would advocate an "attitude [that] was one of unqualified enmity" to "religion." What is to be "one of the chief factors in all his philosophical thinking" also seems in need of some clarification here.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that Basson's work typifies adherence to the basics of "the Kemp Smith interpretation" and the difficulties involved in trying to hold both these and something more. Perhaps there is a recognition that difficulties are involved and yet there seems to be a reluctance or an inability to achieve the independence necessary to assess Hume's position and treatment of religion more accurately. This calls for a closer examination of the basic approach involved in the predominant interpretation and, also, consideration of why it is

\[\text{Ibid., p. 107.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p. 18.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
so convincing and has seemed to be correct, in spite of the difficulties and restrictions it has produced in the area. I turn now to this type of an examination.

Restrictions and subtleties involved.—When philosophers judge a solution to a philosophical problem to be "definitive," often it is safe to infer that the problem has been solved conclusively. One solution to the problem of how to understand and interpret David Hume's treatment of religion has been accepted as "definitive," and it has been inferred that the problem has been solved conclusively. In this case the inference seems philosophically unjustified. The inference can be explained on the basis of its probable causes and why it seems compelling to make the inference, but on generally acceptable philosophical criteria for judgment the inference seems ill-advised.

The judgment of an interpretation as "definitive," in the above sense, contains at least three other logically distinct but related judgments. They are positive judgments concerning conclusions, method, and value. They may be stated as judgments affirming: (1) That the conclusions or results are correct and that they follow from the evidence and a correct assessment of the evidence relevant to the problem. (2) That the method by which the conclusions are obtained is correct and appropriate, both to the conclusions and to the problem. (3) That the value of the solution or interpretation consists in the adequacy with which
it fulfills its purpose, viz., that the interpretation provides a correct, accurate, and balanced understanding of the issues involved and of the relevant context of the problem, and that the interpretation solves the problem conclusively.

When we examine Norman Kemp Smith's "definitive" interpretation of Hume's treatment of religion by these criteria, however, difficulties involved in the interpretation and the processes by which it was constructed quickly appear. When examined by the criteria that should (and apparently have been thought or judged to) establish it as "definitive," the difficulties that appear are such that Kemp Smith's interpretation is no longer philosophically tenable.

First, the conclusions that Hume was sceptical in the extreme, "negative," and intentionally destructive to not only all religious forms but also to religion in principle, do seem to follow from the evidence cited. But they do not follow from all the evidence that is relevant to the problem. Hume employed a sceptical "style" and "scepticism" was a part of his method, but the whole of his method is not reducible to style and one aspect. Unless, that is, Hume used a completely different method in treating

religion from that which he used elsewhere in his philosophic framework. This seems to be what Kemp Smith holds, but this derives from a misunderstanding of Hume's method and other, chiefly methodological, difficulties.

Second, the method that Kemp Smith uses to construct his interpretation is at once interesting, disturbing, and confounding. It is interesting because it seems to be the technique of interpretation that philosophers consider so sound that they treat it as a philosophical principle. One version of that principle is: "Interpretation of a philosophical text . . . must derive primarily from the text itself . . . "  

74 The method of the "definitive" interpretation is disturbing because Kemp Smith used this sound principle inappropriately. Seemingly employing it to interpret a single text, he advances to construct an interpretation for a whole area. 75 The use to which it is put is inappropriate to deal with the problem and with the full evidence. This is due, in part, to the nature of the primary source from which he derives his interpretation and to the nature of the problem. It is also due, in part, to


75 Kemp Smith may have attempted to interpret Hume's treatment of religion, the area, on the basis of the Dialogues, because he (Kemp Smith) was presenting an edition of the latter work. However, regardless of the possible motivation, the fact remains that he did attempt to do this. Ref. above, pp. 22-35.
a contextual restriction that does not account for the method of Hume and the structure of his writings on religion according to that method. Kemp Smith builds his interpretation on his choice of one of two strands of emphasis in one ambiguous work and the affirmation that "clues" found in this strand constitute the basis for understanding and correctly interpreting, not only this one work, but the whole of the area of Hume's treatment of religion. The interpretation derives primarily from "clues" contained in Hume's Dialogues. But the Dialogues contains more than one set of "clues." Kemp Smith, however, quickly and summarily explains these away: these other clues are not really clues at all; rather they are merely "devices," partly prudential, partly ironic in nature. Even so, Kemp Smith quite fittingly turns to "external" sources for supporting evidence. The other work to which he makes principal reference for supporting evidence, Hume's Natural History, is itself far from unambiguous. Similarly, the extent biographical data of Hume contain bases for more than one direction of inference. True, Kemp Smith does refer to portions of other sources, but he considers these three sources of principal value in establishing his interpretation. This, however, constitutes a restrictive and inappropriate limitation of context.

This restricted context and the procedure of Kemp Smith have two very confounding effects. On the one hand,
If both procedure and context are accepted, then no opposing interpretation can be conclusively established. Thus, even though an interpretation for directly opposing conclusions be proposed, it cannot be established more conclusively than that of Kemp Smith. And, it seems to follow that the "definitive" interpretation cannot be conclusively refuted, or (if "refuted" is too strong here) superseded. Tacit acceptance of method or procedure and context seems to have restricted further inquiry into the problem and to have set the conditions, the limits, within which any inquiry in the area must operate. On the other hand, the procedure and limitation of context in the "definitive" interpretation carry a judgment not only upon any possible opposing interpretation but also upon the "definitive" interpretation itself.

Although Kemp Smith takes the Dialogues as the primary source from which he derives his interpretation and limits the context of relevant supporting evidence to almost equally ambivalent sources, he so skillfully presents his train of argument that we find ourselves almost compelled to assent. What is less noticed is the importance of counter evidence which he tends to ignore or, when considered, it is explained by being explained away. However, a directly opposing conclusion can be derived from the same procedure. This is just how I would proceed if I considered that Kemp Smith's conclusions were appropriate. A careful
reader of these sources will recognize that this suggestion of an opposing conclusion that emphasizes the "positive" is quite possible and not a matter of unfounded conjecture. The Dialogues also contains "clues" from which a "positive" interpretation may be proposed. The Natural History contains supporting evidence for these clues, and the thesis can be fortified further by selection of biographical data or by emphasizing different aspects of the data cited in support of the "definitive" interpretation. Such an interpretation would possess the merit of being consistent with the evidence cited, and the conclusion of a "positive" treatment of religion by Hume would indeed follow from that evidence; also, counter evidence could be explained as not really as important as it seems, if counter evidence were considered.

Most of us would judge this interpretation somewhat as follows. The proponent of the "positive" interpretation chooses one set of two opposing sets of clues in the Dialogues and takes these selected clues as the basis from which the interpretation primarily derives. These clues are supported by one of two strands in the Natural History and in Hume's biographical data. However, (a) since the "positive" interpretation seriously considers only one side of the evidence and one of two strands in Hume's treatment of religion, and (b) undervalues the other strand—in the works agreed to constitute the context that
is relevant to the problem--(c) then--regardless of the
fact that method has been agreed upon and that this inter-
pretation is structured precisely according to that meth-
od--this "positive" interpretation (1) is not established
conclusively and (2) is philosophically unacceptable. (d)
These judgments are made because (1) although the conclu-
sions of the interpretation do follow from the evidence
cited, they neither follow from nor constitute a correct
assessment of all the relevant data. (2) The method used,
though similar to the sound philosophic principle of inter-
pretation, somehow seems unable to deal satisfactorily with
either the problem or the complexities of the "text." (3)
Therefore, this "positive" interpretation fails to ade-
quately fulfill its purpose, for (1) it does not provide a
correct, accurate, and balanced understanding of the issues
involved (ii) or of the relevant context of the problem.
(iii) This interpretation does not solve conclusively the
problem of Hume's treatment of religion. Let me add that
this "positive" interpretation, granted that it could be
constructed, does not and cannot refute or supersede the
"definitive" interpretation.

I believe that many philosophers have recognized
the inconclusiveness of any such opposing interpretation
as that which I have just discussed. They have recognized,
also, the inappropriateness of the procedure involved in
such an attempted opposing interpretation, at least as far
as procedure is related to the failure of establishing conclusively conclusions that differ from the "definitive" set. And, they have recognized that this would not refute or supersede the "definitive" interpretation. These "facts," combined with the compelling argument of the "definitive" work, resulted in a stricture to further inquiry in the area. Tacitly accepted, it seems, were two further points that made an alternative seem out of the question; hence, further enhanced was the "definitive" status of the accepted interpretation. Those two further points are:

1. that the "definitive" interpretation uses the proper, appropriate method; and
2. that the context appealed to in that study is appropriate and relevant to the problem of interpreting the area. The attractiveness of the former is enhanced by its seeming similarity to the principle that emphasizes the place and importance of internal evidence. The second is enhanced, perhaps, because of a general feeling that Hume's works on religion are not especially related to his philosophy, except for attack and respectable disclaimers.

If in fact these conditions have obtained, they may have constituted compelling grounds for inferring that the problem of how to interpret Hume's treatment of religion has been solved conclusively.76

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76 Ref. above, p. 46, par. 1.
It has been recognized less well that the judgment against the "positive" interpretation has equal force against the "negative" interpretation. Each is derived from a (different) set of clues in the same primary source, supported by a (different) strand of emphasis (evidence) in the same "external" sources; both adhere to the same context and structure their respective arguments according to the same method. Yet the opposing "positive" interpretation cannot be established conclusively. Neither can the "definitive" "negative" interpretation. But if this is the status of the "positive" interpretation, it does not solve the problem conclusively. Neither does the accepted "negative" interpretation. Since the (logical) status of the "definitive" interpretation is the same as that of the opposing interpretation, what obtains is that both are (capable of being) equally well-founded or ill-founded.

This, then, is the judgment that is contained in the methodological principles and the limitations of contextual relevance embraced by the "definitive" interpretation. It is a judgment not only upon the status of any opposing interpretation meeting its contextual and methodological conditions, but also a judgment upon its own status. At best, these conditions permit a counterpoise of arguments. On method and context the arguments are agreed. The conclusions of each follow from the evidence cited. Both seem equally well-founded or ill-founded. Yet, they differ
on interpretative conclusions, one emphasizing the "positive," the other the "negative." Still, there is no criterion, no philosophical basis, to choose one rather than the other. Acceptance of these conditions seems to defy movement beyond this point.

However, this kind of situation, this status of the situation, is philosophically insufferable—if the problem can be dealt with. One of my working assumptions is that a problem can be understood, and understood according to some principle. That "principle," or principles if there are more than one in the problem, can be found (usually, if by some chance not always) in the proper context of the problem itself. This principle of understanding and of interpretation should be adequate to account satisfactorily for more than one strand of evidence that is relevant to the problem. This working assumption is not a stranger to philosophic inquiry. It is at least a part of what is involved in the philosophic attempt to render perplexities meaningful.

Philosophic accuracy and the conviction that the problem can be understood cannot be satisfied with this state of counterpoise. Earlier I listed a set of criteria that seem to be (and to have been) involved in the judgment of a work and an interpretation as "definitive."77

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77Ref. above, p. 46, par. 2.
Checking these two contentious interpretations by these criteria produces some interesting results, or, perhaps I should say suggestions. Such a check suggests that "equally ill-founded" may be a better emphasis than "equally well-founded." And it indicates more clearly why we have no criteria or criterion to choose between these interpretations. Both have the same (logical) status and both fail to meet those criteria that they proposed to meet. When judged according to those criteria which, if met, should have been the basis of establishing the interpretation, not only is there no positive basis for a positive choice of one rather than the other, but also, both interpretations meet a negative judgment from each sub-set of criteria within the larger criteria set. Neither interpretation has satisfactorily met any of the three sub-sets.

If we are to retain the meaningful emphasis of the philosophic maxim, and if the problem can be dealt with, then the point and content of interpretive origin, the methodological commitments and variants, and the context of inquiry appropriate to the problem must be re-evaluated. What is needed is a less zealous but a more meaningful obedience to the philosophic maxim, an appropriate use of it, and a revision of context. In a word—Perspective. We need a change in point of view (a perspective) in order to discover the proportional importance of the aspects of Hume's treatment of religion (perspective). Otherwise, we
remain in a situation of defending one interpretation over another because we have an inclination or sympathy for it or pretend to be more convinced by the "cogency" of one interpretation than that of the other.

If we want to understand the way a philosopher deals with a particular problem philosophically, we must discover first, not only the words but also the meaning and structure of that treatment. This derives from his method of dealing with the problem or his methodology. If we discover and understand his methodology, his principles of method, we will be able to understand both what he says and how he structures what he says. This is philosophically more important than a counterpoise of independently cogent arguments, neither of which, in principle or in fact, constitutes an accurate assessment of the complexities of the text from which "clues" are taken, or of the context proper to the problem, or of the method of Hume in his treatment of the problem. By discovering the underlying structure we should be able to understand the point that he (Hume) is making and what it is that he says. This should enable us to see through any "special devices" that he might employ in some part of his treatment. By seeing through them and not getting stopped by them, we may be able both to discover the meaning in them and the point and meaning of what Hume is trying to say and do, both in the parts and in the whole of his treatment of the problem.
(We are—and I am—of course, under the scholar's obligation not to impute to Hume something that he clearly did not hold.)

The interpretations of Kemp Smith and Basson are untenable because of certain basic difficulties. These difficulties involve the conditions that are requisite and appropriate for understanding and interpreting Hume's treatment of religion. Chief among these difficulties are failures to deal adequately with three concepts that are of central importance to Hume and his philosophy. These concepts are context, method, and, relatedly, scepticism. In failing to deal adequately with the appropriate context, the concept of method is distorted; with a distorted concept of method, scepticism then is viewed in disproportion, also. Dealing inadequately with conditions produces inadequate and/or unsoundly based interpretive conclusions.

Before any soundly based interpretation can be given, the matter of conditions must be dealt with more adequately. These concerns are prolegomena to an interpretation, but they are prerequisites. It is with conditions that we must start. And the best procedure is to consider more closely what Hume considered these to be.

The problem can be dealt with. The area can be understood, and understood according to principles within the context appropriate to the problem. The principle, in this case, is Hume's methodology, his principles of method,
as explained and exemplified within the specific context. Since method is easily distorted by an inappropriate context, context is the first point to consider. The general and specific contexts and the place of method and religion in these contexts are presented in Chapter II. Chapter III consists in an analysis of Hume's method, including attention to his "scepticism," based chiefly upon the specific context presented in Chapter II. If Hume's Inquiry concerning Human Understanding bears the weight that I assign to it, viz., that it contains those principles of method adequate to explain the works in the specific context, one of the characteristics it would have would be an order and unity. This is also one of the characteristics that would be necessary if Hume's request to consider it as superseding the Treatise, Book I, were to be taken seriously, and if it were to serve as a mature, approved statement of his "logics," as a basis for Hume's concept of philosophic inquiry. Chapter IV consists in a sketch of Hume's Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, showing its unity and the principles of method analyzed in Chapter III. Chapters V and VI consist in showing that the structure of Hume's treatment of religion, viz., the other works in the specific context, is explainable on the basis of the methodological principles within this context, presented in the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, and examined and exemplified in Chapters II, III, and IV.
Hume was a philosopher of Eighteenth Century Scotland. He pursued, or believed that he pursued, an area of philosophy according to a particular method. Deliberately Hume published his first major philosophical work anonymously; this was his *Treatise*,\(^1\) an attempt at a system. Later he advised against reading the *Treatise*, recommending instead that works written after the *Treatise* better expressed his philosophical principles. Hume also wrote works on religion. He seems to have had a continuing interest in this area. At least two parts of his writings on religion were written, in some form, several years before they were published in his finally approved form. Hume had intended to include at least one of these, in some form, somewhere in the *Treatise*.

For purposes of explication I will speak of Hume's work as being involved in two contexts, the general and the specific. The general context will provide the framework for noting Hume's concept of his work as a philosopher,

including the scope of that work. The specific context refers to those particular works constitutive of the minimal grouping in which Hume's basic treatment of religion is most meaningfully considered. In this context it is clear that Hume's method has relevance for his work on religion—this much at least. And, it seems fairly clear that religion and method may be more closely related. Religion is included in the "general context" of Hume's philosophic interests.

There is some possibility that religion and method were closely related earlier than the time of Hume's writing about "religious issues" around the mid-1700's. This, if true, may have some bearing on the possibility that the "specific context" is a more balanced and accurate representation of Hume's "logics" than his earlier published expressions. There is some reason to consider that Hume's interests in religion and method were prominent in his intellectual development and instrumental in his move into the broader concept of philosophy indicated in the "general context." There is more reason to consider that these interests were continuing, if not constant, interests even though Hume was unable or unwilling to bring his work on these interests to publication before the time of the publication of the works in the "specific context." (The latter seem fairly certain, the former quite probable.)
General Context: "Moral Philosophy"

Hume was interested in "moral philosophy" and it was a "moral philosopher" that he sought to be. This, however, does not mean that he was solely interested in ethics, or that he sought solely to be an ethical specialist. That the terms meant something different in the Eighteenth Century from what they mean in the Twentieth Century should not be surprising, but it should not be forgotten either. Most students of Hume and his era will recognize the meaning and significance of the two-fold classification "natural philosophy" and "moral philosophy." Since apparently not all do however, a reminder of the meaning of this distinction is not out of order.

Before it was to appear as a central theme in his Phil. of D. Hume (1941) N. Kemp Smith gave a trial flight to the thesis "that Hume's philosophical interest centered . . . in ethics." Referring to Letters, ed. Craig, I, 13-16, "Letter to a Physician," Kemp Smith asks "Could there be a clearer statement that it was in the field of morals that he had found his starting point, and the main goal of his enquiries?" Ref. N. Kemp Smith, "The Inaugural Address: David Hume, 1739-1939," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Vol. XVIII (1939): Hume and Present-Day Problems, pp. xvii-xviii. Although Professor Kemp Smith's question was rhetorical, it deserves some response. A careful reading of "Letter to a Physician" shows that Hume's concern with "morals" did not precede but originated later than what I take to be his concern with religious issues. There seems to be another point of relevant concern here. Kemp Smith italicizes "moral philosophy," and treats it as "morality" or ethics. That is, he provides and then takes for granted the narrower interpretation and meaning of "moral philosophy." In doing this, he ignores the context of concerns in which Hume's account is set, and he chooses a meaning contrary to Hume's usual use of "moral
Professor Charles W. Hendel presents such a brief yet clear account of this distinction and such a helpful emphasis concerning its significance for Hume that it can be little improved upon.

... The term "philosophy" had a very broad meaning in Hume's day. In fact, philosophy included all knowledge, with whatever degree of certainty of that which is "matter of fact" or "existence. There were two sorts of philosophy of existence, "natural philosophy" and "moral philosophy." Newton's science of nature was designated a natural philosophy: his Principia was indeed translated as "the Principles of Natural Philosophy." By contrast, "moral philosophy" comprised the knowledge of all things relating to man, in contradistinction from nature, the things where man himself is implicated in the facts, where his opinions, tastes, judgment, reason, and action are in some way involved.3

... That century, the age of man, was preoccupied with human nature, human understanding, morals, government, art, criticism, and natural religion. All these interests in what concerned philosophy as contrasted with "natural philosophy."


man had somehow to be gathered under one rubric. The term "natural philosophy" had been used for the whole of the study of physical nature, the signal example of which was Newton's Principles of Natural Knowledge. By contrast, then, "moral philosophy" was used to designate a similarly comprehensive knowledge of all the things relative to man, the things where man himself is implicated in the facts, where his opinions, tastes, judgments, reason, and will are in some way involved. . . . Moral philosophy then comprised all that is the subject matter of psychology, aesthetics, and criticism, ethics, political and economic science, and the rudiments of sociology, and made a consummate moral knowledge available for the general welfare and happiness of mankind.4

All of this taken together constituted "moral philosophy" and Hume regarded himself as a moral philosopher—that being the role and achievement to which he aspired.5

Hendel's description agrees with Hume's concept of "moral philosophy" and its scope, and also with Hume's contrast of "moral philosophy" with "natural philosophy." That is, this description agrees with what we can learn of Hume's concepts of these matters from his published works and his correspondence.

In his Treatise, his earliest published philosophical work, Hume used the following title: A Treatise of

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Human Nature: Being An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects. In one of his later works, An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding (Book I of the Treatise is entitled "Of the Understanding"), Hume opens the work with the phrases "Moral philosophy, or the science of human nature," and his closing remarks include reference to "experimental reasoning." Although the need for further explication is obvious, let us note the following points here. The "general context" is "moral philosophy, or the science of human nature." The method is "experimental reasoning" (or "the experimental Method of Reasoning"). It is held to be applicable to "moral subjects" or the area called "moral philosophy." ("Reasoning," as well as "experimental," is included in the phrases concerning method. Religion or at least "natural religion" is included in "moral philosophy.")


8. For analysis of method and special problems, such as, e.g., Hume's scepticism and in what sense Hume's method is "experimental," ref. below chap. iii. The relation of method, religion, human nature, and "moral philosophy" will be given further consideration in this chapter. As noted earlier, chap. iv deals with the structure of the Inquiry chU, chaps. v and vi with the structure of Hume's works on religion.
The Specific Context

The "specific context" consists in: Hume's *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, and his *The Natural History of Religion*. This is the minimal group of particular works in which Hume's treatment of religion is most meaningfully considered. This means that the works on religion which are included in it can be explained and understood according to the principles of method found within this context.

These works are textually-topically related. A comparison of these three works discloses a striking number of similar topics, expressions, illustrations and arguments. Examples are: topics of belief and evidence, the nature of man or human nature, the method of experience and reason (rationalism). Others include: miracles as violations of the natural, irregularities as extraordinary, concern over a particular providence, argument from design and the belief in and evidence for the argument. And: the foundation of religion, the rise of religion in human nature, the problem of evil. Also: "reasoning," reason, experience, cause and effect, and scepticism. Part, but only part of this similarity has to do with the special relation that Sections X and XI of the *Inquiry concerning Human*

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Understanding have to the Dialogues and the Natural History.\textsuperscript{10}

These works are temporally related, also. Hume published the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding first in 1748; it was then entitled Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding. Hume revised the work and added his name as its author in the second edition in 1750. He wrote at least parts of the Dialogues before March, 1751.\textsuperscript{11} The Natural History of Religion was probably written near 1750-1751; in May, 1755 Hume writes, this work "I have kept some years by me." Each of these works was published with Hume's name as its author, and this was by his approval. He revised each work, and he approved each work in the form we have it. The Dialogues, of course, was published posthumously, but Hume made a final revision of the manuscript shortly before his death, and this revised form is what was published. The other works were approved for the (posthumous) "authoritative" edition of 1777.\textsuperscript{12}

The structural and methodological relationship of

\textsuperscript{10}Ref. below chaps. iv and v.


these works, the principles of method that are examined and exemplified in this context are of primary importance for understanding the works within the context. Method is first presented and examined in the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding. ("Logics" included methodology and epistemology, and Hume used the term "logics" to describe the general subject-matter of Book I of his Treatise.) It is by examining and understanding this work, the first Inquiry, and its principles, that the structure and principles of Hume's works on religion are explicable. This is the basic theme of the present study. The analysis of method is dealt with in Chapter III. The unity of the first Inquiry, suggesting that it is a work more worthy of consideration than often thought, is the concern of Chapter IV. These moves are next in the order of development and dependence, and will be followed by showing how this method appears in Hume's treatment of religion. The latter is the task of Chapters V and VI.

However, there are other matters that demand attention before proceeding to Chapter III, and in the course of working with these additional problems more information can be brought to the contexts and their meaning for Hume and his philosophy. First, neither Kemp Smith nor Basson consider what I term the "specific context." The closest either comes to it is to note that in Sections X and XI of the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding "Hume has raised
theological issues." Thus, some attention is given to two sections of this work. Rather, both Kemp Smith and Basson proceed according to a different approach, an approach that so far has proved more of a handicap than a help for understanding Hume's treatment of religion. Yet, their approach is fairly usual and involves a definite attitude concerning the place and importance of the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding. Some attention should be given to these factors and to the status of (what, at this point, seems to be my claim for) this "specific context" in relation to the emphasis and the emphatic concern with the Treatise. These matters I will consider below under the heading "Resistance to the Inquiry."

Second, there is an additional problem raised by this resistance and by (the claim made for) the significant place and importance of the "specific context," especially the place of the Inquiry chU in this context. Strictly speaking, that the "specific context" and the analysis of method in this context constitute the requisite and appropriate conditions for understanding and interpreting Hume's treatment of religion is dependent upon the fulfillment of just that end, viz., actually being conditions that allow a full consideration of the evidence and allow the structure of Hume's writings and procedure to be noted. However, while perhaps not essential for this basic claim, it is

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13 Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 45.
worthwhile to consider whether at an earlier time Hume might have held to such a relation as (at this point I claim that) he holds in the "specific context." This relation would involve religion and method, and perhaps "moral philosophy." And, a part of this same question, indeed an intimate part, concerns whether there is any additional evidence or other reasons from other sources or earlier periods for considering the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding to have the importance and to function in the capacity that (I claim) it does in the "specific context."

Or: Is there any basis for this "specific context" in Hume's earlier thought? Here, in this area, at least part of my interpretation of the data may be conjectural—I must recognize this, since at least some of the points that I will note are points that I do not recall having been made by any of the commentators on Hume that I have read—although rather than being "thrown together" they seem fairly probable and seem to follow something of a "natural" development or order. There are certain facts and structures that are not open to question and that serve as bases for inference and interpretation. I will consider these matters below under the heading "Facts, Conjectures, and Structures."

Resistance to the Inquiry

Both Kemp Smith and Basson emphasize the Treatise and devote attention to this work. Then, they refer back
to Hume's treatment of religion. Note the "two" moves.

Kemp Smith puts greatest emphasis on the Treatise in the Philosophy of David Hume, and then attempts to argue from that work (in the "Preface") back to support his positions in the "Introduction" to his Hume's Dialogues. He attempts to relate the Treatise to his assessment of the Dialogues. In next to the last chapter of the Philosophy of David Hume, Kemp Smith does comment "that in the Enquiry . . . he has given us his maturer, more considered views" but this is only "in regard to . . . parts of the Treatise . . .". In the introduction to Hume's Dialogues Kemp Smith does recognize that "those sections in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding in which Hume has raised theological issues" are of some importance for "the Dialogues"--and he considers both of them, Sections X

Some difficulties with this attempt were noted above, chap. 1, pp. 29-34.

Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, p. 536; ref. pp. 519-540. Other difficulties with this chapter, which Kemp Smith entitles "The Relation of the Treatise to the Enquiry," have not gone unnoticed. Sternfeld remarks that not only is it the case that "Smith ultimately refuses to decide which of the two works is the best expression of Hume's thought," but also, among other things missed and overlooked, Kemp Smith "misses . . . the basic difference in orientation" of the two works and "overlooks the positive doctrine of the Enquiry." Ref. Robert Sternfeld, "The Unity of Hume's Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," Review of Metaphysics, III (Dec., 1949), 168, n. 3.

Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 45.
and XI. After all, Kemp Smith cautions (or pronounces):

The Enquiry, it must be borne in mind, is a re-writing of such parts of his youthful Treatise of Human Nature as he considered likely to be of general interest.17

The "reason he also desired to include" these sections that "raised theological issues" is that "he was anxious that it /"the Enquiry"/ should appeal to a wide public."18

Basson states quite clearly that it is the Treatise with which he is concerned. He as clearly states what he thinks of the first Inquiry. "If the Enquiry were a substantial advance on the Treatise," it might be worth considering.

But this is not the case. The Enquiry is certainly a clearer and more readily intelligible work than the Treatise, but these desirable features are secured not by solving difficulties, but by ignoring them.19

"Consequently," concludes Basson, "the plan adopted in this exposition is to follow the Treatise."20 Basson follows the Treatise, and then refers to Hume's treatment of religion. He is greatly disappointed that in Hume's works on religion he does not find what "we should have expected" from considering the Treatise. Basson's disappointment is somewhat complicated by the fact that he describes Hume as

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 16.
having done what he (Basson) expected Hume to do and then denies that Hume had ever done it. It is at least to Basson's credit that he believes "we should have expected" a methodological similarity in the different areas of Hume's philosophy.

This concern of Kemp Smith and Basson for the Treatise and their aversion to the first Inquiry seem to have prevented the ideas of either the "specific context" or the value of the Inquiry from occurring to them. Such an emphasis (as they gave) is not, however, unusual. Yet, unfortunately, such procedure and emphasis overlooks the following points. Hume did not actually proceed in this way. The Inquiry concerning Human Understanding fills the function expected from the Treatise (as Hume himself suggested). This Inquiry and Hume's works on religion, part of which is put forth in the Inquiry, are intimately related, temporally, textually-topically, and methodologically. Also, there is some basis for considering that these works fulfill a task that the Treatise never did, and, because of certain aspects of its structure, cannot be expected to fulfill.

Why this reluctance, then, to consider the Inquiry in the capacity I claim for it, or even as being of value in its own right? Perhaps it results from taking the

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21 Ref. above, chap. 1, pp. 34-45.
collective contentions of a tradition as supporting convincingly the claimed worthlessness of anything, with a few exceptions sometimes noted, after the youthful Treatise. Perhaps from a feeling that this recognition would imply a threat to the Treatise; by or resulting from confusing or not distinguishing between the force and meaning of two propositions. Or, perhaps from a tendency to overlook or ignore the possibility of certain structural differences in the two works and the significance of these for Hume's concept of his work and his way of fulfilling it.

**Distinctions.**—Let us consider the propositions first. The first proposition is the stronger. The proposition and its supposed attendant reasoning may be put this way: The Inquiry concerning Human Understanding does supersede the Treatise. Therefore, the Treatise is not worthy of philosophic examination. This would constitute a total sacrifice of a work that for Hume scholarship and for philosophy can never be "replaced." The resolution of a contention of this sort—if, indeed, anyone would dare openly to contend this—must be achieved through a detailed, thorough analysis of both works. However, this is neither my contention nor my problem.

The second proposition is weaker. And this weaker proposition should be distinguished from the stronger one immediately above. The second, weaker proposition may be put this way: There are some reasons to consider that the
first Inquiry is of more importance as an expression of Hume's philosophy than has often been thought, and there are some reasons to consider that the differences between Book I of the Treatise and the first Inquiry may indicate that the Inquiry better fulfills problems and goals of Hume's "design" than does Book I of the Treatise, or perhaps the Treatise.

Now my "claim" is related to the second proposition. It is: The Inquiry concerning Human Understanding provides the basis for understanding Hume's treatment of religion. This is a fairly weak claim when compared to the first proposition above. This claim does constitute my problem, i.e., not just the claim but also showing that it is well-founded. It should be noted that this is a different claim from that usually assumed to be the point of the first Inquiry. It is usually assumed that the first Inquiry is to fulfill a duplicate function of Book I of the Treatise, viz., as the "logics" for Hume's "moral philosophy," and this is "moral philosophy" construed to be exclusive of Hume's work on "religion." I point out this difference to avoid confusion of my claim with that usually assumed. Although I believe that this broader context of relevance can be shown, and shown not exclusive of religion, I do not undertake the complete task in this study. Instead I will work on the assumption that it is related to the whole of Hume's "moral philosophy"—although this hardly seems so weak as to merit
the qualifying term "assumption." I am particularly con-
cerned to show that Hume's works on religion are structured
according to this first Inquiry, which is, in this case,
stronger than the usual claim. If this can be done, I
believe the qualifications of the method and structure of
the first Inquiry for the basis of "moral philosophy" will
readily be recognized.

In dealing with the grounds for "my claim" I will
deal with some evidence that is relevant for the second
proposition and that may have implications for the first.
However, I will not be involved in a thorough, detailed an-
alysis of the two works, the Treatise and the first Inquiry.
I will be involved in an analysis of the methodological and
unitary structure of the Inquiry and a few but, I believe,
highly important aspects of the "design" of the Treatise,
mostly relevant for Book I. Through these I will attempt
to examine some of the bases for Hume's advice to consider
the first Inquiry rather than Book I of the Treatise. (I
recognize that Hume's advice was broader than reference to
just these two works.) In dealing with my claim I am deal-
ing more closely with the weaker proposition; yet, the
steps involved will show some factors that also seem rele-
vant, though not conclusive, for the stronger proposition.

A tradition.—But, even the weaker claim has met
with resistance; this derives from the failure to make the
distinction between the weaker and the stronger claim, or
from answering the threat, taken to be imposed in the stronger, with a resounding "No!" That Kemp Smith and also Basson should find it quite natural to prefer the Treatise and virtually ignore the first Inquiry is not unusual. It is a practice that has quite a tradition. I turn now to some representative examples of this traditional way with Hume, and to certain exceptions and seeming exceptions.

As I indicated in the section just above, there are certain peculiarities involved in this tradition and judgment that the Inquiry concerning Human Understanding has little value. In the case of Kemp Smith and Basson, Taylor, Selby-Bigge, and Green and Gross, for example, the Inquiry is judged on the basis of an expected, but not perfectly fulfilled, duplication of the Treatise, especially Book I. Little is judged of value on the basis of difference. I will push this to an extreme form in an attempt to make the point clear. Duplication is good. Difference is bad. The Inquiry is judged on the basis of subjects dealt with in the Treatise. (1) Since the Inquiry does not perfectly duplicate the Treatise in scope of subjects and/or extend discussion within that scope, it is not "an advance on the Treatise." (2) The only way the Inquiry can possibly supersede the Treatise (Bk. I) is by saying better and saying more on precisely those points or subjects about which something was said poorly or partially in the Treatise. (3)

These being granted, any other differences are simply
extraneous additions, explicable by other than philosophical motives or purposes.

Hardly considered is the significance of Hume's sacrifice or his estimation of the sacrifice in excising from the Treatise those parts of "reasoning" that he judged to be the "nobler." Or, that such parts are included in the structure of the first Inquiry, and as integral parts. Or if consideration is given to these parts, they are treated as separate, not as integral and as contextually included. Indeed, Hume is said to have published the Inquiry and to have included these parts solely for "fame" or other "unworthy motives." He is said to have produced no serious and coherent philosophy after the Treatise. The Inquiry is said to be a loose, disconnected, group of essays. And this request to consider the Inquiry rather than the Treatise as better expressing his philosophical principles is the "last-minute caveat" of a sick, angry, perhaps demented, old man, and as such, this request has been and must be "wisely disregarded."

The traditional way with Hume has been to consider the Treatise as his serious and philosophical work, and all or nearly all else that he produced as lacking in seriousness and philosophical import. It is not improbable that this tradition owes a certain debt of origin or impetus to the statements given by Green and Grose, or perhaps a misreading of these statements, i.e., if the Dialogues and the
Natural History are excluded from the place of possible importance that Green and Grose implied for them. (Taylor seems to have made this move.) Green and Grose remark:

On reviewing the history of Hume's literary and philosophical works, we are at once struck by the suddenness with which his labours in philosophy come to an end. The Treatise on Human Nature was written when he was five-and-twenty; that is, in the beginning of 1736; it was published in 1739-40, and after that date he wrote little that was new. The Essay on Miracles was already drafted in manuscript. The Enquiries are for the most part popular reproductions. Even a large portion of the Essays appears to have been written before 1739. The only additions which philosophy received from Hume, are to be found in the Natural History of Religion and the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion: the latter were written before 1751, and the former 'he had kept some years by him' in 1755.

To be brief: Hume's contributions to metaphysics were written by 1736, when he was five-and-twenty; his contribution to the philosophy of religion, by 1750, when he was thirty-nine: and after this date he added nothing.22

L. A. Selby-Bigge passes the following judgments on Hume's work.

Hume says himself that the Treatise 'fell dead-born from the press without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots.' That distinction was, to the end of his life, particularly dear to Hume, and it will be seen that in the Enquiries he made a bold bid for it in his quite superfluous section on Miracles and a Particular Providence.23

22 Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, ed. Green and Grose, I, 75, "History of the Editions." (As noted, this volume is Vol. III in Hume's Phil. Works, ed. by Green and Grose)

These sections, says Selby-Bigge, "do not add anything to his general speculative position." Selby-Bigge, "the writer," compares the works as follows:

Perhaps it may be allowed the writer here to record his own adherence to those who judge Hume's philosophy by his Treatise. Bk. I of the Treatise is beyond doubt a work of first-rate philosophic importance, and in some ways the most important work of philosophy in the English language. It would be impossible to say the same of the Enquiries . . . to ignore the Treatise is to deprive him of his place among the great thinkers of Europe. 25

Commenting on the incompleteness of the first Inquiry compared to the Treatise, he continues:

This wholesale omission and insertion cannot well be due to philosophical discontent with the positions or arguments, or to a general desire to fill up a gap in the system . . . whereas a lively and sceptical discussion of miracles and providence could hardly fail to find readers, attract attention, and excite that 'murmur among the zealots' by which the author desired to be distinguished. 26

It is not surprising, then, that Selby-Bigge declares it is quite impossible to comply with Hume's wish and treat the Enquiry as representing the whole of his philosophic system. 27

Although part of this declaration is not surprising, part of it is. Indeed, it is, at the least, a most unfortunately misleading expression, or, at the most, a declaration of the

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24 Ibid., p. xix.
25 Ibid., pp. x-xi.
26 Ibid., p. xii.
27 Ibid., p. xx.
impossibility of complying with a wish that Hume never made. Hume at least did not demand this in the "Advertisement" referred to, and appearing attached to the "authoritative" edition of 1777. However, that he did appears to be the assumption upon which even some of the more capable students of Hume seem to have continued to work.

On the contrary, this is neither the statement nor the import of either Hume's cover letter or the "Advertisement" that was for the first time "prefixed" to Volume II of his works in the posthumously published edition of 1777. The prefixed advertisement reads as follows:

**ADVERTISEMENT**

Most of the principles, and reasonings, contained in this volume, were published in a work in three volumes, called *A Treatise of Human Nature*: A work which the Author had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and published not long after. But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some negligences in his former reasoning and more in expression, are, he hopes, corrected. Yet several writers, who have honoured the Author's Philosophy with answers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work, which the Author never acknowledged, and have affected to triumph in any advantages, which, they imagined, they had obtained over it: A practice very contrary to all rules of candour and fair-dealing, and a strong instance of those polemical artifices, which a bigotted zeal thinks itself authorized to employ. Henceforth, the Author

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desires, that the following Pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles.29

"This volume" contained An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, A Dissertation on the Passions, An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, A Dialogue, and The Natural History of Religion.30 Hume, through this advertisement, speaks of "this volume" and of "the following Pieces," plural. Hume, in using the plural here, is referring neither to "the Enquiry" nor to the (often erroneously considered) piecemeal structure of the first Inquiry. He refers, rather, to a group, this group of writings contained in "this volume." (His Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, it must be remembered, though started in approximately the same period as most of these writings, was not published until 1779.)31 The loose, disconnected essay structure often attributed to the first Inquiry seems to be used sometimes to strengthen the notion that reference in


30Ref. Hume, Essays, MPL, ed. Green and Grose, I. Ref. Hume, Enquiries, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. xli, where a title page is reproduced; under "containing" all the titles of these works except "A Dialogue" are listed, and in Selby-Bigge's "Note to the First Edition" precisely that group of writings that I have listed above is admitted to be contained in the second volume of the 1777 edition of Hume's Essays, MPL.

31Thus, since the Dialogues was not yet published, there was no way that Hume could include that work in "this volume" or in reference to these works at this time.
the advertisement is merely but specifically to the "Pieces" of that work.

A. E. Taylor puts the matter of the traditional judgment of Hume succinctly. Participating in a Symposium on "The Present-Day Relevance of Hume's Dialogues," he declares:

Repeated study of Hume's Dialogues leaves me convinced that their permanent worth is commonly overestimated. I find them, like everything Hume wrote on philosophy after his youthful Treatise, wanting in high seriousness and logical coherence . . . His wish to discover truth was not equal to his capacity for discovering it.32

So much, for example, of the traditional way with Hume.

There have been exceptions and seeming exceptions to this "traditional way" or general tendency. Let us give brief consideration to stances of Charles W. Hendel, Antony Flew, and Robert Sternfeld, for the varying degrees of departure from this tradition that their works represent.

First to Hendel, who has stated so well the meaning and import of "moral philosophy" for Hume and his era. In the "Introduction" to his edition of the first Inquiry Hendel begins by stating:

The Inquiry concerning Human Understanding is a "first reader" in the philosophy of Hume. It was so intended by the author. He hoped that this book would provide the right approach and introduction to the essentials of his philosophy.33

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One is led to expect Hendel to be an exception. Indeed, he
does render an exceptionally excellent account of the Ab-
stract (Hume's anonymously published "review" of the first
published parts of his Treatise) and aspects of its rela-
tion to the first Inquiry. And yet, it seems almost as if
even Hendel misses the point of the philosophical signifi-
cance of Hume's first Inquiry and gives-in to the tradi-
tional line, when he goes on to declare:

The book of Philosophical Essays [this was the
first title of the Inquiry CHU] was a rewriting of
portions of the ill-fated first book of the Tre-
tise of Human Nature. But the new form and style
made little difference.34

The Inquiry remained, despite the new name, a
collection of philosophical essays, being sections
of the Treatise restated in a more attractive form.35

Although he does note "two novelties," Sections X and XI,
Professor Hendel seems to consider the whole as consisting
of the retention of an unfortunately few bits of "marl"
"mixed with" much "dung."36

This feeling that Hendel himself fell into an "old
bemusing tradition" seems markedly strengthened, when in
his 1963 publication he states clearly that he is going to
concentrate on the Treatise and affirms that "commentators

34 Ibid., pp. ix-x.
35 Ibid., p. x.
36 Ibid., p. ix. Hendel there uses these terms,
after Hume, to describe Hume's "shrewd art." Hume attempted
to use his Essays, Moral and Political to bring forth the
important and "hard" "principles" in more serious philoso-
phy later.
have wisely disregarded Hume's last-minute caveat against reading his 'juvenile' work.\textsuperscript{37}

But more than correcting our assumptions about Hume's principles I want here to examine those principles themselves, and especially to learn what they meant for Hume through studying how he used them in his Treatise.\textsuperscript{38}

Comment on two difficulties is needed here. One concerns the point I mentioned a few paragraphs earlier, viz., the erroneously considered piecemeal structure of the first Inquiry. This is involved in Hendel's remarks. Also involved in his remarks is the "last-minute" nature of Hume's request that the "following Pieces," including the Inquiry cHU, be considered as containing his philosophical "principles."

Hume wrote a group of essays and published them in 1741-1742, in two "volumes" or parts. At first known as Essays, Moral and Political, they were added to in later editions, and in the "authoritative" edition of 1777 the revised and approved group was entitled Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. Incidentally, in this latter edition this group of essays constituted the first volume and it was not to this volume that Hume requested the

\textsuperscript{37}Hendel, Studies (New ed., 1963), "Supplement: On Atomism . . . ," p. 406. I have noted earlier, above chap. 1, pp. 23-24, n. 6, that in several places Hendel now considers his positions were wrong or need correction in light of the work on Hume done by Kemp Smith in the latter's Hume's Dialogues and Phil. of D. Hume.

"Advertisement" be "prefixed"; rather it was to the second volume. It was the group of "essays" known as Essays, Moral and Political that Hume had at first intended to have published as "periodical essays," in "a weekly periodical" not the Philosophical Essays. (Hume did not consider the Essays, Moral and Political to be especially profound. He undertook the project of these "essays" for "popular" consumption after he considered that his first Books of the projected Treatise had somehow failed.) Regardless of the fact that it was this group of essays, viz., Essays, Moral and Political (probably volume one), and not the Philosophical Essays (concerning Human Understanding, which, before 1758, was changed to the title An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding), the plans seem to have been transferred from one group to the other work. This transfer was not made by Hume, but seems to have been made somewhere along the line of Hume's interpreters and to have remained to crop-up at off-guard moments. Once made, it tended to add force to the notion that the Philosophical Essays (first Inquiry) was just a loose group of "essays" or writings without plan or principles of internal organization. (A careful reader might question such an assertion even with regard to the Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary.) Mossner, noting that the Essays, Moral and Political at

39Mossner, Life, p. 138.
first appeared anonymously and by a "new Author," remarks:

Describing the anonymous writer as a "new Author," the preface affords the first outward sign that Hume was already beginning to dissociate himself from the Treatise. ⁴⁰

(That would be as early as, or earlier than, 1741-1742.)

Now to the other point. Although much is frequently made of the "last-minute" suddenness of Hume's decision to have the Treatise disregarded and "the Enquiry" take its place, this is in error on two counts. One I have already noted, i.e., the request is not that one work, "Enquiry" or otherwise, is to take the place of the entire Treatise.

Second, consider Mossner's judgment of the early move being made, outwardly, by Hume, as early as 1741-1742. With regard to concern over one work, however, consider the following:

I believe the Philosophical Essays contain everything of consequence relating to the understanding which you would meet with in the Treatise; and I give you my advice against reading the latter. ⁴¹

(The title of Book I of the Treatise is "Of the Understanding.") Hume gave this "advice" in a letter written more than twenty years before the "Advertisement" in which Hume "disowned the Treatise" was even sent to the publisher. ⁴²

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 139.

⁴¹Letters, ed. Greig, I, 158: "L. to Gilbert Elliot, 1751."

⁴²The dates: 1751 and 1775. This "advice" comes from a period of intense philosophic activity for Hume. In this period he began a public restatement of the principles
This seems like a rather early "last minute."

Antony Flew, in his Hume's Philosophy of Belief: A Study of His First 'Inquiry', recognizes the traditional treatment given to the first Inquiry. The subtitle indicates the work to which he gives chief attention: this is even more clearly put in the first chapter.

The present book is in form a study of Hume's Inquiry concerning Human Understanding..... Our first object is to consider this Inquiry as a book in its own right. That is how Hume himself originally presented it to the world. Later he publicly acknowledged its connection with the Treatise. But he insisted still, in public as previously in private, that it superseded that first work.43

Flew notes that "Hume greatly understates the difference between Book I of the Treatise and what he calls the first part cast anew."44 Even so, however, Flew wants "to make quite clear" to the reader that his (Flew's)

concern for the appreciation of the first Inquiry is not to be mistaken to imply any depreciation of the earlier work. Indeed not, for there is quite "sufficient ground for refusing Hume's urgent requests to ignore the Treatise." Yet there would be no point at all in our proposal to study this Inquiry in its own right if it really were, as the Victorian editors said and as many today still seem to think, simply an abbreviation 'Anyone who will be at pains to read the Inquiries alongside the original Treatise will find that their

of his philosophy. He began a review of his earlier struggles with religious issues, doubts, belief, and evidence. And, by 1751 he had produced a revised edition of his Philosophical Essays, including Sections X and XI, had written at least parts of the Dialogues, and probably was involved in forming the Natural History.

43 Flew, Hume's Phil. of Belief, p. 1, par. 1.
44 Ibid., p. 3.
only essential difference from it is in the way of omission' (Green and Grose, Preface). In fact Hume does not only rewrite, omit, and abbreviate. He adds.45

And, again:

Our first purpose in the present study is thus to consider this Inquiry as a book standing on its own, rather than a miscellany of appendices, re-statements, and irrelevant notoriety-hunting insertions. . . . The Treatise is not a book to be ignored. But the same author also wrote An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding. This too calls for some interpretation.46

Flew thus affirms that the "first Inquiry" is at least worthy of treatment "in its own right."

A few years later Flew writes what may be the result of his having thought further on this problem.

Perhaps the appropriate approach is a compromise: to regard the Treatise as the fortunately preserved notebooks recording early philosophical intuitions, and the EHU as the first public expression of Hume's mature Philosophy. We shall then not be tempted to think of the latter merely as a re-writing of the former, but be on the alert to notice any further changes of substance over and above the obvious additions and omissions.47

There is a difference between this later expression and the earlier approach in his book. The later thought is largely undeveloped, but it is rather perceptive.

Neither Hendel nor Flew seems to be aware of the

45Ibid., p. 5.
46Ibid., p. 15.
much earlier work of Robert Sternfeld. Sternfeld considers that Hume's first Inquiry is a "unity" and is "in fact, a systematic exposition of Hume's mature thought." Commenting in a footnote, he says:

The tremendous weight of authority against Hume's advertisement makes a defense of his statement appear almost foolhardy. The general belief that the Enquiry is at most a group of essays has led most commentators to neglect it.

Sternfeld is correct indeed. I have already noted this above and have attempted to come to terms with the "group of essays" line of treatment, factors involved in it, and certain other lines of opposition that have contributed to neglect of the first Inquiry.

Clearly Sternfeld's proposal is an exception; what I understand the force of his article to be is a complete departure from what I have termed "the traditional way" with Hume's Inquiry. The succinct forcefulness with which Sternfeld puts the matter in his first paragraph is worthy of note.

The interpretation of Hume's Enquiry concerning Human Understanding has been a perplexing problem for many commentators. In spite of Hume's explicit assertion that his later works were to be considered definitive and were to replace the statements made in the Treatise of Human Nature, most commentators have chosen to regard the Enquiry as a hodgepodge of ideas written by Hume.

49 Ibid., p. 167, n. 2.
solely to obtain the notice which he failed to receive upon publishing the Treatise. The commentators have singled out particularly the sections dealing with miracles and a particular providence which did not appear in the Treatise as clear evidence of the Enquiry's lack of profundity and organization and of Hume's desire to attain distinction. That the Enquiry is, in fact, a systematic exposition of Hume's mature thought, and that Sections X and XI are integral parts of Hume's argument, apparently have not been recognized. And this very fact, that the Enquiry has been so thoroughly misunderstood, is in itself a most significant sign of the character of and direction of contemporary philosophy. It is therefore my purpose, first to show that the Enquiry is a unified work and further, that the analysis of miracles and a particular providence is basic to Hume's argument. In doing so, I shall also be demonstrating that though the Treatise may be the more important work for the history of philosophy, since it criticizes most of philosophy prior to its publication, the Enquiry is the more profound and consistent work of philosophy, since it states in a highly generalized and formalized way the basic tenets on which the detailed criticism of the Treatise is based. . . .50

(The similarity of phrases and judgments in Sternfeld's work above and the brief comment made by Flew some years after his book was published, also quoted above, is somewhat striking.) Perhaps relative silence is the cost of radical departure from or the result of attempting to take exception to a tradition of which one is a member. Sternfeld's article has been a source of stimulation and nagging concern for me. Although I do not agree with his interpretation of the unity of the Inquiry, I completely agree that the Inquiry is a unitary work.

50 Ibid., pp. 167-171, a portion of one paragraph.
Reference to my consideration of the force and the status of my own "claim," noted in the immediately preceding section, may be appropriate again at this point.\textsuperscript{51}

Flew and Sternfeld deal with the first Inquiry. Flew considers it "as a book in its own right" but declares that this "is not to be mistaken to imply any depreciation of" the Treatise. Sternfeld considers the Inquiry to be "a systematic exposition of Hume's mature thought" displaying "a remarkable unity of structure"; as such, it is a "more profound and consistent work of philosophy" than the Treatise. I believe that Sternfeld's claim is probably correct; however, neither he nor I (he has not and I will not, in this study) present a sufficiently detailed analysis to prove conclusively this stronger claim (if it can be proven conclusively!) As mentioned earlier, I will present an interpretation of the first Inquiry as a unity, but this is different in structure from Sternfeld's interpretation. Also, I claim that the Inquiry has an additional relation, viz., that it has a particular or special place in the "specific context"; this is more than I understand Flew or Sternfeld to have either shown or noted. And, in the next section I will present additional factors of relevance for considering why it may be more appropriately valued higher in philosophical importance with respect to Hume's "design"

\textsuperscript{51} Ref. above, "Distinctions," pp. 74-76; also, ref. first few pars. of present section, pp. 76ff.
than it usually is; this is different from their approaches.

If I am correct, there is a basis for Hume's *Inquiry* in his earlier thought, and the attempt to move from the *Treatise* to his treatment of religion is inappropriate. (This might bear on the necessity or lack of necessity for a detailed analysis of the *Treatise* and also on the question of "Hume's mature philosophy" and its meaning.)

**Facts, Conjectures, and Structures**

Although a detailed examination and exposition of the general biography of Hume and of the history of his era might be inappropriate here—it has been judged to be so—

52 Sometimes philosophers, and others, may concentrate so exclusively on "internal evidence" that they may forget that "external evidence" can be of value and importance for interpretation of some issues. Mossner not only notes this sometime error but also cogently explains the general lines of its remedy. "Interpretation of a philosophical text, as indeed of all texts, must derive primarily from the text itself, the written words which express certain relations of ideas. Yet especially in the case of earlier philosophers, the reader may be assisted by secondary information, various types of historical knowledge, such as the precise meaning of key words at the time written, the intellectual climate of the age, the biography of the author. Biography may not only provide information about sources and motives but can provide information that compels a reconstruction of character based upon the interpretation of a text. And knowledge of character, in turn, may be of great utility in the comprehension of textual passages which are ambiguous because of oblique presentation or of the possible presence of irony. When it becomes desirable to deal with the biography and the character of a philosopher in order to gain fuller understanding of his meaning, it is requisite that the biographical data employed be true and that the character inferred be consistent with them." Such evidence and procedure prove decidedly helpful in more than one case of interpretations that are...
brief inquiry into Hume's intellectual biography is very much to the point. Information resulting from such an inquiry is of considerable value for understanding both Hume's method and the "specific context," and his concern with belief, evidence, and human nature. When an attempt is being made to supply a needed reconstruction of Hume interpretation, such information is decidedly relevant, even if not sufficient.

The chief point of concern in this section is to inquire whether there is any additional evidence or reason for considering Hume's first Inquiry to have the importance and to function in the capacity that (I claim) it does in the "specific context." Or, is there any basis for this "specific context" in Hume's earlier thought and/or his intellectual biography? The relevant data here include mostly those explanations and points of information that Hume provides from and about his progress of thought through earlier periods.53

From such an inquiry it seems improbable that Hume determined to make "'morals' commonly so-called" the "gateway" into philosophy and the source from which every truth would be derived. It seems improbable that "morals," i.e., pure morals or ethics, was Hume's earliest interest. And, further, it seems indicated rather clearly that Hume's attitude toward religion is not at all adequately or accurately explained by limitation to the popular emphasis that his was a psychological or emotional rebellion because of a childhood over-dose--certainly not in its overly simplified form, for the issues are more complex than this allows for.


Recall, also, that some of the "hot" theological issues from before Hume's birth through his development and maturity, in his era, included: the reasonableness of Christianity; disclaiming the "mysterious" character of religion; discourses on miracles; "natural religion," "true religion" as old as creation; testimony of witnesses for authenticating miracles and religion or a special form of religion; the need or needlessness of "revelation"; general criticism of "superstition" and "enthusiasm"; and a growing appreciation for "textual criticism" even on "holy texts."

54 From an additional area, then, comes further support for my earlier contention that Kemp Smith seems to have been in error on these points. Ref. above, chap. ii, pp. 62-63, n. 2. If I am correct, his error here was twofold: a factual error and a mistaken textual interpretation. There is reason, also, to think that Hume's home area was a bit more religiously moderate, consciously and by design, than Kemp Smith allowed.

55 Cf. above, chap. i, p. 31, n. 23. Cf. James Noxon,
From such an investigation I find the following more positive features. Hume considered it to be from a methodological and area orientation to "human nature" that he "determined to derive every truth." Religious issues were his earliest interests and those about which he struggled for confirmation in his pre-Treatise period. These interests, and problems especially connected with them, persisted throughout Hume's career and were among the last issues with which he dealt just prior to his death. Hume seems to be speaking as much for and of himself as anything else, when he wrote concerning these topics, "we cannot restrain our restless inquiry with regard to them." Disappointment and distaste or psychological reaction and unfair treatment from others may have had a part in Hume's treatment of religion. There is an especially sharp bite in his mention of religion and its devotees in works published shortly after each of the occasions when he was "prevented" from being appointed to a philosophy professorship. (I noted these in Chapter I.) But, there is something more—


56Professor Hendel held to and thus had sympathy for the first part of this point for several years. However, he has apparently given it up, finding much greater sympathy and agreement with Kemp Smith's theses now. Ref. Hendel, Studies (New ed., 1963—first ed., 1929), passim, but esp. note p. 177 & p. 257, n. 6. Ref. above, pp. 23-24, n. 6.

something that is too important to be extinguished by this
thesis that would hold nothing more than quasi-psychologist-
cal bitterness.

Hume wrote: "Be a philosopher; but, amid all
your philosophy, be still a man." It is easy to become
fascinated with this very good advice, and so emphasize the
man that we overlook the philosopher. Hume does say "be a
philosopher" and a philosopher he was, a philosopher with a
rather keen, capable intellect. It was with matters of be-
lief, the beliefs of "common opinion," credulity in
believers, evidence, argument, means of confirmation, and
with matters of principle and method that Hume was first
concerned in his early struggle. These entered significant-
ly into both his treatment of religion per se and his posi-
tion in his so-called "general philosophy." These are
the concerns of the philosopher; and these were the concerns
of a very young man who became a philosopher.

It is in light of this reorientation, this reori-
ented point of view and method, that Hume reflects back upon


reading of the first volumes of each of these works is quite
relevant for Hume's early period. Reference to certain
later correspondence in which he refers back to action,
thought, and development in the earlier periods is also help-
ful in giving Hume's opinion of his progress. This also pro-
vides the basis for a comparison of his thought on the
matter with his procedure in his published works in philoso-
phy. Ref. other works, above, pp. 94-95, n. 53.
his earlier struggle and the way or progress by which he arrived at, or rather, was brought to, his "new scene of thought."

Every one, who is acquainted either with the Philosophers or Critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two Sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper, growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium, by which truth might be established. After much study, and reflection on this, at last, when I was about 18 years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with the ardor natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it.60

Earlier than this account,61 Hume had kept an intellectual diary, an "old manuscript book" in which he had recorded

60 Letters, ed. Greig, I, 13; Burton, Life, I, 31: "L. to a Physician," probably in March or April, 1734. Cf. Mossner, "Hume's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 1734: The Biographical Significance," Huntington Library Qtrly, VII (Feb., 1944), 135-152, for aspects of the controversy concerning the intended recipient of this letter.

61 Prior, that is, to March or April, 1734, when the above account was included in a letter to a physician. The "old manuscript book" was referred to and a short account of its contents given in a letter to Gilbert Elliot, dated March 10, 1751; in this letter Hume discusses portions of his Dialogues. It is from this letter to Elliot, in which Hume is recounting events and stages in his earlier development, that the following brief quotations are taken. Ref. Letters, ed. Greig, I, 155-157, and Burton, Life, I, 331-335. Burton, perhaps too easily, considers that "even in the most fundamental articles"--in the 1734 letter--clearly and unquestionably refers to the fundamental articles of religion.
carefully "page after page, the gradual progress of my thoughts" on religious issues, arguments, doubts, difficulties with which he tried to come to terms. This struggle had begun "with an anxious search after arguments, to confirm the common opinion," that is, the beliefs commonly held, in religious matters. Beginning with the commonly held beliefs in religion as he found them, that is, with "belief" as accepted fact, as existing phenomena, he was not satisfied with the grounds or lack of grounds upon which they seemed founded. So he sought to "confirm" them by the discovery of irrefutable "arguments." All leads and the very wording of his account indicate that Hume first looked to Rationalism and to rationalistic arguments for support. (It is hardly possible that one so ardently searching and so intellectually alert as the young Hume would not have considered arguments being discussed and put forward by religious traditionalists, Deists, Critics, and the "milder supernaturalists" of his general era.) The above quotation from his later statement (1734) reflects a similar interest and progress, at this later time somewhat more broadly construed to include application to "moral philosophy."

Hume indicates that the "arguments" he had found or attempted to use were apparently all being made in the name of "Reason." These "arguments" at first appeared to be candidates for supporting those beliefs held by "credulity" in the case of the "vulgar." Yet, these arguments seemed to
be on an equal footing, each of them, all of them. However, this was not satisfactory for purposes of "confirming" the "common opinion," for there was no criterion by means of which to choose one over the others. Though all were, in greater or less degree, looking to "reason" or claiming for religion and its essentials a basic "reasonableness," there was no such agreement, but wide difference, about what the essentials were and differences about the nature and status of man, the world, and God. Each of the alternative, divergent claims and arguments held to have established "the truth" of the matter with unquestionable certainty.

Apparently, at least at this point, Hume was committed to the belief that "truth" could be established, if only the correct "medium" or method could be found. That is, that truth could be discovered or established was not questioned. Rather, the question was "How?" "By what method or means?" The claims of "reason" or the method of "rationalism" were apparently taken by Hume at this time to be incapable of "establishing truth" and, perhaps, discovering it, in the area with which he was concerned. What was

62 Cf. much later, Hume's comment with reference to the human understanding and knowledge about its functions and objects: "There is a truth and falsehood in all propositions on this subject, and a truth and falsehood which lie not beyond the compass of human understanding." *Enquiry* CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. 1, p. 14.

63 With reference to this point, it is of interest to note what Hume puts in the mouth of Pamphilus, the youthful interlocutor of the Dialogues, in introducing that work. He
needed was a new method or "some new medium" by which resolu-
tion of the perplexities might be achieved and truth

remarks that "reasonable men may be allowed to differ where
no one can reasonably be positive." After affirming "the
being of a God," he comments: "But, in treating of this
obvious and important truth, what obscure questions occur
concerning the nature of that Divine Being, his attributes,
his decrees, his plan of providence. These have been al-
ways subjected to the disputations of men; concerning these
human reason has not reached any certain determination.
But these are topics so interesting that we cannot restrain
our restless enquiry with regard to them, though nothing
but doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction have as yet been
the result of our most accurate researches."* Hume's Dia-
logues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 128. This would certainly de-
scribe Hume's early struggle with "reason," i.e., with
rationalistic arguments for purposes of "confirming" the
common opinion on religious issues. I hesitate to say,
but cannot but wonder if this might not be a "page" from
Hume's "old manuscript book."

Hume's "old manuscript book" probably contained at
least attempts to prove or "confirm" belief in the existence
and attributes of a personal deity, a deity or God very much
like the God of Scottish Calvinism being preached and lec-
tured about in Hume's era. And, insofar as he attempted to
establish such "common opinion" by or on the foundation of
rationalistic argument, and other forms of argument, the
Dialogues may well constitute the development and outcome of
his thought "on this head" and on certain others. (This
work constitutes but one part of his mature treatment of re-
ligion, however.) Taking here that one "head," "doubts stole
in"—How could Reason demonstrate the existence and attri-
butes of a Being who is in principle unknown and unknowable,
the hidden and the revealed God? How can "faith" behold the
revealed God as the Unfathomable, the "hidden" God, who
though hidden is yet active and omnipresent? -How can a God
who is a severe and demanding and commanding Sovereign, such
a stern magistrate who has condemned some to "damnation" and
others to "salvation," apparently for no other reason than
that it be his caprice, be termed or even considered a moral
Deity? If the Deity be omnipotent and moral or benevolent,
why do suffering and evil exist in the world which is sup-
pposed to be his "providence"? Why must a religion that
offers so much to man, or at least to some men, and threa-
tens others with such consequences of terror and disaster,
consider "human nature" in such low esteem, i.e., see the
nature of man as "totally depraved," perhaps essentially so?
Why must its teachers and priests, its clergy, bear so much,
established. That at least the beginning of such a method was achieved or that an insight was reached as to how the problem might be attacked, is indicated by Hume's seemingly sudden "new scene of thought."

Hume reports that, concentrating on method, attempting to calm his former heights of restlessness and endeavoring to "cool my inflam'd imaginations, I began to consider how I sho'd proceed in my philosophical enquiries." He found that "moral philosophy" "labor'd under the same inconvenience that has been found in . . . natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, & depending more upon invention than experience." This discovery of analogical "inconvenience" resulted from his "new scene of thought" and his program of extensive "study, & reflection." Whereas "every one of or in the past consulted his fancy," "without regarding human nature," Hume now takes as a basic part of his reorientation that it is this formerly neglected "human nature" "upon which every" "conclusion must depend" in "moral philosophy." This formerly neglected "human nature,"

so incessantly upon the horrors and fears of the threats awaiting? That Hume moved from an essentially unconcerned conformity to a deeply concerned attempt to make sense out of, to explain or to establish the commonly held beliefs of religion, and that the lad became perplexed, does not seem surprising. That his "anxious search" involved him in methodological searches for resolution of these difficulties does not seem terribly odd or strange. But that from these struggles he acquired insights that would and did permit him to view the whole of "moral philosophy" as capable of being approached by a "new scene of thought" and a different method, apparently does seem quite strange to some.
he tells us, "therefore I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth" in the whole of "moral philosophy."64

These themes remained with Hume and he gave to his first published philosophical work the title: A Treatise of Human Nature: Being An Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects.65 In an advertisement for the first two "Books," published together, Hume remarks:

My design in the present work is sufficiently explain'd in the introduction.66

In this "introduction" Hume both explain his "design" for the Treatise and gives a general explanation of his method, in both its positive and negative aspects. Since this information is "revelatory" of what Hume considers that he wanted to do and attempted to do, it is worth close attention. It not only reflects, rather closely, a continuation of the concerns and themes held earlier, but also constitutes Hume's explanation of how he has or believes that he has proceeded in the basic part of his reoriented approach to "moral philosophy" and Hume's account of what he wants to cover and considers as especially relevant in his philosophical "system." In the advertisement Hume warns the

64Letters, ed. Greig, I, 16; Burton, Life, I, 35.
65Treatise, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. xi.
66Ibid., p. xii.
reader "that all the subjects there plann'd out to my self, are not treated of in these two volumes"; however, he continues, "I shall proceed to the examination of" the other areas of "moral philosophy" after this publication, i.e., these two parts. 67

Hume rather clearly points up the defects that he considers to characterize rationalistic method and systems, and does so in the earliest parts of the introduction.

'Tis easy for one of judgment and learning, to perceive the weak foundation even of those systems, which have obtained the greatest credit, and have carried their pretensions highest to accurate and profound reasoning. Principles taken upon trust, consequences lamely deduced from them, want of coherence in the parts, and of evidence in the whole, these are every where to be met with in the systems of the most eminent philosophers, and seem to have drawn disgrace upon philosophy itself. 68

And, again: "disputes are multiplied." Strangely, if it were not for the fact of human nature, "amidst all this bustle, 'tis not reason [i.e., "reasoned evidence" or "just reasoning",] which carries the prize, but eloquence," which is capable of "gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis." 69 In light of this, Hume explains, "if truth be at all within the reach of human capacity, 'tis certain

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., p. xvii.
69 Ibid., p. xviii.
"It must lie very deep and abstruse." He continues:

'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. '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, and could explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform on our reasonings. And these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them; and consequently we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason.

In the face of failures of other approaches, Hume explains:

Here then is the only expedient, from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method, which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or center of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may everywhere else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life. . . . 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 with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat

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70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. xix.
Thus, Hume is making a sweeping claim, viz., that "all the sciences," that is, every area of study that is capable of being studied by man, of being a "science," is to be seen as related to "human nature." "Human nature" is fundamental or foundational for the proper study and knowledge of all areas of claimed "knowledge"—the whole of "natural philosophy" and the whole of "moral philosophy"—including that from the area of natural religion. In other words, Hume proposes to establish and show the relevance of a new "logics" ("logics" included what today is considered to be methodology, epistemology, part of logic). Hume's "new logics," he claims, applies across-the-board and not just to one or more limited areas. "A compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new"—

And as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only foundation we can give this science itself must be laid on experience and observation. . . . the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects . . .

The work that Hume proposes to carry through—he has completed only part of it—in "moral philosophy" and with the "science of man" he considers even more significant than that of "natural philosophy" "on account of the greater

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72 Ibid., p. xx.
73 Ibid.
importance of that science i.e., the science of man and moral philosophy, as well as the necessity it lay under of such a reformation."74

For me it seems evident, that the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations. And tho' we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical.75

... We can give no reason for our most general and most refined principles, beside our experience of their reality; which is the reason of the mere vulgar ...76

But 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 artisans. None of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority. Moral philosophy has, indeed, this peculiar disadvantage, which is not found in the natural, that in collecting experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may arise. When I am at a lose to

74 Ibid., p. xx1.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. xxii.
know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. 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 disrupt the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from this phenomenon. We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension."

Here, then, I have quoted at length from the "Introduction" of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. There is no formal introduction included in his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*. However, there are other features of interest in the structures of the two works. Almost every student of Hume mentions sacrifice of problems, problems unsolved, and the inclusion of two sections on "theological issues" in the first *Inquiry*. And, as I noted earlier, the *Inquiry* usually comes out a poor, a very poor, second to the *Treatise*.

Now I direct attention to a few more facts, a further bit of conjecture (although I believe that most of it bears much more the status of fact), and some other structural comparisons. I repeat, I am not undertaking a fully detailed

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77Ibid., pp. xxii-xxiii.
comparison and analysis of these two valuable works. Rather, I am attending to a few parts of Hume's "design," and of the works—a few but important parts, which have not been noted universally.

Hume intended to include some "Reasonings concerning Miracles" in some form somewhere in the Treatise. But he withdrew them from the work and did not publish these "Reasonings" in the Treatise. This exclusion was made with regret and reluctance, except for the fear that Hume had of the public disfavor or offence to individuals that might be created by publishing them.\textsuperscript{78}

Hume conceived the Treatise as a system. But, he became disillusioned with the project. Hume says of the work "it fell dead-born from the Press."\textsuperscript{79} But this cannot have meant that it received no notice, reviews, and reading and discussion.\textsuperscript{80} Rather, Hume was disturbed over the fact that his work was not only misunderstood but also incomplete.

\textsuperscript{78}Ref. Burton, \textit{Life}, I, 63; \textit{Letters}, ed. Greig, I, 24, "L. to Henry Home, Dec. 2, 1737." As early as this date Hume was circulating this material, i.e., "some 'Reasonings concerning Miracles,'" at least to Henry Home. Hume remarks that "I have spread it out much more than the other parts of the work," i.e., the Treatise.

\textsuperscript{79}This remark was made by Hume in \textit{My Own Life}, and has generally been taken to indicate that the Treatise did not receive the popular sales that Hume had anticipated. It is frequent, as I have noted, that this is used to fortify the "fame" and "unworthy motive" line concerning Hume and his works.

\textsuperscript{80}Mossner has shown that it is far from true that the Treatise received no notice, reviews, or discussion. Ref. Mossner, \textit{Life of D. Hume}, chap 10, pp. 116ff.
and inadequate as an expression of his thought. Certainly that he began change and correction almost immediately is evident from his correspondence, the appendices published with Book III and his pruning of the work to essentials in the Abstract. Hume's dissatisfaction with the work and the project is hardly a matter of conjecture.  

Hume included two sections in the first Inquiry that were not mentioned in the text of the Treatise itself. They are not specifically mentioned in the Abstract of the Treatise either. Although Hume mentions the two sections or their topics neither in the Treatise text nor in the Abstract, he does in the "Introduction" to the Treatise where he presents his "design" and hopes for his "system." These two sections constitute integral parts of the Inquiry. (I will show this in Chapters III and IV.) Their exclusion from the Treatise constituted two major reasons for Hume's dissatisfaction with that work, or, more properly, the exclusion of one and not dealing with the other. And, Hume explicitly recommended the first Inquiry instead of the Treatise, Book I, as early as 1751 (as noted above, earlier). The first Inquiry was revised in 1750.

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81 Books I and II were published in 1730. Review and change, confession and explanation of dissatisfaction were included in appendices to Book III but referred to Book I especially; this was in 1740. The Abstract of the first publication, an anonymously published "review," pares the work to its very basic argument structure; here Hume, in 1740, prepares the way for transition to the first Inquiry.
Then, recall what I have indicated about Hume's early struggle and concerns with religious issues. Consider the "Introduction" of the Treatise, p. xix, where Hume expresses hope for improvements concerning natural religion:

And these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them . . .

Hume's plans for a system in multiple parts of the Treatise were sacrificed. The original title of Section XI in the 1748 edition of the Inquiry was "Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Religion." This was changed in the 1750 edition, to "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State." At about this time Hume had already started writing his Dialogues concerning Natural Religion and The Natural History of Religion. Section XI contains the basic concerns that were developed in both of these later works; Hume deals with the "practical consequences" of "natural religion" in these later works, and especially in the Natural History which was completed near the time of his second defeat at the hands of the orthodox clergy. The idea of "a providence" or special province of a deity is also dealt with in the Natural History.

It seems that there are some additional reasons, evidence of some merit, to consider the first Inquiry of more worth than it is usually thought to possess, and to consider the choice of the "specific context" a fair choice.
for its importance to Hume. Further, there seems to be some basis for the relation of method and religion, concern with belief, evidence, and human nature in his earlier thought, and that the place of these in the "specific context" bears considerable similarity to their place in Hume's earlier thought.

Now to Chapter III and an analysis of aspects of Hume's method.
CHAPTER III

METHOD FOR "THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE"

Hume's first Inquiry—and the method exemplified in it—is the result of a review of his philosophy, his mature evaluation of both the essential features of his philosophy and the examination and exemplification of his methodology. This is the scene of presenting the "more durable" and basic steps as well as an examination of the methodological credentials.

The method is more than a change of style, just as the aspects treated constitute more than omissions from his earlier ventures. Hume's philosophy is set against two fronts and his method must be one that is adequate to guide him between these two extremes. The setting is between credulity and scepticism, between dogmatism and Pyrrhonism, viz., a mitigated scepticism that involves correction of Pyrrhonism by common sense and credulity by reflection.

Hume's Abstract is a vehicle of transition, but it is not more than that. It shows or serves to show a transition between the stage of the Treatise and that of the first Inquiry. Hendel easily may make too much of the similarities and too little of the differences between Abstract
and Inquiry.¹ If what I have noted (in the last Chapter, e.g.) is accurate and of the significance that it seems to be, then there are vital additions in the Inquiry, made when Hume no longer submitted to his much regretted act of "cowardice."

Avoidance of Two Extremes

Troubled by Credulity, Aversion to Reason

Hume started his inquiry with those beliefs that the "vulgar" held by sheer "credulity." Yet this did not constitute satisfactory grounds for the inquiring Hume. The Rationalism of the Seventeenth Century, its truth claims and outgrowths in the early Eighteenth Century deeply impressed him. The personal struggles and development of this man provide some assistance for better understanding his philosophy and philosophical procedure.

Troubled by the credulity of the vulgar, Hume looked to Reason for answers to perplexities in the area of religion. He found only greater perplexities and contradictory truth claims. The result for Hume was a state of mind or attitude toward Reason that can only properly be termed aversion. As the word indicates, he was drawn to Reason, and yet ended in a dislike and distrust of Reason and its claims (at least) as far as the determination of any "solutions" in the area of moral philosophy is concerned.

¹Hume, Inquiry chU, ed. Hendel; ref. "Introduction."
The two sides of this attitude developed into part, a permanent part, of Hume's philosophical methodology, not alone but especially explicit in what could be termed his "mature philosophy." Attention to the pretentious claims of Reason is one aspect of Hume's treatment of each of the major areas of moral philosophy. Of special note here are his concepts and treatment of "science," "logic," ("logics" or, as might be said today, epistemology), "metaphysics," "religion," and "morality"--or perhaps we should say "logic," "morals and criticism," and "politics." As a general practice in method, Hume first attends to the arguments of Reason. Next, he shows that they do not speak to the point at issue, viz., some facet of "matter of fact and existence" or "moral reasoning." Hume seems to take particular pride in this continued bursting of the high-flying balloons of Reason, i.e., Rationalism. At the same time, he supplies what he considered to be a necessary corrective in methodology. Rational demonstration and "relations of ideas" were not (respectively) the appropriate method and not the appropriate domain of the moral philosopher, and it was a moral philosopher that Hume sought to be.

Perhaps it was due to the continued misunderstanding

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2Ref. e.g., Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. iv, part ii, p. 35; part i, pp. 25-26; sec. v, pp. 41, 43, 47; sec. vii, pp. 60-61, 70-73; sec. viii; sec. ix; sec. xii. These citations are by no means exhaustive but serve as illustrative of the point above. Note well that the first Inquiry has a special foundational place in Hume's philosophy and for his method.
of his primary division of "the objects of enquiry" and the kinds of "reasonings" that Hume persisted in this treatment of Reason; perhaps it was due to the firm entrenchment of the misuses of Reason in an area that was inappropriate for it. Certainly this is a continued part of Hume's philosophy and method. And, this persistence and "misuse" may well have been one of the bases for the charge of "sceptic" being hurled at Hume.

Scepticism

Again reflecting Hume's own experience, when the certainties of Reason are sacrificed, due to the contradictions of rationalists and arguments, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the loss and conclude that no truth, no knowledge, no certainty is attainable. Hume seems to take special pains to tell or show us that his position is not any version of extreme scepticism. In spite of this fact, though perhaps because Hume speaks so often of scepticism, interpreting him as an extreme sceptic or Pyrrhonist is not a phenomenon limited to past centuries (as will be noted in the first subsection, below).

The structural similarity of the Abstract and the first Inquiry I have noted already. In both of these works Hume mentions scepticism. But in each work he also tells
us that unqualified scepticism has a sure counter—human nature.\(^3\)

In the first *Inquiry* Hume has much to say about scepticism. He even highlights three sections by including the term "sceptical" in their titles. Sections IV, V, and XII are entitled, respectively, "Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding," "Sceptical Solution to These Doubts," and "Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy." This might lead us to suspect that scepticism, in some form, has some place in both Hume's method and his philosophy. If this is so, then to know both what form or type this is and what it is not seems of considerable importance.\(^4\)

Treating scepticism at this point in this study will embody certain disadvantages. Perhaps the chief of these is

\(^3\)This is the force of Hume's remark that "nature is too strong" for any philosophy that would attempt to "render us entirely Pyrrhonian." Ref. *Inquiry CHU*, ed. Hendel, "Abstract," p. 194. Ref., cf., *Inquiry CHU*, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xii, part iii, p. 160; cf. sec. v, part i, p. 41.

that this treatment will precede any detailed or interpretive analysis of Hume's "logic" and philosophy, and thus, such an analysis will not be available to utilize in explicating Hume's scepticism. However, the major advantage seems to outweigh this. By attending to Hume's position with respect to scepticism, we may well find a "key" for understanding and interpreting Hume's method and his philosophy—a key founded on internal evidence and supported by external evidence. But first it might be interesting to indicate a sampling of the range of stances taken on the question of Hume's scepticism and examples of kinds of treatment given to this issue. Pyrrhonism is far from neglected.

A sampling of stances.—James Drever emphasizes the ease with which the originality of "Hume's Pyrrhonism" is apt to be over-estimated.\(^5\) Drever attempts a corrective by considering not alone Montaigne and Bayle, but Hume's "other ancestors" and the fact that the "pattern of European thought"
during the century and a half which preceded the publication of Hume's Treatise... [Shows that] Pyrrhonism was never far beneath the surface and reveals itself readily to any study which is not confined to the more strictly philosophical writers.\(^6\)

He traces the perplexities caused by the Sixteenth Century,


\(^6\)Ibid.
and with the continuing underlying problem of faith and
reason, the popularity of sceptical style, the emotional ab-
horrence of scepticism. Drever states, in his concluding
paragraph, that:

... Hume must have seen how the ways of escape
from the Pyrrhonist position that had at first
seemed hopeful turned out in the end to be blind
alleys.7

Philip Stanley finds that "Hume called himself a
sceptic" even though "parts of his writings do not bear him
out."8 However, Stanley concludes his investigation with
the summary report that not only was Hume a sceptic, but he
"was six sceptics."9 Two of these are "negligible," but
the other four divide into "two incompatible pairs."

One pair, the sceptics of the textbooks and the
commentators, the Cleanthes of the Dialogues, is
probably the "real" Hume, if by this is meant the
dominant Hume. This Hume can not to-day be called
a sceptic at all, unless in historical perspective.
The other pair of sceptics is the Pyrrhonist, the
recessive Hume, rising at intervals to trouble the
dominant Hume.10

Constance Maund presents another stance, and one
that does not seem to be at all unpopular. Maund cannot
have any patience with those misguided critics and commenta-
tors who diminish the importance of Hume's scepticism or who

7Ibid., p. 50.
8Stanley, Journal of Philosophy, XXXII (Aug. 1,
1935), 421.
9Ibid., p. 431.
10Ibid.
speak of Hume's "mitigated" scepticism by using methods that:

suggest that Hume was advocating a watered down version of someone else's theory. Nothing could be more misleading. Hume's sceptical theory has much in common with other sceptical theories but in its complete form it is unique in the history of philosophy. The notion of "mitigated scepticism" and more especially of "Hume's mitigated scepticism" seems to me to be unfortunate in that it disguises this fact and so is a menace to understanding.\(^{11}\)

I must admit the probable relevance of Maund's comments:

I would much prefer to write only of Hume's explanation of his position and his reasons for it, and not at all of the psychology of our reactions to it. Unfortunately the latter seem to be an inescapable hindrance both to understanding Hume's views and to using them.\(^{12}\)

The neglect of Hume's sceptical theory and the treatment of it as a milder form of other scepticisms, express to me an emotional rather than an intellectual response. Scepticism threatens our assurance and so is distasteful to us. We cannot completely reject the possibility that there is truth in it so we make the situation a little less uncomfortable by talk of "mitigation." This is an expedient for quieting our fears and protecting our self-esteem. It also blurs our understanding.\(^{13}\)

What scepticism is, or means, is something which we perhaps hardly begin to understand, but it is in some sense, or in some part, either true and significant, or it is not so. Mitigation is not a resolution of this issue.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{11}\)Maund, Revue Internationale Philosophie, VI (Sommaire, 1952), 171.

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 172.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., pp. 172-173.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 173.
I must admit the probable relevance of these comments, and indeed I find considerable sympathy with certain aspects of them. Still, however, it seems that this opposition and proposal to dispose of all traces of "mitigation" would not be too incorrectly described, perhaps, as founded just as much on an emotional response and psychological reaction as those positions to which objection is made. And this, I believe, serves just as much as a "hindrance . . . to understanding Hume's views . . . ."

Maund is impatient with persons who make too easy conclusions, decisions, and qualifications "for which there seems inadequate textual justification." This emphasis on the need for adequate textual justification is laudable; the place of internal evidence is high for philosophical procedures. To attempt to bring explanatory and interpretive clarity to long perplexing problems by special insight and by appeal to adequate internal evidence seems a noble goal; and, it would not seem to weaken the case if support were found in external evidence and in the philosopher's "biography." However, neither Maund nor anyone else, it seems to me, can consistently (1) maintain that Hume held an unqualified, extreme or Pyrrhonistic scepticism, and (2) remain loyal to the textual and external evidence of Hume's (1) philosophy and "logics," (11) and the full exercise of his

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15 Ibid., p. 170.
method, and (iii) the applications made and consequences drawn by Hume himself. When such a position is attempted, there seems to be not only the need for considerable ingenuity but also a "believeing beyond the evidence" or drawing conclusions "for which there seems inadequate textual justifica-
tion."

The range of treatment indicated by these three writers includes: judgment that Hume was unoriginal but of a certainty, inescapably an extreme sceptic or Pyrrhonist; that Hume was multiple sceptics, that he was and was not a sceptic and a Pyrrhonist; and, that Hume was an extreme, not a "mitigated," sceptic and that this position of his was ab-solutely unique. These interpretations may serve as en-lightening contrasts to what Hume discloses as his actual position.

Hume's guide.--Hume is often his own best critic, and it seems that this is relevant for the present issue. Indeed, I believe that it is not so much a matter of what we decide\(^\text{16}\) but rather of seeing or discovering the guide, or "key," that Hume himself provides.

In Section XII of the first Inquiry Hume, recogniz-
ing the ease with which the label "sceptic" might be (and had been) misapplied to him and to his philosophy, faces the

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\(^{16}\) As Basson holds, D. Hume, p. 140: "Hume professes to be, and is in fact, a Sceptic. But such pigeon-holing is of no value whatever unless we have decided exactly what a Sceptic is, and in what sense the term is applicable to Hume."
problem squarely by considering the "very natural question":

What is meant by a sceptic? And how far it is possible to push these philosophical principles of doubt and uncertainty?  

(Perhaps of even greater importance is the integral part this section plays in both the Inquiry itself and Hume's philosophy as a whole. However, this cannot be seen fully until Chapters IV, V, and VI.)

Hume then undertakes an evaluation of various "species" of scepticism, pointing up both weaknesses and strengths, both limitations and values. One of the seemingly confusing things about this treatment is that much of what Hume speaks of under headings of "extreme" scepticism seems to be a repetition of, or at least markedly similar to, points that Hume made earlier in his own writings. Why is this? The answer that has been given frequently is that this means that Hume was clinching the fact that he was fully Pyrrhonistic--Hume's denials, explanations, and protestations to the contrary notwithstanding.

We who admire Hume the philosopher, and probably some who do not, have probably read this section dozens of times and yet may have failed to appreciate the full significance of it. In proposing to treat Hume's scepticism prior to an exposition of his philosophy (i.e., "the specific context") and in relation to his methodology, I made the "new discovery"  

17 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 149.
that I had repeatedly missed the point of this section and the skill of Hume speaking through it. (Although this way of understanding Hume now seems "evident" to me, I recognize the possibility that I may be, as Hume felt himself to be at times, too prone to say at this point "'tis evident.") If I am correct, then several of the more forced and restrictive interpretations of Hume and his works are placed in a different (I am tempted to say, their proper) perspective. Put somewhat differently, behind all the possibilities of "literary style," "irony," "special devices," "fame seeking," etc., etc., there is the stroke of a master philosopher—Hume.

In a very real sense what Hume is doing here is sceptical. He is exercising scepticism upon his sceptical philosophical principles and consequences. And, in doing this, he sets the basis of interpretation by means of which to read those points of importance in his analysis, explanation, method, philosophy, application and consequences. Hume reviews the very principles of the philosophy that he has propounded, showing how consequences further than he is willing to go may be drawn by using forms of scepticism other than the scepticism he embraces. He is playing the part of the sceptic to his proclaimed sceptical philosophy, pointing out both its values and its limitations, its strengths and usefulness. The "mitigated scepticism" of which he speaks is an indication of, a basic label placed
upon, precisely this activity—an exercise of the moderate form of each of the preceding types, or "excessive scepticism" "corrected by common sense and reflection."18

This in no way "robs" Hume or his scepticism of significance; rather, it enhances both. It is an advance beyond the credulity that troubled him and an advance beyond the tempting excessive scepticism that could result from the conflicting Rationalistic arguments. (Hume did use the phrase "reconciling project" in his first Inquiry.) Nor does this rob Hume or his scepticism of all elements of uniqueness, for what he proposes is not any one of the kinds that he considers held by others in an extreme form. Here is a case of Hume taking the sceptical aspect of his method and consciously using it upon itself, or a scepticism of scepticism. This, then, constitutes (and may constitute a recognition of) two levels of method, not just one. Here is not something that "we decide" but rather what seems to be the key for understanding Hume provided by Hume himself—Hume's guide.

Hume first considers Cartesian doubt or "antecedent" scepticism, which has the avowed purpose of avoiding error and pronouncing judgment too quickly. It consists in a doubt that is universal and is enforced prior to all inquiry. All opinions and principles previously held and also human

faculties are doubted. The sole way of establishing the veracity of these "faculties" is by an assured deductive process from an indubitable first or "original principle."

Hume criticizes this kind of scepticism by holding that it cannot be attained, and even if it could, we could never escape from it. First, there is no single, superior principle of the character demanded here. Second, even if there were, no progress could be made beyond that principle except by using the parts of the human understanding the veracity of which is held in doubt. Third, no process of "reasoning could ever bring us to a state of assurance and conviction upon any subject."\(^{19}\)

The value of this kind is recognized, by Hume, chiefly as a requisite propaedeutic to "the study of philosophy"—but only when this species of scepticism loses its extreme nature and becomes "more moderate." Then it provides the necessary corrective for biased judgment and prejudice. It provides caution in procedure and frequent reviews of progress to assure accuracy of method, principles, conclusions and consequences. These values Hume appreciates, even though his appreciation for Rationalistic "self-evident principles" is nil.

"Consequent" scepticism, that kind that follows study of "sciences and enquiry," is considered next. This

\(^{19}\)Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 150.
type supposedly arises when it is discovered that our "men­
tal faculties" are totally unreliable or are unable to at­
tain final solutions to problems of "speculation." Apparent­
ly Hume had a broader meaning of "mental faculties," for he
notes how "a certain species of philosophers" brings into
dispute "even our very senses" and doubts the "maxims of
common life," and then spends most of the rest of Part I
discussing the problems associated with the senses. The
usual "trite topics," e.g., bent ear in water, Hume does not
consider of sufficient worth to treat; he only notes that
all they show is that the senses are not to be relied upon
completely but need the correction of reason and items of
the situation.

There are, he tells us, "more profound arguments
against the senses, which admit not of so easy a solution." Here he discusses chiefly two topics: belief in external
existences and the question of primary and secondary quali­
ties. In both he shows the bankruptcy of argument to give
assurance, and the opposition of "reason" and "natural in­
stinct." What he is highlighting is "that momentary amaze­
ment and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of
all extreme scepticism," (and not just "Dr. Berkeley's").

20Ibid.
21Ibid., p. 151.
22Ibid., p. 155, n. 1.
In Part II Hume considers scepticism related to "abstract" and to "moral" reasoning and evidence. He opens Part II this way:

It may seem a very extravagant attempt of the sceptics to destroy reason by argument and ratiocination; yet is this the grand scope of all their enquiries and disputes. They endeavour to find objections, both to our abstract reasonings, and to those which regard matter of fact and existence.23

Hume thus makes and follows a division here that is rather markedly similar to earlier divisions.24 He attempts to speak to the areas of natural and moral philosophy, and of the areas called "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact and existence" and of the type of reasonings used in the latter two, viz., demonstrative and "moral reasoning." His first consideration here has special relevance for natural philosophy and for "geometricians and metaphysicians." The ideas of space and time are treated in relation to the concept of infinite divisibility. The study of these ideas is the chief object of these sciences, Hume says; yet when they are posed against the concept of infinite divisibility, which is so cogently reasoned, reason is amazed and uncertain. On the one hand is common sense with its seemingly clear idea; on the other, cogent argument; the result, confusion. "Yet still reason must remain restless, and unquiet,

23 Ibid., pp. 155-156.

24 Ibid., p. 157. Note the similarity of this to points made about the opposition of reasoned argument and natural instinct in part i. Cf., pp. 25 & 34 with p. 157.
even with regard to that scepticism, to which she is driven by these seeming absurdities and contradictions.\(^{25}\) It is interesting to find that Hume, in a footnote,\(^ {26}\) had "dropped" a "hint" of a way toward moving beyond this scepticism, and exemplifies a "restless, and unquiet" reason that stops not in "amazement and suspense."

The first class of "objections to moral evidence, or to the reasoning concerning matter of fact" is the "popular." (Today, with our over-zealous proneness to divide everything into theory and practical, this class would probably be termed the practical or applied, while Hume's other class, the "philosophical," would probably be termed the theoretical.) These are based upon the contradictions, oppositions, and variations of opinions, judgments, and sentiments of a man and of men in different times and places, and emphasize "the natural weakness of the human understanding."\(^ {27}\) The weakness of these objections is shown by the fact that we employ reasonings of this nature, viz., of matter of fact and existence, constantly in ordinary life, and could not continue living if we did not.

The great subverter of Pyrrhonism or the excessive principles of scepticism is action, and employment, and the occupations of common life. These principles may flourish and triumph in the schools; where

\(^{25}\)Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 157; ref. n. 24, just above, also.

\(^{26}\)Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 158, n. 1.

\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 158.
it is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible, to refute them. But as soon as they leave the shade, and are put in opposition to the more powerful principles of our nature, they vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined sceptic in the same condition as other mortals.  

"The sceptic," says Hume, therefore, had better keep within his proper sphere, and display those philosophical objections, which arise from more profound researches. Here he seems to have ample matter of triumph; . . .  

Here, again, a similarity to Part I appears, this time on the matter wherein the sceptic, at least "the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph." It is at this point that Hume lists several parts of his philosophy or at least several parts of that basic portion of his philosophy that he puts forth in the first Inquiry. The sceptic, then, seems to have ample matter of triumph; while he justly insists, that all our evidence for any matter of fact, which lies beyond the testimony of sense or memory, is derived entirely from the relation of cause and effect; that we have no other idea of this relation than that of two objects, which have been frequently conjoined together; that we have no argument to convince us, that objects, which have, in our experience, been frequently conjoined, will likewise, in other instances, be conjoined in the same manner; and that nothing leads us to this inference but custom or a certain instinct of our nature; which it is indeed difficult to resist, but which, like other instincts, may be fallacious and deceitful. While

28 Ibid., pp. 158-159.
29 Ibid., p. 159.
the sceptic insists upon these topics, he shows his force. . . .

Now, it is interesting that this may be taken as the confession of Hume that he was completely and in extreme form sceptical. Indeed, there is enough of his "logics" included in this to lead one to suspect that this is the case. However, such treatment of this passage seems to lift it out of context, to consider it completely out of relation to the rest of the last sentence, the last part of the paragraph, the rest of the section and chapter, and out of joint with the other aspects of Hume's philosophy and method. Let us note the rest of that sentence, and of the paragraph, and certain points of the immediately following paragraph. Hume continues:

While the sceptic insists upon these topics, he shows his force, or rather, indeed, his own and our weakness; and seems, for the time at least, to destroy all assurance and conviction. These arguments might be displayed at greater length, if any durable good or benefit to society could ever be expected to result from them.32

For here is the chief and most confounding objection to excessive scepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it; while it remains in its full force and vigour. . . . An extreme sceptic or Pyrrhonian cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind; or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. . . . It is

31 Ibid., p. 159.
32 Ibid.
true; so fatal an event is very little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same, in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect, or with those who never concerned themselves in any philosophical researches. When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself, and to confess, that all his objections are mere amusement, and can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections, which may be raised against them.53

After having presented this groundwork in Parts I and II, after having pointed up that we are to be sceptical of "excessive scepticism," after having spelled out the limitations of Pyrrhonism and "hinted at" possible advantages of "more moderate" forms, Hume spells out the uses and the advantages of "a more mitigated scepticism" in the first two paragraphs of Part III.34

"Mitigate" means to soften, to render or become mild or milder, to make or become less severe or harsh. It is this meaning that Hume seems to be using here when he speaks of the advantages of "a more mitigated scepticism or academical philosophy." These advantages and this mitigation

33 Ibid., pp. 159-160.
34 This, indeed, is not to deny the relevance of the rest of this part of the concluding section. I will have a bit more to say about this later, in chap. iv, below.
are results of Pyrrhonism or "excessive scepticism" "corrected by common sense and reflection," or corrected by reference to life. What Hume seems to mean is that the two, Pyrrhonism and the events of ordinary action and the conduct of human life, have or should have a corrective influence on one another, that the two should be seen as existing in a polar relationship. This would avoid the extremes of a too easy dogmatism, on the one hand, and an attitude and stance of extreme scepticism that is out of touch with life, on the other hand. These were extremes that were abhorrent to Hume both in his philosophy and in his life.

The two sets of advantages, both of which Hume has already indicated, at least in part, and both of which have methodological import, are these. First, dogmatism will be avoided, opposite opinions will be considered, prejudices avoided, modesty of self and principles will be instituted, and greater caution will characterize procedures, when men attend to the "strange infirmities of human understanding." This should serve also to give "the learned" a proper perspective of themselves and their studies and conclusions, viz., when they realize

the universal perplexity and confusion, which is inherent in human nature. In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner. 36

36 Ibid., pp. 161-162.
And there are more. The second set of advantages which may be the natural result of the Pyrrhonian doubts and scruples, is the limitation of our enquiries to such subjects as are best suited to the narrow capacity of human understanding. . . . A correct judgement . . . confines itself to common life, and to such subjects as fall under daily practice and experience; . . . To bring us to so salutary a determination, nothing can be more serviceable, than to be once thoroughly convinced of the force of the Pyrrhonian doubt, and of the impossibility, that anything, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it. Those who have a propensity to philosophy, will still continue their researches; because they reflect, that, besides the immediate pleasure, attending such an occupation, philosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodized and corrected. But they will never be tempted to go beyond common life, so long as they consider the imperfection of those faculties which they employ, their narrow reach, and their inaccurate operations.37

Further comments.—In what, then, does Hume's scepticism consist? He was sceptical in that he held to the complete irrelevance of Reason, i.e., Rationalism and demonstrative reasoning, for the area he termed "matters of fact and existence."38 He was sceptical in that he held that scepticism in its extremes or "excessive" form was useless and to be avoided, and if pursued in common life would have unacceptable consequences. Both of these he considered out of touch with life. He was sceptical in that he exercised the method or attitude of scepticism upon extreme

37Ibid., p. 162.

38It must be noted that Hume seems sceptical in yet another sense or area, viz., of "empirical reasoning." I will say more about this in the next section (below), when I consider in what sense Hume's method was "experimental."
scepticism itself. He was sceptical in that he called attention to the fact that the human understanding has certain limitations. He was sceptical in that he held that "assurance" was most well-founded in only certain areas. He was sceptical in that he opposed dogmatism and proposed tolerance, undogmatically when and where possible.

Yet these are hardly the tenets of "excessive scepticism." And, it seems to constitute further evidence in support of "Hume's guide," and at the same time reflect accurately Hume's actual procedure (method and philosophy), to note that, in a most unsceptical way, Hume accepts and uses those very concepts, or, if you will, ideas, beliefs, and "reasonings," concerning which he was most critical or "sceptical." Hume uses cause and effect reasoning. He relies strongly on the uniformity of nature; he holds that human nature has been, is, and will be remarkably "the same"—that the future will resemble the past. He depends greatly upon history, the testimony of men. He uses and depends upon the evidence of experience, accepting it as "evidence for" his principles and conclusions. Although

39 Cf. Hume's protest: "I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that any thing might arise without a cause." Burton, Life, I, 97-98.

40 Consider the (possible) relevance of the (questioned) quotation as a description of both Hume and his philosophic method: "Though I throw out my speculation to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet, in other things, I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine." Burton, Life, I, 294.
(I would insist) the critical assessment of the "human understanding" was a requisite propaedeutic to all other endeavor and although the critical strain remained, it seems an undeniable fact that Hume the critic did not stop Hume the constructive philosopher.

In What Sense "Experimental"?

It is obvious and well known that Hume makes much of "the Experimental Method" as the way he attempts to establish "the science of man" or "the science of human nature," the foundation of "all the sciences." It is, however, less obvious just in what way or ways his procedure is and/or is meant to be "experimental." Basson comments:

But if we read Hume's works, we do not find any accounts of 'careful and exact experiments,' nor do we find any 'cautious observations of men's behaviour.'\(^1\)

Yet, any criticism of Hume and his method along the lines that his was not a so-called "experimental science" (based on a model existing some two hundred years after Hume) or that he does not "do what we should now call experimental psychology"\(^2\) seems to me to be misplaced.

It is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a detailed analysis of Newton's work and of the point by point similarities and differences that may relate and


\(^{2}\) Ibid.
differentiate Newton and Hume and their procedures. However, it is of importance to note just what it was about "natural philosophy" and its method that Hume held in such high esteem that he would attempt to employ the method in his treatment of "moral philosophy"—or, perhaps, an analogical form.

Natural philosophy had come increasingly to rely upon what was called "observation and experiment." The following elements can be found in its procedure: a number of "observations" of phenomena were collected; from a "study" of these, explanatory hypotheses were "discovered." Then, these "experimentally based" hypotheses were referred back to other "experiments" or observations of phenomena. And, as the scope of the latter increased, the hypotheses serving to explain more of these "experiments," the hypotheses were considered to be increasingly confirmed, supported, and adequate. Simplicity, few "principles," was an ideal sought. Thus, from a number of experienced particulars, a few "principles" were "discovered." These "principles" reveal the pattern of operation of the phenomena being considered. Then, these principles are used as, or lifted to the status of, generalizations, and then referred back to further experience of phenomena. The move is from

\[43\] N. Kemp Smith has presented, in less than a dozen pages, certain important relations between Newton and Hume with respect to method and "experiment." Ref. Phil. of D. Hume, pp. 50-51, 52-62.
particular to generalization to particular, and—so it was believed—all based on the foundation of experience. The "mysterious" and the "occult" and the question of "final causes" are avoided. These features and this procedure caught Hume's fancy; at least it may be said that he attempted to institute these in the "science of human nature," the foundation of "moral philosophy" and "all the sciences."

In his discussion of "The Meaning Hume attaches to the Term 'Experiment'," Kemp Smith says that:

for Hume, the term 'experimental' is virtually equivalent to the term 'empirical,' but it is a stronger term, carrying with it the suggestion of a deliberate collecting of observations, sufficient in number and more especially in variety, to serve as a reliable basis for generalization. Like Newton, he lays no emphasis on the hypothetical, speculative factor, without which we should have no questions to ask, and consequently no criteria for determining which observations we may most profitably make. He is so bent upon eulogising experience, at the expense of speculation, that this feature of controlled direction of enquiry receives no attention.

Here, again, Kemp Smith has particular reference to Hume's Treatise. This should be noted well. It is not quite true

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46 Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, p. 62.
of Hume's mature philosophy that "he lays no emphasis on the hypothetical, speculative factor."\textsuperscript{47} The Abstract, born as it was in the midst of publication arrangements for the Treatise and other events, including the beginning of a rethinking of his philosophy, still bears the mark of a much enthused Hume. He is still willing to attribute to himself the marvelous title of "inventor" (with reference to the principles of association) and marvels at his many "new discoveries."\textsuperscript{48} The tone is considerably "mitigated" in his later works.\textsuperscript{49} I must remark, however, that Kemp Smith calls attention to some very important aspects of Hume and his method. Indeed, they may well possess far greater importance and more significant consequences than their author realized.

First, consider the term "experimental." Kemp Smith seems to recognize that even while he calls it "virtually equivalent to the term 'empirical'," the equivalence of the two will not be satisfactory. I suggest that we substitute "experiential" for the term "experimental"—but even here further explanation is needed. Kemp Smith is quite right in emphasizing Hume's "bent upon eulogising experience."

And, following the suggestion for substitution, it is clear

\textsuperscript{47}E.g., Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, secs. i, xii.


\textsuperscript{49}E.g., Hume's first Inquiry, Dialogues, and Natural History.
that Hume considered his method to be "experiential" on the following counts: the source of criticism of other methods; the source of data collected for study; the source from which principles are derived; the source of "experiments" for confirmation; the locale for application of conclusions; and the source of confirmation of his whole discussion of method--sort of a combination of vindication of method on two levels.

Two Levels

Somewhat earlier I noted that there are or seem to be two levels of operation in Hume's methodology. One of his chief endeavors in the first Inquiry (and a recurrent theme in other works) is to disclose the inadequacies and inappropriateness of formerly reigning and commonly used methods. And a related endeavor is to replace these with an adequate and appropriate method. In the process of these endeavors, and at the same time, Hume is discussing method and he is using a method. If labels are needed, we could term these two levels "the method as discussed" and "the method as used." This distinction, its consequences, and the relation of the two levels require some further comment.

It would seem that Hume could discuss method (and methods) and render considerable critical (negative) and

50 Ref. above, p. 125.
corrective (positive) service. Yet, at the same time, it would seem possible that his progression and treatment "as a whole" as well as particular parts, (though not all parts) could suffer limitations due to the limitations of the method he is using in discussing method.

It is not unpopular to consider that Hume is basically correct in his discussion of method. However, along with this, apparently, goes the tacit admission that his method as used is also correct. Indeed, it is the latter that is the logically prior; and so it was with Hume. In this level, which is the more basic, reside the beliefs, convictions, and, I almost dare say, biases of Hume—and perhaps others of us. What I have termed "the method as discussed" follows from and is based upon "the method as used."

Hume conceives that his "foundation" work (that is, the first Inquiry) is a setting of, and his other works are further explications of having set, "the proper province of human reason." How could this be achieved? By "an accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties of human nature." And how could this be achieved? Considering how Hume proceeds, it seems that his response must be: "by the experimental of experiential method."

52 Ibid., p. 13; cf. p. 12.
Before going on, perhaps I should consider two objections that may be posed to this attributed response. The two seemingly come from opposing interpretations of Hume, yet may be more closely related than appears at first. The first may be posed in the form of a retort that this is really nothing new, for Hume clearly says he is concerned with the "experimental method." Or, the second may be put in this way: this response (that I have attributed to Hume) cannot be correct, for Hume held that no arguments, even those from experience, justify the inferential step taken by the mind.

There is an element of accuracy in each of these objections. But there is also an element of inaccuracy in each of these objections. In one sense, the first is quite right. What I have attributed to Hume is nothing new; rather it is as old as the work of Hume, which is where I consider it to be grounded. However, what has not been clearly seen, I believe, is the full force of this response and of the two levels of methodological involvement of Hume. Part of this I have already indicated and more should be seen in dealing with the second objection, to which I now turn.

There seems to be much in the second objection. I noted earlier⁵³ that more consideration would have to be given to Hume's apparent scepticism of the reasonings from

⁵³Ref. above, p. 134, n. 38.
experience; here, in relation to the second objection, seems the appropriate place for some further attention to that topic. Hume distinguishes Reason or rationalism and demonstrative reasoning and its certainty from Experience and experimental-experiential reasoning and its degree of assurance. Even though he says that all reasonings in "matter of fact and evidence" seem dependent upon "cause and effect," and that this is apparently or seems to be founded in "experience," he seems to say also that:

our conclusions from that experience of cause and effect are not founded on reasoning or any process of the understanding.54

Yet, one of the most interesting things here—although it could be said fairly that apparently it has not been one of the most obvious—is that Hume does not stop at this point.55 This fact, the details involving it and the details involved in it, what Hume goes on to, how he has arrived here and how he goes on, are of major importance both for understanding Hume and his method and for providing further exemplification of Hume's central concern with human nature, belief, and evidence.

Hume starts with human nature. He attempts to

54 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 32; et passim. Notice that Hume entitled this section, in accord with its purpose, "Sceptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding."

examine the human understanding and the operations of the human species in an area he labels moral philosophy or matters of fact and existence. Full, demonstrative, certainty, he finds, does not characterize what has been termed knowledge in this area. Yet, in spite of this and the fact that no chain of argument can be found to establish this type of confidence, man continues to believe. Why? Hume undertakes an investigation of this "subject worthy of curiosity," viz., he determines

to enquire what is the nature of that evidence which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory. This part of philosophy, it is observable, has been little cultivated, either by the antients /sic/ or moderns; . . .56

Hume was enough in touch with human nature to realize that man continues to believe or place assurance upon so-called knowledge-claims or experiential inferences, even though they lack justification or establishment by argument. Hume proceeded to search out "principles" by means of which this aspect of "human nature" could be explained.57 These principles were to serve as explanation of this phenomenon of belief, and Hume believed that he had "discovered" principles that were just as much experientially based as were any discovered prior to this stage.

Now, recall my suggestion of the two levels of


57 E.g., ref. Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 42.
method in Hume. How does Hume discover the "fact" that even argument based on experience is inadequate to justify the inference? By appeal to experience—even while saying that here experience is and must remain mute. While showing the inadequacy of the experimental, or rather, the experiential method in discussion, Hume uses the experiential method to establish this conclusion, and, indeed, to proceed beyond this conclusion. In other words, though at one level Hume holds that we cannot use arguments from experience to justify inference in experience, there being no "reasoned" step, yet Hume uses arguments from experience to explain the bases of inferences made (reasons about the step) by appeal to the canons of experience. Though the step be not "rational" in either the Rationalistic or the Empiricistic senses, yet Hume believed there to be a rationale and this he endeavored to supply by use of "experiments" and the experiential method.

The "Abstract" and "Speculative"

We have seen that Kemp Smith holds that Hume "lays no emphasis on the hypothetical, speculative factor" and that he is "bent upon eulogising experience, at the expense of speculation, ..."58 And, I have suggested that this part of Kemp Smith's remark is not quite true of Hume's

58 Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, p. 62. Ref. above, pp. 138-140. I have already noted that Kemp Smith gives great emphasis to the Treatise.
mature philosophy. A word of further explanation seems in order.

The Hume of the Abstract, talking about the Hume of the Treatise, says, with pride:

he talks with contempt of hypotheses and insinuates that such of our countrymen as have banished them from moral philosophy have done a more signal service to the world than my Lord Bacon, whom he considers as the father of experimental physics.59

Yet the Hume of the first Inquiry begins that work with a consideration of the speculative, "abstruse philosophy," and one that is not entirely negative. The mature Hume does object to the "abstract," the "abstruse," the "speculative," the "metaphysical," and "remote," the "airy sciences." But his objections seem more directed; the point of his objection to these is that they are—or have been—treated without due relation and reference to experience, both as a basis and as applied.

Indulge your passion for science, ... but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society.60

Hume is himself engaged in a "speculative" endeavor in the work of the first Inquiry; and, yet, it is almost as if he recounting his own experience, when he continues:

Abstruse thought and profound researches I [i.e., "nature"] prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you,

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60 *Enquiry* ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 9.
and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man. 61

Hume further objects to the "obscurity" and "ambiguity" involved in the "abstract" reasonings. He proposes to bring clarity to the terms and concepts involved by referring all to the canonical court of experience. 62

On the one hand, Hume, though operating speculatively, does not emphasize this side greatly. This is due to what he considered to have been the gross overemphasis on and the inappropriateness of a "speculation" that was not based on experience; such "speculation" had reigned serene far too long. On the other hand, though he does not applaud speculation wildly, nonetheless, the mature Hume seems to be at least more aware of the fact that he is engaged in an endeavor that is speculative in part.

Indeed, I believe that a case, a case of no little cogency, could be made for Hume having attempted "a reconciling project" in his mature philosophy; and, further, for his believing that his method was adequate for the realization of such a project. The dawning of this hoped for change that "would be easily able to reconcile all parties"

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., e.g., pp. 51, 21-22, 26-27, 38, 9-11, 12-16. Hume largely fulfills this proposal in secs. vii and viii.
can be noted as early as the Abstract. The structure and perspective of the first Inquiry show that, by this later date, the project has developed considerably. I have called attention to Hume's "mitigated" scepticism in the setting of this (later) work; here is a significant advance beyond the dead-end sceptical dilemma of the Treatise. And Hume explicitly uses the term "reconciling" at other rather enlightening points in the first Inquiry. Let us consider one such point.

The first section of that work bears the title "Of the Different Species of Philosophy." After subjecting both the "abstruse" and the "easy" "species of philosophy" to criticism in both senses—it should be remembered that "criticize" has both a negative and a positive sense—Hume concludes the section with the following remarks about his own "enquiry."

But as, after all, the abstractness of these speculations is no recommendation, but rather a disadvantage to them, and as this difficulty may perhaps be surmounted by care and art, and the avoiding of all unnecessary detail, we have, in the following enquiry, attempted to throw some light upon subjects, from which uncertainty has hitherto deterred the wise, and obscurity the...


64 It is interesting to note that in the "Appendix" which was added later to the Treatise, there is, mixed in with the insoluble problems, the "dilemmas" and "difficulties," also mention of "modest scepticism"—and a tone that may well indicate the beginning of a philosophical "rethinking" process. At the least, certainly there is a recognition of dissatisfaction and of unsatisfactory solutions.
ignoreant. Happy, if we can unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound enquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty. And still more happy, if, reasoning in this easy manner, we can undermine the foundations of an abstruse philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served only as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error.

Hume is saying that he is dealing with "abstract" "speculations" "in the following enquiry." This, I believe, has generally been ignored. Relatedly, the last sentence has not infrequently been misread to support the position that Hume was unreservedly opposed to all elements and aspects of all that was "abstruse" and "speculative." It is at least interesting to note that "all" does not appear, but rather the terms that are used in the phrases in question are "an abstruse philosophy." Perhaps one could hardly imagine a more damning criticism of a dogmatic Rationalism that Hume considered to be totally out of touch with "life" and "experience," yet taking this as what Hume decried, together with what he cited as the character of the "speculative" aspects or "speculations" of the "enquiry," hardly seem sufficient evidence for the further interpretation.

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65 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. 1, p. 16. Ref. also, e.g., sec. viii, p. 95, where Hume writes that he will "proceed in this reconciling project" now, at this point, "with regard to the question of liberty and necessity."
Selection and Confirmation

It might almost seem as if the "mitigation" occurring in Hume's later or mature philosophy might be indicative of certain misgivings about the adequacy of his method. It might appear that additional force is given by noting that this "mitigation" seems to have extended not only to scepticism, but seems to have touched other endearing delights of the earlier Hume. More mildness seems to be shown to "speculation," at least in one sense. This softening process seems to have touched even some of Hume's "new discoveries" and "inventions." It seems as if the experienced intolerance from others to his views may have touched his views, causing Hume to hold that where reasonable men cannot be certain tolerance is desirable, and, in writing "dialogue" causing him to show forth the "variety of lights" of the issue involved. Hume seems to have made or to make room for "propensities," "instincts," and "beliefs" that are "natural." Let us move this out of the "seems to

66 Cf., e.g., the difference in tone of the Abstract and the first Inquiry. Note, also, that Hume deleted seventeen paragraphs from section iii in later editions of the Inquiry. This left only three paragraphs to speak for what he had considered earlier of utmost importance. For the material that was excluded, ref. Inquiry chU, ed. Hendel, sec. iii, pp. 33-39. (It is true that this deletion was fairly late, being made after 1758 but before 1776. This, however, does not materially affect my point.)

67 Cf. the development of dialogue form in sec. xi of the first Inquiry, "A Dialogue," and Dialogues cMR.
be" area, and admit that there could be a case made for this side of Hume and his mature philosophy. 68

Yet there is a more persistent, obstinate, and per­tinacious side of Hume. A man's dreams are sacrificed only with the greatest of difficulty, and frequently they die more slowly than the man. It was one of Hume's dreams that the "experimental method" could be applied to the whole of "moral philosophy," and that he could do it. He seems not to have been willing to sacrifice his deeply impressed dream for, and faith in, his method as used, and commitments resident in this area. One or more of the following possibilities seem to characterize the situation. Hume seems unwilling to recognize the possibility that what he would find in "human nature" would be what his method would allow. Or, he was not willing to recognize the full significance of these consequences. Or, whether or not he was aware of these factors, he deliberately or unconsciously excluded those "experiments" that would constitute negative evidence for his case. Or, a prior or more basic commitment as to what constituted "human nature" was considered by Hume to be sufficient grounds for both methodological application and exclusion of negative instances. That these possibili­ties are decidedly relevant for the matter of Hume's selec­tion and what I will term his selective exclusion of

68 It is probable that this would apply to, and be most evident in, what I have termed Hume's "method as dis­cussed."
"experiments," in both the processes of collecting original "phenomena" and using "further experiments" for confirmation, will, I believe, be fairly evident. That these matters and this area may involve some major weaknesses of Hume's method and philosophy seem not to be so evident and seem not to have been universally recognized.

The very sweeping hope that Hume had for his method and the conviction that he had that there was a methodological analogue between natural philosophy and moral philosophy might lead us to expect that almost anything that could be cited would constitute evidence, i.e., anything "experimental." Yet here is a decidedly uneasy spot for the student of Hume. Though on the one hand he spends some effort noting the limitations of the analogue and "exceptions" to his position, on the other hand he treats the analogue as if it were precise and exercises a questionable care in the choice of citing or using "experiments."

Not infrequently and not inconsequentially, Hume goes through three stages in argument. First, he presents his case by saying that it is generally x, although there are such and such exceptions. Second, it is x almost without exception, or with exceptions that are of no import or that are scarcely worth considering. Third, x is the case—no mention of conflicting evidence even existing, let alone having either any import or having been considered. This constitutes at least part of Hume's forcefulness and his
convincing impact, but also part of his weakness in procedure, i.e., in method application.

Hume's use of his method does seem to bear some analogy to those accepted "sciences" that do not admit of "experimental isolation" and repetition of experiments at will. One contemporary philosopher says that "in such instances as these, we have to work on observations that are given to us in the normal course of things." However, whereas "statistical control" is now used often as a substitute for "controlled experiment," Hume treated the matter as if he had means sufficient for determining the relevant factors, for excluding those that are irrelevant, and for achieving a superior degree of certainty; today the latter are usually considered to be the laudable characteristics of only "the best" of "controlled experiments." What were these means, in what do they consist and from where did they come?

Along with Hume's conviction of the analogue of method goes another conviction of analogue. I would almost be tempted to say that it is contained in the methodological analogue, were it not for the possibility, indeed the strong probability, that the analogue of subject-matter is more basic for Hume than that concerning method. (There is


70 Ibid.
the possibility that Hume's metaphysical commitments are
even more basic.) The tacit assumption that "Human Nature"
is on a par with or is but one more part of "Nature" is
hinted at, implied, indicated, all but spoken, yet not
spoken. Thus, so it must have seemed to Hume, whatever
method is adequate to treat "nature" is adequate to treat
this part of nature. Thus, "human nature" can be as ade­
quately treated by the "experimental method" as can the sub­
ject matter of "natural philosophy." Hume believed that
"human nature" was on a par with or was a part of "nature." He
believed that the principles of operation in the two
areas were on a par or the same. He believed that the
principles of explanation were on a par or the same.

71 Cf. Marvin Fox, "Religion and Human Nature in the
Philosophy of David Hume," in Process and Divinity: the
Hartshorne Festschrift, ed. Wm. R. Reese and Eugene Freeman
(La Salle, Illinois: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1964),
pp. 561-577. Professor Fox emphasizes that Hume reduces
"human nature" to animality and thus destroys a distinction
that is basic to both religion and any religious concept of
man. Fox is concerned to point up the consequences of such
a reduction or "naturalism" for religion and "human dignity."
He gives chief attention to the Treatise, the Dialogues,
Hume commentaries, and secs. x and xi of the first Inquiry,
Essays and possible sources of influence; I do not believe
specific reference is made to sec. ix of the first Inquiry,
"Of the Reason of Animals." At least twice during our dis­
cussions of Hume (before the above work was published), Dr.
Fox "hinted at" this reductionism and "suggested" that this
constituted the real threat to religion from Hume.

72 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, for example, ref. pp. 32, 39, 48, 50, 54-55, 84, 90 esp.

73 Ibid., e.g., ref. pp. 27, 82-83, 84, 90.

74 Ibid., e.g., ref. pp. 27, 32, 35, 36, 44, 90-91.
believed that uniformity in the two areas was on a par or the same. He believed that "reasonings" in these two areas were on a par or the same, as were the matters of the degree of certainty achievable, accuracy, evidence, and "the operations of the mind." Hume uses "same" often.

Thus, it appears that here is the criteria set for the choice of "experiments." On this basis or these bases the original observations are selected, and on this basis or on these bases other observations, i.e., either seemingly negative evidence or "other data," are either explained away or selectively excluded from consideration. I wonder if this might not have at least some relevance for a position holding that Hume had "no criteria for determining which observations we may most profitably make."77

This may—and certainly seems to—mean, then, that Hume found both method and subject matter adequate for one another, and that, as far as he was concerned, the experimental method did not restrict in any way what he would or could "discover" in "human nature." "Experiments" were selected, then, for their "natural-revealing-character." If this is so, then the choice of many examples from "natural philosophy" is by no means accidental or inconsequential.

75 Ibid., e.g., ref. pp. 41-42, 82-85, 88.
76 Ibid., e.g., ref. pp. 27, 32, 36, 43, 82-83, 90-91.
77 Ref. Kemp Smith, Phil. of D. Hume, p. 62. Also, cf. above, pp. 138-139, 145-146.
Rather, such examples in use only carry further the analogue of method and subject matter.  

Hume's choice and use of confirming "experiments" constitutes a further exemplification of the same tendency. Hume handles the matter of confirmation, of testing or verifying, in this way. After having "discovered" his principles in "human nature," he cites a number of additional "experiments" by means of which the principles receive further support. These are supposed to be of the same type as, or sufficiently similar to, those from which the principles, or let us say, principle was derived. Thus, an ever wider or broadening application and an increasing adequacy are shown for the principle and for the method. This is the (or at least one) purpose of Hume's inclusion of the often troublesome and disturbing Section IX "Of the Reason of Animals" in the first Inquiry. These are the procedures that Hume follows.

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78Although the "billiard ball" example is the most frequently mentioned and recalled by commentators and in discussions about Hume, and was used by Hume in a paradigmatic way, only a glance through Hume's works is needed to find other examples. Ref. Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 63; and Inquiry cHU, ed. Hendel, "Abstract," p. 189—cf. p. 187: "If we can explain the inference from the shock of the two balls we shall be able to account for this operation of the mind in all instances."

79Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, ref., e.g., pp. 19, 51, 55, 82, 83, 89, 105-106.
Sources of "Experiments"

Earlier I suggested a substitution use of "experiential" for "experimental" in Hume's works. It may be further helpful to substitute "experiences" for Hume's "experiments." It is both meaningful and accurate to say that the source of Hume's experiments is experience or the collective experience(s) of "human nature" (including history, human testimony, past and present). Here we have a means that offers at least some hope for dealing with two "hard" problems concerning Hume's philosophy and method: (1) the charge that he restricts all "knowledge" of matter of fact and existence to "immediate experience" or the impressions of the so-called specious present, and (2) the unrest about his use of introspection.80

Hume was sensible enough to recognize that different men seem to "share" experiences in the sense that they have experiences that are at times highly similar. But Hume went beyond this to introspect, to "look within himself," and from this source he "discovered" principles that he held others would find also if they would conduct similar investigations themselves. Such procedure seems to argue for,

80 Ref., e.g., Basson, D. Hume, pp. 19-20: "There is something that Hume calls 'an experiment,' but this is a procedure all his own, and it is invariably introspective in character. There are observations of human behaviour, but they are . . . accounts of certain general features of human behaviour, which are in fact obvious to everybody." Cf. pp. 37-38, Basson's work; also, pp. 147-153, above.
and not against, the method and commitments, the analogue and assumptions that I have "found" in Hume. Hume here displays both the experiential aspect of his procedure and the confidence he has in the great uniformity of human nature (e.g., human nature is "so much the same," and all faculties are supposed to operate the same).

But Hume does not stop here either. He moves beyond the specious present, beyond the shared experiences, beyond introspection. On to "history" he moves, chiefly for a richer source of the collective experience of "human nature"—making the move, of course, with his assumptions and analogues. He puts it this way:

Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records or /sic/ wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments he forms concerning them.81

But here is "experience" several steps removed from the immediate or present, perhaps by hundreds of years, it will be protested. How could Hume make use of such records as

original data or for purposes of confirmation? This question has already been answered on several counts: for example, consider Hume's very wording in the above quotation; consider his assumptions and analogue. Yet there is enough in the question to merit additional attention, and Hume seems to be well aware of this fact. The events or experiences recorded and Hume were either separated or connected by the absence or presence of a link different from both the events and Hume—namely, the reliability of the historian, and/or the reliability of the testimony of the witnesses to the events reported. Hume indicates this when he asks: "What would become of history, had we not dependence on the veracity of the historian according to the experience which we have had of mankind?" And, it is the (or at least one) purpose of Section X of the first Inquiry to deal with this problem. It is interesting that here Hume attempts to judge the credibility of reports and witnesses by further use of the analogue of "nature" and "human nature."

82 Ibid., p. 90. I cannot help but wonder if this use of "history" by Hume—the italics are his—might offer a corrective suggestion for the tendency to dwell too much on what is taken to be the unquestionable certainty that Hume was so much influenced by the "ancients" that his philosophy is derived almost solely from them.

83 Section X bears the title "Of Miracles." Although probably not miraculous, it is at least interesting that this purpose has not been universally seen, and when glimpsed, has not received extensive consideration or the consideration that is due it.
Hume's Certainty

The matter of Hume's certainty is fully as pertinent to any treatment of his method and philosophy as is that of his scepticism; it is also just as perturbing. Yet attention to his scepticism far outweighs attention to his certainty, i.e., in sheer bulk of articles and works produced on Hume. The two are related, as they, in turn, are related to those aspects of Hume's assumptions, analogue, methodological commitments, and hoped-for methodological scope, with which I have been dealing.

Just as it has been frequently ignored that Hume disclaimed an excessive scepticism, so also has it been generally ignored that Hume undertakes his task in the first Inquiry with confidence that in this "science of human nature" there is "a truth and falsehood" and that the discovery and delineation of these reside within "the compass of human understanding." Note the place of these factors and their relation to others which I have emphasized, in the following.

Nor can there remain any suspicion, that this science is uncertain and chimerical; unless we should entertain such a scepticism as is entirely subversive of all speculation, and even action. It cannot be doubted, that the mind is endowed with several powers and faculties, that these powers are distinct from each other, that what is really distinct to the immediate perception may be distinguished by reflection; and consequently, that there is a truth and falsehood in all propositions on this subject, and a truth and falsehood,
which lie not beyond the compass of human understanding. There are many obvious distinctions of this kind, . . . which fall within the comprehension of every human creature; and the finer and more philosophical distinctions are no less real and certain, though more difficult to be comprehended. Some instances, especially late ones, of success in these enquiries, may give us a juster notion of the certainty and solidity of this branch of learning. And shall we esteem it worthy the labour of a philosopher to give us a true system of the planets, and adjust the position and order of those remote bodies; while we affect to overlook those, who, with so much success, delineate the parts of the mind, in which we are so intimately concerned? 84

It requires little interpretive subtlety to see that Hume, in this introductory section, Section I, is "introducing" the reader to an instance of such "certainty" as he is describing, and of such "success in these enquiries."

And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our enquiries concerning the mental powers and economy, if prosecuted with equal capacity and caution. 85

But, can this emphasis on "certainty" 86 be recognized and held, in light of what has been remarked about Hume's "sides" and his "two levels" of methodological involvement? I think so, and further believe that the "two levels" serve as an aid both for recognition of Hume's "certainty" and for treating certain "facts" that may have been the bases for neglecting his "certainty."

Let us consider what appears to be chief among

those "facts." Hume restricted the human understanding severely.\textsuperscript{87} He "showed" that cause and effect (causal) reasoning, though the sole method of reasoning in matter of fact, is without justification. There is no "necessary connection" between cause and effect. He "showed" that the best we can achieve in this area is "probability"—yet "no reasoning" causes us to make inferences.\textsuperscript{88}

However, the justification of these so-called facts results in a situation that creates both logical discomfort and concern over interpretive accuracy. Perhaps at least a partial remedy can be achieved, at this point in the study, by looking at our tendencies, procedures, and emphases in light of those of Hume.

We students of Hume concern ourselves with "cause and effect" so much that we tend to neglect the place of "analogy" in Hume's exposition and its use at the basis of his work. Analogy operates on both levels of method (i.e., on both of the levels that I have noted). The assumption of methodological analogue resides behind and operates in these procedures of Hume. Further, analogy is at the basis of Hume's "enquiries" and also plays a large part in his

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., e.g., p. 31: "Thus the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it."

\textsuperscript{88}Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, e.g., p. 43.
discussion of method. Although "cause and effect" may be that principle by means of which we attempt to "reason" beyond the present testimony of our senses and memory, still our attempts to apply and extrapolate that "principle" depend upon "seeing" the resemblance, the similarity, the analogy of the cases to which we believe this type of "reasoning" applies. This would seem to constitute an elevation of the place of the first principle of association that Hume lists—"resemblance." Hume tells us that:

_All our reasonings concerning matter of fact are founded on a species of Analogy, which leads us to expect from any cause the same events, which we have observed to result from similar causes._

Hume continues:

_Where the causes are entirely similar, the analogy is perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is regarded as certain and conclusive: . . . _91

But where the objects have not so exact a similarity, the analogy is less perfect, and the inference is less conclusive; though still it has some force, in proportion to the degree of similarity and resemblance._

Thus, though it be the case that the "Reason" of Rationalism is rejected for this area, still "reasoning" has an undeniable place here. Certainly Hume makes use of

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89 _Ibid._, _e.g._, pp. 47, 49, 51-55, 60, 72, 104-108, 28, 30, 36.

90 _Ibid._, p. 104. _Italics mine._

91 _Ibid._. _Italics mine._

92 _Ibid._. _Italics mine._
reason in this sense in his "reflections on common life." Quite interestingly, though Hume indicates degrees of analogical certainty, he exercises considerable skill (prudence?) in selection and confirmation "experiments" to show that "the analogy is perfect."94

"Experience and observation and analogy" are the principles or "guides which we can reasonably follow" in this "science of human nature."95 Consider the following:

All the philosophy, therefore, in the world, and all the religion, which is nothing but a species of philosophy, will never be able to carry us beyond the usual course of experience, or give us measures of conduct and behaviour different from those which are furnished by reflections on common life.96

There is, I think, some question about how much of this is Hume's style and how much constitutes his convictions. However, even if we grant the accuracy of this quotation as an unproblematic "testimony" on Hume's part, still, in that area Hume proceeds with certainty, with a certainty that does not seem warranted by the discussion of method that he presents. Although "final causes" or "ultimate springs and

93 I bid., p. 146, e.g.
94 This is especially the case in the Natural History of Religion, though not limited to this work. Ref. below, chaps. V and VI.
95 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 148.
96 I bid., p. 146.
principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and en-
quiry":

It is confessed, that the utmost effort of human
reason is to reduce the principles, productive of
natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and
to resolve the many particular effects into a few
general causes, by means of reasonings from
analogy, experience, and observation.97

And, in this process, Hume, in his method in use, proceeds
upon a presentation of "a truth and falsehood, which lie
not beyond the compass of human understanding"98—at least,
not beyond Hume's.

If Hume's mature "enquiries" be considered as criti-
cal investigations and exemplifications of the role of hy-
potheses in the "science of human nature,"99 then a most
interesting result follows. If Hume is using the method
that he is discussing, viz., "the experimental method," we would expect him: (1) to delimit the area;
(2) to cite relevant phenomena; (3) to put forth an hypothe-
sis; (4) to test, verify, or confirm it; and, perhaps, (5)
to indicate the consequences of the "experiment." He does
these things—or he seems to attempt to do them. His phras-
ing and procedure lead me to believe that this is just what

97 Ibid., p. 30.
99 I seriously doubt that many students of Hume
would be willing to consider Hume's "enquiries" in this way.
Yet, without claiming completeness for this aspect, I be-
lieve that emphasis on this aspect is both enlightening and
accurate.
he is involved in; for example, at a highly significant place in the first Inquiry, Hume proposes:

We shall make trial of this, with regard to the hypothesis, by which we have, in the foregoing discourse, endeavoured to account for all experimental reasonings; and it is hoped, that this new point of view will serve to confirm all our former observations.¹⁰⁰

Hypotheses are induced from facts to explain facts—or "the facts"—and then facts are considered to exemplify the hypotheses. The confirming facts make (render) the hypothesis probable. Hume's discussion of the "human understanding" and his method would lead us to believe that he is making just these moves and that he is maintaining the conditions and status of the hypotheses at this level, just as described. Yet, the certainty of his method as used, and of his conclusions as established (or as he considers them to be established), seem to exceed that status.

At least part of this situation is grounded on Hume's assumption that his evidence is complete, or, where noted as incomplete, further "facts" or "experiments" will exemplify further and only those conclusions already established. Hume, in treating evidence as complete and as complete in type, moves to a situation wherein the "knowledge" arrived at by his peculiar analysis and explanation is treated as certain. To put it somewhat differently, Hume, while

¹⁰⁰Enquiry cHU, ed Selby-Bigge, pp. 104-105. Italics mine.
treatting issues and "experimental reasoning" as fallibilistic, uses the same method to establish an antifallibilistic position, viz., that some empirical judgments are certain with adequate confirmation, and, further, Hume seems to say that his conclusions are the ones that are certain and have been given adequate confirmation.

If I am correct or have been up to this point, then anyone who would hold that Hume's works are reducible to "nothing but" descriptive or "experimental psychology" would have some additional problems to contend with. While Hume would then be seen as attempting to provide only a psychological descriptive and psychological explanatory study, a number of other matters would have to be dealt with in some way. These problems would, for example, include: Hume's judgment concerning the adequacy of his method, especially on the logically prior level; his use of "evidence" and negative evidence; his stance on the character of human nature; and his excursions beyond descriptive limits. Such matters as these would stand in need of explanation, as would the result that these matters led Hume to a prescriptive treatment of his subject and not only to a descriptive treatment.

My interpretation of Hume's methodology derives

101 Although one may be tempted to exclaim "if, indeed, anyone would hold such a thing!" the position should not be excluded entirely out of hand. Cf. Basson, D. Hume, e.g., pp. 19 and 78.
chiefly from the work that Hume proposed as the methodological and epistemological basis for all inquiry in the area of "moral philosophy." Since this is the force that Hume gives to *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, it is appropriate to consider this work as a unity and to note its unitary and peculiar structure. This and further elaboration of method are among the concerns of Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

HUME'S UNITARY PROPADEUTICS: A NECESSARY FIRST STEP FOR ALL THE "SCIENCES"

Changes, Steps, and Concerns

The changes that Hume made in his later, that is, his post-Treatise works reflect rather well a more significant change. More than a change merely in form or style, rather the terms that Hume uses describe his philosophical procedure. He used the term "treatise" in the title of his first work. This term means (or suggests) a systematic exposition; such was Hume's attempt, and largely in one major work. For his later, more mature philosophical works he uses the term "inquiry." This term means (or suggests) a search for truth, for information, for knowledge, by questioning or interrogation.

With such a plan where does Hume begin to "inquire"? With "human nature," "the science of man." Where does Hume begin this inquiry? "For as it is by means of thought only that anything operates upon our passions,"¹ it is with that

¹Hume, Inquiry cHU, ed. Hendel, "Abstract," p. 198. Perhaps the absence of a detailed treatment of "the passions" may be thought to constitute a weakness of the present study. However, there is at least some rationale for
part of human nature that deals (or has been "thought" to deal) with thought that, Hume holds, we must begin. That part is called "the human understanding," the "reasoning faculty." Further:

The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas; . . .

this procedure--some rationale that I hope does not consist in simply a rationalization in its negativistic sense. It is generally considered that *A Dissertation on the Passions* is one of Hume's least successful works, that the mold for this phase of the "recasting" process was not sufficiently strong for the strain put upon it, and that this work is at best a collection of loose threads grouped in one bundle by the aid of a single title, not woven together into a fine fabric. But more to the point is the fact, or what I take to be a fact, that Hume's epistemological excursion, both negative and positive, is factually and logically precedent to his work on the passions. (Cf. Hume's correspondence concerning the difficulties of bringing his "Four Dissertations" to publication, as well as the probable time of composition of the work on the passions. Ref. Burton, *Life; Letters*, ed. Greig; *Letters*, ed. Hill; *New Letters*, ed. Klibansky and Mosener.) Although in the *Abstract* (p. 184) Hume says "the author has finished what regards logic, and has laid the foundation of the other parts in his account of the passions," it is with "logics" that he began. And it is there, I believe, that we must begin. (And, if this is correct, what better place could there be for Hume's "propaedeutic"?) Further, and contrary to usual emphasis, his "logics" contain(s) significant comment on the so-called passional side of human nature. Although it is but a conjecture (at least at this point), it is possible that this could be why Hume was not particularly concerned to dwell at great length and effort upon the "recasting" of a separate work in which the passions would be "treated." Instinct, propensity, belief, and tendency, for example, are not unimportant in the structure of the first *Inquiry*. It could be that this is as far as we need go to trace the particular facts to general facts of human nature. The first part of Hume's inquiry is to consider the evidence forwarded for the beliefs of man, what the evidence really is, what evidence can be found to explain the fact of belief when "reasoned justification" has failed.

Since this is the case, the first step, then, and a necessary one, is to inquire into "what regards logic."

Now one aspect of this is critical. That is the discovery, or re-discovery, and critical explication of ... a defect in the common systems of logic that ... are too concise when they treat of probabilities and those other measures of evidence on which life and action entirely depend, and which are our guides even in the most of our philosophical speculations.\(^3\)

Still, being aware of the existence of a problem does not constitute a solution of it; in most cases this is also true of a critical explication of the problem. A second aspect is the constructive. Not only was Hume "sensible of this defect," but also he

... has endeavoured, as much as he can, to supply /a remedy or corrective for/ it.\(^4\)

Criticism, critical study, is part of the continuous activity of philosophy. It is an important part. Hume was critical. Yet, it is a fact that Hume the critic did not stop Hume the constructive philosopher. This is shown (at least partially) in the way that Hume (1) pointed up the limitations not only of the "common systems of logic" but also of experiential reasoning, and (2) then used experiential reasoning, with its criticized and exposed weaknesses, to produce work of philosophical importance.

\(^3\)Ibid. Italics mine.

Granted the philosophical importance of the first phase, which is a critical epistemological excursion, Hume goes on to build an epistemology and to show its significance in application to areas of life and belief.

If "epistemology comprises the systematic study of the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge," then Hume inquired into the area of epistemology. If the relevant queries in this area concern the knower and the known (subject and object of knowing, "human understanding" and its object), the nature of knowing, what is true, the method of correct reasoning, whether genuine or certain knowledge is possible, whether knowing is innate, experienced or both, then Hume made epistemologically relevant queries. If man is "only moved by truth or what is taken for such," then truth claims and knowledge claims, belief in and the evidence for this belief in them, are of importance. So is knowing what we mean by "knowing" and claiming to know. And, if it is a part of logic to be concerned specifically with the problem of correct reasoning, then there is some basis for considering that Hume's inquiry is at least partly


6 Ibid.

7 Inquiry chU, ed. Hendel, "Abstract," p. 191; cf., "... this feeling which constitutes belief, ... has a more forcible effect on the mind than fiction and mere conception. This he proves by its influence on the passions and imagination, which are only moved by truth or what is taken for such."
"logical" in nature. Further, there is at least a sense in which Hume's inquiry and conclusions, as well as his approach, are much concerned with "metaphysical" issues; and, in taking the stance he does, he posits an ontology:

We . . . must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterate. 8

Hume starts with the facts of experience. All of us, regardless of our philosophic persuasion, must start here, accept this reality, before taking-off for our philosophic flight. This is basic. 9 Hume examines the logical basis of, the grounds for, and the explanation given of, these facts. He concludes that there is no logically defensible rational ground and seems to conclude that there is no logically defensible empirical (argument) ground for the reliance that man places in his (own) procedure. The problem remains, however, as belief itself remains—how to account for beliefs and this belief-proneness of human nature, for this fact of experience, for this crucial distinguishing characteristic of the inferential advance. Hume is concerned to find what the relevant evidence displays.

Hume proceeds through four steps. First, he starts

8 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Biggs, p. 12. (It would be amazing, wouldn't it, if Hume were not being completely and only "ironic" here?)

9 It is true that "presuppositions"—both of Hume and of the rest of us—are not less basic. Yet these also are "facts of experience."
with a belief or a statement of a belief that is a basic fact of experience, of man, of "human nature."

Second, he questions the status of the belief, i.e., he examines its status. How is this belief established? Or, what is its logical status? This involves both a question of method and a question of evidence. The credulous nature of the belief is frequently the most highlighted characteristic. The credulity of the vulgar consists in believing or holding the belief without evidence, adequate evidence, or an adequate concept of relevant evidence. Hume considers "Reason" as the basis for establishing the belief; but this a priori reasoning results, not in the founding of belief in "matter of fact and existence," but the credulity of the Rationalists. Next Hume considers "reasoning," reasoning in experience as the basis for establishing the belief; but this a posteriori reasoning results, not in the founding of belief in this area with certainty, but the credulity of the "Empiricists" who act as if certainty reigns here.

Third, Hume raises the question: How should that belief be established logically? He is concerned with the reasoned basis for man's reliance upon belief and that which he believes, with the way of evaluating and the appropriate grounds for belief. He attempts to find possible grounds between Credulity and Pyrrhonism (almost as if he were reconciling these extremes). His major effort is to propose the
proper criteria for belief. This proposal is of importance.

Fourth, (regardless of the success or failure of the second and/or third steps above), belief is a real fact or phenomenon of human nature, human experience. Hume proceeds to operate according to the criteria set that he has stated. (The efficacy of the causal relation or causality is presupposed in Hume's search and throughout his analysis.) He then considers: (1) Granted the reality of this belief, then how does it persist? (11) Why does it persist (if it is alogical)? (111) What is its nature/origin (Instinct—not final)? (iv) What is its value (consequences)?

A belief is more or less well-founded; it is held or not held. But as a natural phenomenon of human nature, belief is not to be denied!

In one sense Hume never got beyond human nature, belief, and evidence. Each of these is intimately involved in each aspect of "moral philosophy." Because of this, even if there were or had been no other reason, Hume considered it imperative that he "treat" each of these in his "proaedeutics" or "logics." From these "first studies" Hume moves through the areas of "moral philosophy," applying his "treatment" or "solution" and pointing out consequences. In this procedure, Hume considered each additional phase to supply further confirming evidence for the accuracy and adequacy of his "solution." He believed his "solution" was further strengthened in and by its adequacy to explain and deal with
each additional aspect, ranging, for example, from "The Reason of Animals" to "Natural Religion."

An Interpretive Sketch

First I will present an abbreviated outline of Hume's Inquiry, his "propaedeutics," and then a somewhat more detailed sketch. I will attempt to show that this work is a unity; that the content, emphases, and structure of this work stand in the relation of "first studies" to all other areas of "moral philosophy"; and that these follow from this later carefully worked and approved inquiry of Hume. The relation of this work to Hume's treatment of religion is somewhat different, chiefly in that "religion" constitutes a paradigm of Hume's philosophy and its consequences. Even though these emphases differ from more usual interpretations of the first Inquiry, my interpretations are based upon Hume's procedure, what I understand to have been his intention, and what is found in the Inquiry itself. As such, they are not without foundation.

Outline (according to the major divisions or sections)

I  Scope and hope of science and method
II Materials of "thinking" and activity of "mind"
III "Connecting" links of materials of thinking
IV Evidence for soundness and advance of knowledge
V "New evidence": "Impressional" principle of human nature; reconstructed "solution"—belief
An Interpretive Sketch

In Section I Hume critically explicates and evaluates two "different species of philosophy." These "species" are derivative of two different concepts of man or of human nature. Each has a particular method that is supposed to be related to that central concept of man that characterizes the stance taken. And each has particular goals in view. Hume posits a dual disclaimer with respect to these.
His method will be neither of these, but rather one that he hopes will overcome the weaknesses of both while it yields positive results of its own. The "subject matter," of course, will be the same, viz., "moral philosophy, or the science of human nature."

Although the concept of man, of human nature, does not receive unlimited fanfare, there are rather clear indications of the view that Hume espouses. This is also related to the general but important hopes that Hume has for his method and study. Whereas the former views concentrated too much on aspects, Hume proposes to achieve a more balanced perspective. This seems to be the point when he speaks of man as a "reasonable," a "sociable," and an "active" being. "Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man"\(^{10}\) serves, then, at least a two-fold function. It comes from the personal experience and testimony of Hume himself, and it is one of the goals he has for his philosophical inquiries. What Hume describes here is remarkably similar to what we have in mind when we speak of an "oriented personality."

In introducing and plotting his project, Hume leaves no room for doubt that his first step of inquiry is to examine man (or human nature) conceived as a "reasonable being." Nor does he leave room for doubt that his first

\(^{10}\)Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 9.
step of inquiry is to be abstract and "hard." Quite interestingly, he insists that this "difficulty" is a necessary propaedeutic for achievement of a correct and corrected perspective with respect to human nature and the science of human nature. This accurate and abstract study, "this involved search or enquiry," is necessary before application can be made in other areas of human nature and life.

Hume, in proposing to examine human nature conceived as "reasonable," proposes to examine the "human understanding." Here knowledge claims, operational claims, the validity of these, the grounds and evidence for them, and criteria for acceptable knowledge are relevant areas of inquiry.

In short, what Hume does in this first section is to introduce his general area of inquiry as well as the particular area of this one work. Further, he sets the problems and the termini of his inquiry, frames the subject-matter, his method, and indicates the hoped for goals of his philosophy. He presents the scope and hope of the science of human nature and the "experimental method" applied thereto. He recognizes that he will be considering the operations of the mind as objects of reflection when he engages in this propaedeutic inquiry. He recognizes, fairly early, a

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11 Cf. sec. i and sec. xii, the introductory section and the concluding section. There is a striking similarity between the conceptions of human nature and method evaluated in sec. i and the varieties of scepticism that Hume finds unacceptable in the concluding section of his first Inquiry. This, I urge, is more than accidental. Cf. chap. iii above.
distinction between operations of the understanding and
tastes or sentiments. And he comments that he will be con­
cerned with the principles which actuate the operations of
the mind. The beginning of the analogue of "human nature"
to "other parts of nature" can be noted already; to be sure,
at this stage these hints are still vague and unclear, but
nevertheless Hume posits these in the first section as
guidelines and structures for further inquiry--that much is
worth noting.

Sections II and III are related in several interest­
ing ways. Hume entitled them, respectively, "Of the Origin
of Ideas" and "Of the Association of Ideas." In these sec­
tions Hume deals, respectively, with the materials of
"thinking" and the activity of "mind," and with the "con­
necting" links of the materials of thinking. These sections
are further related in that Hume presents a twofold or a two
part hypothesis in them; part one in Section II, part two in
Section III. (I will return to this dual hypothesis
shortly.)

First to Section II and to what I believe has been
a considerably misunderstood "test" or "check" attributed to
Hume. Hume presents a "doctrine" and then sets out the only
conditions by means of which he will consider the "doctrine"
to be refuted. We may call these "refutation conditions."
Hume's doctrine, expressed "in philosophical language," is that all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.12

The refutation conditions to the position "that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression" are stated as follows.

Those who would assert that this position is not universally true nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression, or lively perception, which corresponds to it.13

Hume gives these refutation conditions in the context of his "first argument" for the doctrine. The point of the argument is built upon an affirmation of a reductionist model,14 namely, that all "compound" ideas are reducible to simple ideas, and these simple ideas have a correspondent "lively impression." The model treats "ideas" as simple units which may be stuck together to form compounds; these compounds may be reduced without remainder to their simple units, and these checked for referents at the impressional level.


13Ibid., pp. 19-20.

14Hendel opposes the idea that Hume might be associated with any reductionist model. Ref. Hendel, Studies, and Inquiry ed., "Introduction." I agree that Hume's work must not be reduced to this model simply and alone. However, as I will attempt to show (shortly) this model does play a part in Hume's procedure.
Hume's second "argument" is negative and may be called the "defect of organ and absence of sensation argument." The point of the "argument" is that in the absence of the "sensation" or the sense by which the "sensation" could be introduced (i.e., "the sense organ"), a man does not have and cannot have a correspondent or corresponding idea. In other words, we cannot have an idea of a sensation that we cannot have; without the "sensation," the "original," there can be no "idea," "copy." The same point is made concerning the absence of sensation, even granted that a man has the capacity for it. Hume says that "the only manner by which an idea can have access to the mind \cite{Hume}, to wit, by the actual feeling and sensation."\footnote{Enquiry \textit{et al.}, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 20.}

Now, up to this point Hume is speaking of a doctrine concerning the operation of human nature and the sense by which the human understanding acquires its ideas, i.e., its materials of thinking. It is easy, or apparently it has been easy, to treat this in a doctrinaire way. Yet, such an interpretation would ignore the force, or what Hume takes to be the force, of "facts." For, immediately after these "arguments" Hume notes what he considers to be an example of exception. The force of this is that he ceases to speak about "doctrine" and instead calls the position a "general
maxim." Thus, in relation to the exception and the change in status of the "maxim," Hume notes:

... that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to arise independent of their corresponding impressions, ... and that the simple ideas are not always, in every instance, derived from the correspondent impressions.  

The exception that Hume notes is the supplying of a shade and a gradation of color as an idea, but without having the sensation of that shade or gradation. However, I believe the important thing to note is the force that Hume attributes to this exception. This, in effect, constitutes a case that meets those refutation conditions that Hume posited; and the result of this is that "this position is not universally true nor without exception."

Now to the "test." Hume proposes the "proposition" seemingly as a "test" for disputes. This seems of significance in light of his (later) frequent comment that many disputes are merely verbal. The proposition supposedly is that all ideas of simple nature have corresponding impressions. Hume appears to have in mind the following relation: terms, if meaningful, have correspondent ideas, and these ideas have correspondent impressions or sensations. The clarity, distinctness, and forcefulness of impressions, arrived at in this way, are supposed to bring clarity to disputes, and to meanings. Negatively, it would seem to

16 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
follow that the term is meaningless if no corresponding idea can be found and if no respectively corresponding sensation can be found, i.e., an impression corresponding to the idea. At least this seems to be the way it has been tempting to read Hume.

However, let us notice a few well-founded points, beginning with attention to Hume's writing. After Hume remarks that "when we have often employed any term, though without a distinct meaning, we are apt to imagine it has a determinate idea annexed to it," he proposes:

When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if it is impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion. By bringing ideas into so clear a light we may reasonably hope to remove all disputes, which may arise, concerning their nature and reality.17

Two comments are particularly relevant here. First, Hume says that his "proposition"

not only seems, in itself, simple and intelligible; but, if a proper use were made of it, [it] might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon, which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them.18

The key is the condition "if a proper use were made of it."

This is probably also a key to much of recent Anglo-American philosophical endeavor. Recall, for example, the period in

17 Ibid., pp. 21-22. Italics Hume's.
which the whole of "metaphysics" was identified with "jargon" and the elimination of the latter thus eliminated the former. This is not exactly what Hume says (as I have indicated). The seeming caviler treatment of Locke and the innate ideas issue, which Hume makes in a footnote to the last quotation, lends itself to such a misreading, viz., of considering that Hume propounds a theory of meaning that says those and only those terms that have corresponding ideas, which in turn have corresponding impressions, are meaningful, and nothing else will be considered meaningful. This seems strengthened when Hume says: "... then may we assert that all impressions are innate, and our ideas not innate." 

Second, the proposition and its "logic" need some comment. Four points are involved in some confusion here: (1) Hume's mention of meaning, (2) definition and (3) the removal of all dispute concerning the nature and reality of ideas, and (4) the force of exception to his "general maxim."

If we take Hume to be giving the theory of meaning that I mentioned above, then it would follow that there could be no meaningful term without both an idea and an impression. If he is defining "meaning," then it would seem that as a definition there would be no exceptions. Nor

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19Ref., e.g., above, pp. 172-173.
would there be any exceptions to a theory of meaningfulness structured as I explained the theory above. But the fact is that Hume notes an exception, and seems to leave open the possibility of there being at least one class of exceptions. This has the force of disclaiming the necessity of a corresponding impression as the empirical referent of an idea; the existence of an empirical referent called an original impression does not constitute a necessary condition for the "reality" (existence) of a meaningful idea.

This would seem to considerably weaken the earlier assertion that:

In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment! the mixture and composition of these belong alone to the mind and will.21

Certainly, universality seems no longer possible.

There is, however, at least the glimmering of a possibility of getting out of this muddle. Hume could have been clearer, it is true; or, we wish he had been. And, he explicitly remarks, after noting the exception, that he then considers the position not as a "doctrine" but rather as a "general maxim." Still, he proceeds as if he had forgotten this remark. The glimmer comes when we focus attention on the proposed function and actual use of this "general maxim" as a propositional test by means of which an attempt is made "to remove all dispute, which may arise,

21Ibid., p. 19.
concerning their \( \text{Ideas} \) nature and reality." Hume follows this by criticizing both Locke and the schoolmen for drawing out "their disputes to a tedious length" by "making use of undefined terms." So how can disputes concerning the nature and reality of ideas be removed? And, how can terms be defined? Where possible, seek clarification of the key terms of the dispute. This can be accomplished, so Hume seems to be saying, through defining the terms by means of a reductionistic analysis of the compound (complex) to the simple parts. Then find the idea designated by the term. And, then attempt to find whether or not an impression can be "assigned" to this idea as its derivative source.

Interestingly, Hume soon became aware of the impossibility of sticking to the strict form of this technique. Indeed, if he did not become aware of it, he should have, for he had to depart from it almost as soon as he formulated it. This may be the significance of the exception. Some terms apparently can be traced no further than ideas. There are ideas without corresponding impressions; supposedly, then, terms can be used to refer to these ideas. Now, if we can use this "test" to determine the kind of idea about which we are talking, we have proceeded at least that far. Proceeding further than this would seem to be impossible. Still, the reality of such an idea seems admitted by Hume. And, this then would tell us something about the nature of the dispute and about the "nature and reality" of our ideas.
Construing Hume's "proposition" in the most rigid sense, it is a test for clarity, ambiguity, meaningfulness, and sensation or a kind of experiential referent. It makes use of the general maxim or the "experiential" origin of ideas, and words not traced or traceable to that origin are empty, lacking significance. The first part of the two part hypothesis (mentioned earlier) is that ideas, the materials of thinking, originate from impressions. This impressional basis then sets the limits of sound "knowledge." The materials of the mind are ideas, copies of impressions, and the activity of the mind consists in compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience.22

There is one way open to Hume at this point, if he is to avoid the absurdity of denying that which is "experientially real" to both himself and others. He takes it, although it is not clearly shown until later. The basis has already been set in the first section and is utilized in the second section. Hume appeals to tastes and sentiments, classifying much in these areas. Further, since this classification is not properly that of the understanding, he attempts to use "tendencies" and "propensities" and also "principles" which he assigns as part of the basic constitution of human nature. The discovery of these, then, is a

significant part of his inquiry. But now to his next step.

Having dealt with the materials of "thinking" and the activity of the mind, Hume's next task is to consider the "connecting" links of the materials of thinking. This he does in Section III. Note that Hume calls the materials of thinking ideas, not impressions, even though they are supposed to be impressionally dependent.

The second part of Hume's two-part hypothesis is that ideas are "associated" regularly according to certain relations or "principles." If we interpret Hume to be proposing this two-part hypothesis as a hypothesis, I believe several problems, a few of which I mentioned in the discussion of Section II, may be resolved. One of the chief advantages of such an interpretation is that it is in accord with the method that Hume proposed for his inquiry, viz., the experimental (experiential) method.23

The change in the length of this section (III) is of more than historic interest. In the last edition Hume excluded seventeen paragraphs. This exclusion indicates a change that took place in the thought of "the mature Hume." Gone is the enthusiasm exclaimed in the Abstract (as I

23Cf. above, p. 181, n. 14. I consider Hendel to be basically correct in emphasizing that Hume's "'first proposition' is literally that, namely, only a proposal, something to be tried out experimentally and with a view to learning or discovering something else which is not contained in the proposition." Ref. Inquiry chU, ed. Hendel, "Introduction," pp. xxii-xxiii.
noted earlier, and as Hendel also notes). Yet Hume retains the first three paragraphs, the bare essentials of the "association" proposal. He does not explicitly cite an exception here, which is in marked contrast to the procedure in Section II. However, he does mention the difficulty of providing a "proof" of these association principles; by this he leaves open the possibility of discovery of other principles, a technical possibility. His limited statement here is striking in the face of the fact that, at an earlier time, he considered these principles to be "the cement of the universe." They seem more like crumbling mortar now.

If we treat this statement of the "principles of association of ideas" as the second part of Hume's "experimental" hypothesis, we achieve some degree of resolution to the difficulties that I have mentioned in the last few pages (pp. 187-190). These principles of resemblance, contiguity, and cause or effect are the connecting links of the materials of "thinking," viz., ideas. Granting these conditions of status to the principles, Hume proposes that they constitute the basis of advance of knowledge. Here he treats natural relations philosophically; he reflects upon what man finds and experiences naturally.

Regardless of Hume's comment on the ease with which ideas and especially "abstract" ideas are confused with resembling ones (Section II), and his later apparent concentration on "cause and effect," it is resemblance that is the
basis of employing cause and effect reasoning beyond the single instance or beyond present and past experience. And it is this principle, resemblance, that is the basis of analogy and analogical reasoning. The significance of resemblance in these aspects and in generalization has been too often overlooked or minimized. But this leads us to and involves us in Section IV.

In Section IV Hume considers "evidence for the soundness and advance of 'knowledge'." The title, "Skeptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the Understanding," indicates that Hume finds that the grounds of the operations of human understanding are not what many have thought them to be. Yet, (as I noted earlier) Hume does not stop here.

Hume bases the division of "objects of human reason or enquiry" on the "manner" of "ascertaining" them and the "nature" of "our evidence of their truth." The "objects" of the kind he calls "matters of fact" are of particular interest to Hume. Hume designates demonstration and demonstrative reasoning or argument as appropriate only to the "pure" mathematical sciences; thus demonstrative technique is inappropriate to matters of fact. In the former area the subject matter is not dependent on any existent in the world. However, we still have "belief" of veracity in the "matters of fact" even though we cannot appropriately use
the most certain form of argument. Hume wants to examine or
to enquire what is the nature of that evidence
which assures us of any real existence and matter
of fact, beyond the present testimony of our
senses, or the records of our memory.\(^24\)

Hume proceeds as follows:

All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem
to be founded on the relation of Cause and Effect.
By means of that relation alone we can go beyond
the evidence of our memory and senses. . . . All
our reasonings concerning fact are of the same
nature. And here it is constantly supposed that
there is a connection between the present fact and
that which is inferred from it. Were there
nothing to bind them together, the inference would
be entirely precarious.\(^25\)

If we would satisfy ourselves, therefore, con­
cerning the nature of that evidence, which assures
us of matters of fact, we must enquire how we
arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect.\(^26\)

I shall venture to affirm, as a general propo­
sition, which admits of no exception, that the
knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance,
attained by reasonings a priori; but arises en­
tirely from experience, when we find that any
particular objects are constantly conjoined with
each other.\(^27\)

Hume is concerned with the basis, or bases, of our
preference of some conceptions over others equally imagi­
able, our confidence in the ones preferred, and the exten­
sion of our "knowledge" beyond the past and present. To ex­
amine the assurance that we have, he inquires into the

\(^{25}\)Ibid., p. 27.
\(^{26}\)Ibid.
\(^{27}\)Ibid.
"truth" of the objects and the evidence of that "truth," structured on the relation of cause-and-effect. (Hume recognizes "Relations of Ideas" as one kind of mental objects, and he recognizes "demonstrative reasoning" as one kind of "reasoning." Through these he recognizes the nature and reality of (1) ideas without precedent impressions, and (2) an alternative "operation of the understanding" to that employed in matters of fact and existence.)

Hume explains that "the proper answer" to tell us something about "the nature" of these reasonings "seems to be" that "all our reasonings concerning matter of fact" "are founded on the relation of cause and effect." "Experience" "may be" "the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation." But there is a further question to answer: "What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience?" Hume's first response, in which he "shall pretend only to give a negative answer," is that "all our conclusions from . . . experience are not founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding."  

Hume readily admits and treats as undeniable the reality of inference from past to future, of the similarity (resemblance) of the present to the past. His principal interest involves the foundation, the basis of and the

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28 Ibid., p. 25.
29 Ibid., p. 35.
30 Ibid., p. 32.
evidence for this inference. In this section Hume includes two most informative comments; they highlight both the central problems and the "solutions" that Hume gives later.

In reality, all arguments from experience are founded on the similarity which we discover among natural objects, and by which we are induced to expect effects similar to those which we have found to follow from such objects. And though none but a fool or madman will ever pretend to dispute the authority of experience, or to reject that great guide of human life, it may surely be allowed a philosopher to have so much curiosity at least as to examine the principle of human nature, which gives this mighty authority to experience, and makes us draw advantage from that similarity which nature has placed among different objects. From causes which appear similar we expect similar effects. This is the sum of all our experimental conclusions.31

What logic, what process of argument secures you against this supposition? Viz., that, since some objects and their effects and influence change, this may be the case with all objects, and not sometimes but always happen; My practice, you say, refutes my doubts. But you mistake the purpose of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher, who has some share of curiosity, I will not say scepticism, I want to learn the foundation of this inference.32

In Section V, Hume attempts "to examine the principle of human nature, which gives this mighty authority to experience." He presents "new evidence" of the nature of the assurance that we place on the inference from past to future. First, Hume speaks of the "impressional" status of the principle "custom." Then he offers a reconstructed

31Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 36.
32Ibid., p. 38.
"solution" to the problem, in which he describes this assurance and result of custom as "belief." Hume structures belief on the model of forcefulness, liveliness, and vividness, and calls it a "feeling or sentiment." This is the model that Hume used to distinguish impressions from ideas, originals from copies.

He holds that the principle of custom is the cause of the propensity to make the inference from past to future. Hume proceeds from effect to search for cause. First, negatively, he denies that any process of reasoning and argument is a causal or operational determinate. Then, positively, he moves to the "discovery" of custom as cause.

This hypothesis seems even the only one which explains the difficulty, why we draw, from a thousand instances, an inference, that is, in no respect, different from them. Reason is incapable of any such variation. . . . All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning.33

Hume, then, proposes to have found the foundation or the causal principle of the inferential "step of the mind," the foundation of our reasoning from experience. What he has not done is to explicate that assurance which characterizes this step that we take. For, not only is the inference made, but we also believe in the existence that is inferred. Hume is concerned with what the facts are—these facts are the "new evidence" of his "solution." And the reconstructed

33Ibid., p. 43.
solution involves "belief"; here is a new solution in light of new doubts, a sceptical solution that follows sceptical doubts. Sceptical in what sense? Even given the "facts," the "solution" of Custom, and an awareness of this explanation, man continues to believe. Man believes. The principle of habituated action arises from the repetition of resembling existences. What is involved here? (1) The instinctual nature of belief, which is exemplified in the procedure of Section VI; and (2) customary conjunction, which is exemplified in Section VII. There are two levels of assurance: (1) assurance in the inference, and (2) assurance in the existence of an as yet unexperienced entity (object or event). We thus have "belief" in relation to both aspects. Hume uses the terms "expectation" and "belief" to designate these two aspects: "the mind is carried by custom to expect" "and to believe."

In Section VI Hume proposes new or reconstructed standards for belief. Regularity, degrees of regularity, and uniformity are keynotes here. These are set within the contrast between two "extremes," viz., complete certainty or demonstration and complete uncertainty (if there is such a thing) or "chance."

Neither total chance nor demonstrative certainty is appropriate for "belief," but the range of probability is appropriate for belief and expectation. The terminology
that Hume discusses (in a footnote) and which he seems to adopt would

... divide arguments into demonstrations, proofs, and probabilities. By proofs meaning such arguments as leave no room for doubt or opposition.\[34\]

The range of belief and standards for degrees of belief involve "proofs" correlated to uniformity and "probabilities" correlated to degrees of regularity with some degree of irregularity.

Resemblance and regularity of occurrences are standards, then, for belief. Belief should be proportioned to the degree of regularity found in the fund of experience available to a man. These are the reconstructed standards to which degrees of assurance, expectation, and "belief" must or should be correlated. Where the past has been entirely regular and uniform, we have a level of belief that consists in "proof"; "proofs" "leave no room for doubt or opposition."

Though we give the preference to that which has been found most usual, and believe that this effect will exist, we must not overlook the other effects, but must assign to each of them a particular weight and authority, in proportion as we have found it to be more or less frequent. ... Here then it seems evident, that, when we transfer the past to the future, in order to determine the effect, which will result from any cause, we transfer all the different events, in the same proportion as they have appeared in the past, and conceive one to have existed a hundred times, for instance, another ten times, and another once. As a greater number of

\[34\] *Enquiry* *ChU*, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 56, n. 1. Italics in text.
views do here concur in one event, they fortify and confirm it to the imagination, beget that sentiment which we call belief, and give its objects the preference above the contrary event, which is not supported by an equal number of experiments, and recurs not so frequently to the thought in transferring the past to the future.55

We may recognize these as standards of belief, expectation and assurance, but what about the advance of knowledge or is this a real possibility? Hume proposes soundness as a necessary condition for the advance of knowledge in Section VII. "The chief obstacle . . . to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences," Hume explains, consists in "the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms."36 In a sense, obscurity and ambiguity are concerns in both Sections VII and VIII; however, Hume's introductory remarks in each section make it fairly clear that "obscurity" is the principal concern of Section VII,37 while "ambiguity" is the principal concern of Section VIII.38 Hume undertakes

. . . to fix, if possible, the precise meaning of these terms [specifically, the ideas of power, force, energy, or necessary connection], and thereby remove some part of that obscurity, which is so much complained of in this species of philosophy.39

36Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 61.
37Ibid., p. 62.
38Ibid., p. 82.
39Ibid., p. 62.
Thus, in Section VII Hume deals with "ideas." He uses what I have called the first part of his two-part hypothesis to examine the condition of obscurity of ideas, and again remarks that the usefulness of this hypothesis can be shown "by a proper application of it." (Hume specifically refers to Section II, so there can be little doubt as to what he refers. And, I mention again, Hendel's insistence to the contrary notwithstanding, it does seem that Hume attempts to employ a reductionist model here.)

However, this is, perhaps, but one phase. First, Hume attempts to discover necessary connection, or the original of necessary connection, by "examining" the sources of the "outward" and "inner" senses. Then, he applies the standards that he introduced in the previous section. In knowledge, or the advance of knowledge, soundness depends on and must be based on the regular (regularity), not the extraordinary. After a number of resembling instances have occurred in a man's experience, a certain habit of mind is established. Expectation and belief arise from this fund and operation. Appropriately, the degree of regularity in experience should have a correspondent degree of soundness or strength of belief. When this operation of mind arises, we "feel" this connection "in the mind" and this, says Hume,

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., p. 69.
42 Ibid., p. 75
is the only "impression" that there is or that can be found.

Here is (or, at least, seems to be) an attempt on Hume's part to exemplify "a proper application of" his so-called "test" ("check" or "rule"). However, this "test" is stretched so far here that Hume seems to have actually departed from strict adherence to the restrictive first part of his hypothesis. (I believe that the usual interpretations of this "test," viz., those that I mentioned above, p. 180 and following, are indeed restrictive.) Thus, either Hume departed from his "Rule" or he stretched it to the breaking point. Or, he proposed it as a hypothesis and attempted to apply it to a number of instances; he recognized its hypothetical status (general maxim), and also he recognized that departures from it are not only possible but might be necessary in his detailed analysis. It should be clear already that I favor the latter interpretation; this interpretation more accurately describes Hume's actual procedure.

When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they have acquired a connexion in our thought, and give rise to this inference, by which they become proofs of each other's existence . . . 43

This connexion, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the

43 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 76.
Idea of power or necessary connexion. Nothing farther is in the case. 44

"The mind anticipates the senses" 45 and assurance is properly in proportion to the degree of "uniform experience." 46

In Section VIII Hume examines a dispute that has persisted due to "ambiguity of terms," or, as he alternatively describes it, a dispute that is "merely verbal" 47 and has "turned merely upon words." 48 In Section VII Hume ostensibly searches for some impression that is the original of the idea with which discussion in this phase of his inquiry started. In the present section Hume holds that the difficulty consists in the fact that disputants have affixed "different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy." 49 He believes that ambiguity can be avoided by bringing clarity to the idea correspondent to acceptable terms; or, in other words, we may resolve the controversy and reconcile the disputants by enabling them to "affix" "the same ideas to their terms." 50

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44 Ibid., p. 75.
46 Ibid., p. 79.
47 Ibid., p. 95.
48 Ibid., p. 81.
49 Ibid., p. 80.
50 Ibid.
Only by such achievement does Hume believe that any advance of knowledge is possible; he certainly seems to be speaking about a necessary condition for thought about action. In the previous section he considered "necessary connexion" and located an approximation of an impression in feeling. The particular area of analysis was the human understanding and the particular objects were ideas; those ideas are sound or possess soundness that have a correspondent "impression" of "sentiment." Now Hume supposedly moves from ideas that have this soundness to terms. His ploy is that since all disputants agree on and acknowledge the idea of necessity and also that of liberty, the matter of difference reduces to merely variance of terms of "ambiguity of terms." Hence, this matter, when properly understood, is merely a verbal dispute.

In a footnote in the previous section Hume explains that:

as we feel a customary connexion between the ideas, we transfer that feeling to the objects; as nothing is more usual than to apply to external bodies every internal sensation, which they occasion.51

In the present section (VIII) Hume begins his inquiry with this thought clearly in mind. (This procedure is more than just incidental, for Hume frequently provides "hints" and structures in footnotes and then develops these in the next or later section. This is one more procedural detail that

51 Ibid., p. 78, footnote continued from p. 77.
points to the unitary structure of Hume's first *Inquiry.*

Would we, therefore, form a just and precise idea of necessity, we must consider whence that idea arises when we apply it to the operations of bodies. 52

Now this is more than a partial review. Here his concern is to describe "that necessity which we ascribe to matter." He says:

Beyond the constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connexion. 53

If it appear, therefore, that all mankind have ever allowed, without any doubt or hesitation, that these two circumstances take place in the voluntary actions of men, and in the operations of the mind; it must follow, that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of necessity, and that they have hitherto disputed, merely for not understanding each other. 54

The specific application of constant conjunction of similar objects in this case involves a combination of regularities. He says—and note the combination:

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. 55

Hume introduces some very interesting comments about "history." Earlier, in the opening pages of Section VII, Hume explained that "the want of proper experiments

52 *Enquiry chU,* ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 82.
and phænomena" constituted impediments for advance in natur­
al philosophy. Now he seems to consider the moral philoso­pher more fortunate. At least he has at hand "history" or "so many collections of experiments." This is of sufficient importance to merit quoting again.

Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records or /sic/ wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them.56

Now this has considerable bearing on Hume's method; it con­stitutes a change of perspective from the Treatise; and it also has certain bearing on Hume's preparation and conclu­sions in his treatment of "religion," especially in The Natural History. (I have commented on the first two points already; I will consider the third later.57) This also

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57Ref. above, chap. iii, pp. 157-159, "Sources of 'Experiments'." Also, ref. above, chap. ii, pp. 99-112, esp. I will consider Hume's treatment of religion at greater length in chaps. v and vi, below, although my com­ments in chap. ii, above, viz., "Contexts, Religion and Method," are relevant to this development of attitude in Hume.
seems relevant to the thesis that Hume is committed to a "naturalism." It is, indeed, relevant to his work in Section X "Of Miracles"; we will get to this section shortly.

Regularity and uniformity in human motives and actions as well as in the operations of body are readily and universally acknowledged, Hume points out. Such experience benefits us: it instructs "us in the principles of human nature" and it enables us to "regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation." Indeed, Hume explains, it is

by means of this guide, we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. The general observations treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue to human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies. Pretexts and appearances no longer deceive us.58

Not only this, but in addition regularity and uniformity constitute a necessary condition for the advance of knowledge of any kind, or for the advance of "science." Note that for Hume there is but one kind of evidence involved, whether it be "natural" or "moral." We reason the same in both instances "and firmly believe that men, as well as all the elements, are to continue, in their operations, the same that they have ever found them."59

And indeed, when we consider how aptly natural and

moral evidence link together, and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow that they are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. . . . The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volition, and actions; or figure and motion. We may change the name of things; but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change.  

Section IX, "Of the Reason of Animals," has been a troubling section for students of Hume. However, these six paragraphs and one footnote constitute an important part of Hume's Inquiry. I remarked that (especially in Section VII) Hume uses the first part of his two-part hypothesis. He uses the second part, i.e., the principles of association, also; but, in accord with his progressive disenchantment with this "invention," he has not spoken of them (principles of association) as such. Note the place and emphasis that he gives to Resemblance and Cause and Effect up to this point.

Now certain things seem to become clearer. In Chapter III I commented that Hume goes through three stages of argument. First, he makes a general statement, clearly noting given exceptions. Second, he says that x is the case almost without exception or that the exceptions are of little or no import. Third, x is the case; now he does not mention exceptions or even the possibility of the existence

60 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
61 Ref. above, pp. 152-153.
of exceptions. This, I said, constitutes at least part of Hume's forcefulness and convincing impact, but also part of his weakness in this procedure, i.e., in method application. Although I will have additional comments when we come specifically to the area of "religion," some comment is appropriate here. This procedure of Hume's seemed to me, at first, to be something that I had detected in Hume's work and something that he had not recognized. However, the procedure fits so well into the pattern of Hume's "logics" that I now find it more reasonable to hold that he was not unaware of his procedure—indeed, the similarity of what he describes and how he proceeds to this process is quite close.

Methodologically, Hume seems to follow the same criteria that he introduced earlier; he combines "eloquence" with standards of belief and presents this combination in a progressively more forceful manner. Consider his treatment of the human understanding in Section VII, of ideas as the content of the understanding, of ideas and terms that men use (Section VIII); these are steps that Hume takes toward establishing "proof" of his hypothesis. Then, he clinches the "proof" in Section IX; here there is a constancy about his application, and there are no exceptions. He moved across natural and moral philosophy, finding a single type of argument or "reasoning" applicable in or to both areas. Now he clinches his analysis by expanding it to explain the
operations of "all other animals." Starting with "probabilities" he increases the status of his analysis to that of "proof"—or attempts to do so. This constitutes a convincing form of argument. (Were it not for his neglect of negative instances at rather crucial points, it would be even more convincing.) Hume moves through acknowledged uniformity in the operations of bodies and operations of the understanding (Section VII, into Section VIII), human motives and actions (Section VIII), and other animals (Section IX). This "move" involves belief, human nature, evidence, and his peculiar method and analysis; and, these are central in Hume's philosophy. 62

But now to a brief consideration of Section IX. Section IX is the first of three sections in which Hume undertakes an analogical expansion of his hypothesis or hypotheses and analysis, and considers the limitations of "association-ist" principles. Specifically in this section he attempts to establish an analogical "Proof" by generalization to include what is often thought to be most wide of man, viz., "animals." As I have mentioned, Hume has spoken of soundness, physical objects and man, ideas, actions and motives, mind and thought, nature and sentiments put in man by nature. Now Hume seems to be acting on the import of an earlier comment; that is, "the philosopher, if he be

62 Cf. above, pp. 175-176.
consistent, must apply the same reasoning" across the board to all areas. 63

Hume prepares for his conclusion with deliberate care. He opens this phase with a statement of the place of analogy. Then he reviews the reconstructed standards for belief. And then he prepares for a double move that is easily mistaken for only one. If his "theory" is necessary to explain the actions and operations of all other animals, it "will acquire additional authority." And, "this new point of view will serve to confirm all our former observations"—Hume hopes. Compare this with what he said in an earlier location and, apparently or supposedly, with regard to a different topic. "The general observations treasured up by a course of experience" provide the "benefit" of knowledge of "the principles of human nature" and means to "regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation."

By means of this guide, we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures, and again descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. 64

So here, in Section IX, Hume attempts to generalize his theory by holding (1) that it can account for "animals" and (2) at the same time, that such application, if successful, will constitute confirmatory evidence or will count as a confirming experiment.

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63 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 88.
64 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
Now in light of what Hume has done and what he is attempting at this point, consider the following:

All our reasonings concerning matter of fact are founded on a species of Analogy, which leads us to expect from any cause the same events, which we have observed to result from similar causes. Where the causes are entirely similar, the analogy is perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is regarded as certain and conclusive;

This is the essence of "proof," which Hume discussed in a footnote in Section VI (previously quoted). In this instance and in instances of this kind there is nothing that counts as contrary or negative instances within the fund of experience. Hume continues:

But where the objects have not so exact a similarity, the analogy is less perfect, and the inference is less conclusive; though still it has some force, in proportion to the degree of similarity and resemblance.

This corresponds to what Hume described as "probability" in Section VI. In Section VI Hume speaks of the standards of belief and the degrees of assurance that (do and that should) accompany (or correspond to) the regular or somewhat irregular patterns in the fund of experience. Here (Section IX) Hume speaks of the conclusiveness or degrees of conclusiveness of inference.

... Any theory, by which we explain the operations of the understanding, or the origin and connexion of the passions in man, will acquire

65 Ibid., p. 104.
66 Ibid.
additional authority, if we find, that the same theory is requisite to explain the same phenomena in all other animals.\footnote{Ibid.}

If the same theory is necessary to explain something else, it will acquire additional authority. The move here is from man to animals or other animals.

We shall make trial of this, with regard to the hypothesis, by which we have, in the foregoing discourse, endeavoured to account for all experimental reasonings; and it is hoped, that this new point of view will serve to confirm all our former observations.\footnote{Ibid.}

Thus, by applying this to animals, the ground will be set for Hume to make further confirmatory moves, namely, in the present case, from application to animals back to the earlier application to man.

Experience and inference are similar in men and in animals, says Hume. Then he proceeds to deny that animals make the inference by argument or any process of reasoning—a point upon which he already insisted with regard to man. "Nature must have provided some other principle," he repeats.

Although I have already quoted a great deal from this short section, a few further quotations are worthy of note; first, with regard to the denial that the inference is made by "reasoning," and second, with regard to the status of "the experimental reasoning itself."

Were this doubtful with regard to men, it seems to admit of no question with regard to the brute
creation; and the conclusion being once firmly established in the one, we have a strong presump-
tion, from all the rules of analogy, that it ought to be universally admitted, without any ex-
ception or reserve.69

No other explication can be given of this opera-
tion, in all the higher, as well as lower classes of sensitive beings, which fall under our notice and observation.70

And, second:

. . . the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves; . . . .71

So the analogy approaches "proof"; it runs through experi-
ence, inference, expectation, belief, custom, cause and effect, resemblance, and "the experimental reasoning it-
self." This seems to carry with it the assumption that whatever differences there are between men and "other ani-
imals," they are differences of degree and not of kind.72

The same model or analysis holds for both, just as individ-
ual differences in (between) men can be explained by the same analysis. Such seems to be the import of this section

69Enquiry chIV, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 106.
70Ibid., pp. 106-107.
71Ibid., p. 108.
72Ref. Dr. Fox's article, "Religion and Human Nature in the Philosophy of David Hume," in Process and Divinity: the Hartshorne Festschrift, ed. Reese and Freeman (quoted and comments, above, chap. iii, p. 154), for an interpreta-
tion of the consequences of such a view for or with respect to religion, and specifically as such a view can be detected in Hume's stance.
and the footnote. And this seems to be one consequence of Hume's analogical reasoning.

Section X has also been a matter of concern for students of Hume. Indeed, all three sections, i.e., IX, X, and XI, have created problems for interpreters of Hume and his first Inquiry. These three sections are closely related themselves, i.e., interrelated, as well as being related to the Inquiry as a whole. I mean to oppose the popular but untenable position that Sections X and XI are not related to the Inquiry and/or that they were mere after-thoughts and/or that they merely constitute Hume's unworthy attempt to achieve publicity and notice. Such "interpretations" might be convincing or become so, under certain conditions—viz., if we ignore the possibility of the interrelationship of these sections, and if we dwell over-much on the title or titles without attending to the content of the section(s).

Once again, however, Hume seems to have already presented the framework and the central strand of this section in a seemingly casual remark in an earlier discussion. Consider how well the following remarks could serve as an introduction to Section X—as I believe they do—

Should a traveller, returning from a far country, bring us an account of men, wholly different from any with whom we were ever acquainted; men, who were entirely divested of avarice, ambition, or revenge, who knew no pleasure but

friendship, generosity, and public spirit; we should immediately, from these circumstances, detect the falsehood, and prove him a liar, with the same certainty as if he had stuffed his narration with stories of centaurs and dragons, miracles and prodigies. And if we should explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument, than to prove, that the actions ascribed to any person are directly contrary to the course of nature, and that no human motives, in such circumstances, could ever induce him to such a conduct.\textsuperscript{74}

And then Hume cites the conditions of a case for suspecting the veracity of the reporter of certain incidents, incidents that, indeed, smack loudly of the supernatural.

Human testimony and the "exceptional," historical records and the conditions of reliance in reports of past events constitute the theme of this section. It is entitled "Of Miracles," it is true, but this title should not blind us to what Hume actually discusses in the section. This is a further treatment of "analogical expansion and limitations of Association." However, whereas in Section IX Hume considered "proof" and precise regularity, here he emphasizes "probability" and degrees of irregularity as the latter bear on the matter of reliability and belief. Hume started with the felt sentiment or impression of connection, moved through ideas and terms, through an extrapolation of his hypothesis to animals, and now, in treating historical records and the testimony of men, proceeds yet a step further

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{74}Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 84. Cf. above, my earlier remarks on Hume's concept of "history." Note, also, the similarity of the quotation to Hume's "A Dialogue."}
removed from the senses. Or, this is supposedly how Hume
has progressed.

Again Hume reviews much of his preceding analysis;
he notes especially the range of assurance and standards of
or for belief (which he treated in Section VI). He explains
that "a wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the
evidence."75 "Proof" and "probability" are the cases in
point.

In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible
experience, he expects the event with the last de­
gree of assurance, and regards his past experience
as a full proof of the future existence of that
event. In other cases, we proceed with more cau­
tion.76

After this explanation, Hume directs attention to a specific
case.

To apply these principles to a particular in­
stance; we may observe, that there is no species of
reasoning more common, more useful, and even neces­
sary to human life, than that which is derived from
the testimony of men, and the reports of eyewit­
nesses and spectators. . . . It will be sufficient
to observe that our assurance in any argument of
this kind is derived from no other principle than
our observation of the veracity of human testimony,
and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports
of witnesses.77

Consider that "the ultimate standard . . . is always derived
from experience and observation" and that where we have an

75*Enquiry* chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 110.
irregularity within experience and observation we have a "contrariety of evidence." 78

The very same principle of experience, which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the fact, which they endeavour to establish; from which contradiction there necessarily arises a counterpoise, and mutual destruction of belief and authority. 79

It is probably true that the original title of Section XI better describes or indicates its theme and content than does the present title. Originally it was "Of the Consequences of Natural Religion" instead of "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State."

Hume presents this section in a dialogue form; that fact seems to present its own difficulties. However, these may not be as insurmountable as they appear at first. We can now see what fits with those central concerns that Hume has emphasized in his Inquiry thus far; we can examine what follows from the previous sections of the Inquiry and from Hume's central concerns, and from these we should be able to understand what place this section fulfills in the larger work or what place Hume proposes for it.

In the previous section Hume indicated that "religion" is not founded on miracles, or rather, that no miracle can be proved so as to become the foundation of a system of

78 Ibid., p. 112.
79 Ibid., p. 113.
religion, for this would oppose and be opposed by the whole course of experience and line of "reasoning" that Hume has presented thus far. Further, and to the point, the veracity of testimony, "in this case," is impugned to the point of unreliability. Indeed, violations of truth "in these cases" are the rule, they are "regular"--Hume testifies.

Yet, in Section X, while discussing such matters, Hume sets the theme of Section XI. He says:

... it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being [the "Almighty"], otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions, in the usual course of nature. 80

This is a basic tenet of "Natural Religion," as Hume considers the subject. Consider for a moment the consequences of Hume's Inquiry to this point: "Reason," the Rationalistic god of method, has been repeatedly excluded from the area of matters of fact and experience; testimony and the miraculous have been "shown" to be inadequate to establish religion in system or knowledge. What is left? "The experimental reasoning" [or experiential reasoning] that Hume has embraced, appealed to, and used in the various "points of view" thus far. Inference is based on experience, regularity, resemblance, and custom. What are the consequences of this analysis and hypothesis for "religion"? Or, how

80 Ibid., p. 129.
does "natural religion" fare when subjected to examination on the basis of and along the lines of this method or analysis, and what reliability, extent and limits does inference have here?

These, then, are the main questions of concern here. Sections X and XI, so often indicated as Hume's treatment of "religion," have special relevance to and for other works "on religion," viz., Hume's Dialogues and Natural History. Details of that relevance, which include his "answers" to the questions above, are the appropriate concerns of the next chapter(s).

Hume proposes to inquire "how far such questions concern the public interest" in Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 135. Ref. to the two titles of this section and to the "sceptical paradoxes" of Hume's "friend." "Such questions" are chiefly those of "the religious philosophers" who "indulge a rash curiosity, in trying how far they can establish religion upon the principles of reason . . . " (p. 135). Hume says it is taken as "acknowledged, that the chief and sole argument for a divine existence (which I never questioned) is derived from the order of nature"; ref. p. 135.

I have commented on and discussed some of the issues of sec. xii in chap. iii, above. I will have more to say about several sections of the Inquiry in the next chapters. Thus, even though I want to emphasize the unitary structure of the first Inquiry, a summary statement is hardly appropriate at this point. I have shown enough, I believe, to indicate that there is, and Hume intended there to be, a rather close and intricate relation between the several sections—a unitary structure. In being his mature and his approved statement of his "logics," the first Inquiry fulfills, and was meant by Hume to fulfill, the purpose of a "prospodeutic" "for all the sciences" of inquiry—though especially and in a special way for "religion." Now to chap. v.
CHAPTER V

PHILOSOPHIC PARADIGM: HUME'S 'INQUIRY CONCERNING RELIGION'

The title of this chapter and the claims implied by it pose several problems. Although I have attempted to deal with many of these problems earlier, in preparation for an easier recognition of this structure and its importance, some further comment on several peculiarly persisting problems is still appropriate. Chief among these problems are the following: difficulties involved with Hume's "two-part hypothesis," its status, use, and interpretation; Hume's concern with reflective analysis, judgment, criteria, and opposition to propensities; and his central concerns of inquiry. I will give further attention to these in the second major section of this chapter. Hume's method and argument and his specific exemplification of their structure in his works "on religion" are of immediate concern and include and provide the setting for the other problems.¹

¹Ref. above, chap. 1, pp. 22-34, 34-46. Cf. Basson's remarks: "In short, we should have expected his treatment . . . to follow the lines laid down in his treatment of causation, the material world, and the self. But he does not attempt this"; "But the most interesting feature of Hume's treatment of religion is the abandonment of his usual
I mentioned twice that Hume goes through three stages of argument, noted locations and examples, and said that this procedure had relevance for Hume's treatment of religion. Also, I remarked that, in his method, Hume proceeds through four steps. However, I did not fit or weld these two aspects into a single unit, chiefly because Hume's "three stages" are not always limited to a single location in his method; rather he employs them at different steps in his method and analysis. Now, for purposes of illustrating the reproduction of method and argument in his treatment of religion and because this is of special relevance both to my "claim" about his structure and to the status of Hume's conclusions, I will point out how he uses these three stages especially in relation to his fourth step of method. Further, it seems relevant to indicate the relation of these stages to the levels and language of "probability" that Hume adopts, as well as their relation to the moves made in the so-called "experimental method" that Hume so admires.

analytic method." Ref. Basson, D. Hume, pp. 108 and 107, respectively. Kemp Smith's stance, of which this seems to be a reflection, and with which this seems to be in essential agreement, has been noted above in chap. 1.


Steps of Method

First step.—For his first step Hume starts with a belief or a statement of a belief that is a basic fact of man's experience; it is a phenomenon of "human nature," a natural phenomenon. Religious belief, belief in the "miraculous," on the one hand, and belief in "the primary principles of Theism," on the other hand, are basic phenomena of experience; Hume does not question the reality of these beliefs.

Or, consider the matter this way. Hume's "general context" is "moral philosophy." He uses the "science of human nature" almost as a synonym for "moral philosophy." Human nature or mankind has a propensity to believe. Belief as a natural phenomenon of human nature interests Hume intensely. Religion is a part of this concept and area of moral philosophy. Religious belief is a part of that propensity of human nature to believe. Belief is related to the future and causes and resemblance; religious belief is related to the future and causes and resemblance. Hume then finds warrant—I am tempted to say logical warrant—to inquire into this aspect of belief in human nature and in moral philosophy.  

*Cf. above, chap. 11, pp. 93-112; as a youth, Hume started with accepted beliefs or "common opinion."
Second step.—In his second step, Hume examines the status of the belief. He examines the logical status of the belief or knowledge-claim and how it is or is supposed to be established. This involves a question of method and a question of evidence. Frequently, the characteristic that Hume highlights most is the utterly credulous nature of the belief or of belief in the knowledge-claim. "Common opinion," the beliefs of "the vulgar" and of the "generality of mankind," Hume finds to be held tenaciously but without evidence, adequate evidence, or without an adequate concept of relevant evidence and criteria for judgment. However, there are others who proclaim that they hold beliefs and claims to knowledge upon the warrant of sufficient evidence and cogent argument within the context of an appropriate method. Thus, Hume examines the claims of "Reason" and "Experience," of "Rationalistic" and "Empiricistic" argument and method. When the claim of "Reason" to provide the basis for establishing the belief is examined, Hume finds that this a priori reasoning results, not in the founding of belief in "matter of fact and existence," but rather in the credulity of these "Reasoners." This consists in both a confusion of the logical status of the method and type of argument appropriate for the subject matter and an inability to have a functional decision procedure to choose between different but equally cogent conclusions. Although the status of the arguments and conclusions is the same, the
conclusions, each claiming to possess truth exclusively, are in conflict and often direct opposition.

Next, Hume examines "reasoning" in or from "experience" and the claim of this type of argument to provide the basis for establishing the belief. He finds that this a posteriori reasoning results, not in the founding of belief in the area of matter of fact and existence with certainty, but rather in the credulity of the proponents of this type of argument, a kind of "Empiriciats." Although appeal to experience is sound, and method seems appropriate to the area of inquiry, the claim for certainty of the conclusions attained from this source and by this method is inappropriate. Certainty, complete or full certainty, does not reside in this area, but rather in the arena of "demonstrative reasoning."

Recall that Hume divides "all the objects of human reason or enquiry" and "all reasonings" "into two kinds."

All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, Relations of Ideas, and Matters of Fact.5

All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely, demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence.6

Section IV of Hume's first Inquiry, the source of the quotations immediately above, bears the title "Sceptical Doubts

5Enquirychu, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. iv, p. 25.
6Ibid., sec. iv, p. 35.
Concerning the Operations of the Understanding." Even though I have discussed a largely unopposed tendency or "propensity" to emphasize "Sceptical" all out of proportion and I have indicated that the corrective for this is "Hume's guide," I must mention again that Hume, however, does not stop at this point and emphasis.7

Hume examines how far "Reason" and "reasoning" or reasoned argument are appropriate for establishing religion, particularly the "miraculous" in relation to "revealed," i.e. "Supernatural," religion, and theism and its basic tenets in "natural religion." He inquires whether the tenets of religion can be established by "Reason's" (Rationalistic) arguments. Then, he inquires whether religious tenets can be established by a posteriori argument. These are particular concerns of Section X "Of Miracles," and the Dialogues, although Hume refers to and uses these emphases also in Section XI of the first Inquiry and in the Natural History. In relation to the first step, he starts with belief or belief sets in both Section X and the Dialogues, as well as in the other locations.

Third step.—Although Credulity and Pyrrhonism are or may seem to be the actual and most reasonable termini of such inquiry, yet in pure form neither is satisfactory or defensible. The "vulgar" believe without credentials and

7Ref. above, chap. iii, pp. 122-134.
the "learned" use their credentials inappropriately. Pyrrhonism would seem to be the natural result of such sceptical conclusions. Hume, however, raises another problem. Just as Step Two was involved with questions of method and evidence, so too is Step Three. If those evidential and methodological claims that are usually made are not justified, then, Hume asks, what should be the criteria by means of which evidence could be checked to assure correct judgment and warranted belief?

Of one thing he is sure, viz., whatever the criteria are, they must avoid the errors of those three approaches that do not provide a basis, a rational, defensible, sound basis, for warranted belief. One method of "reasoning" is inappropriate for "matter of fact and existence." But another method is at least more appropriate, if its misuse can be corrected. What Hume attempts is to take what he can from the more appropriate method and use these salvaged aspects to their limits of usefulness. These he combines with the idealized technique of the "experimental method," and attempts to construct--reconstruct is more accurate--new or a new "logics," that is, reconstructed standards or criteria for correct judgment and warranted belief. These are based on presuppositions of regularity and uniformity of nature and human nature, and involve utilization of a two-part hypothesis, a process of experiment collection, verification and inference raised to generalization and thence to
"proof." (I will return to these in the next step and in the next major section below.) Perhaps the best summary advice that Hume projects from his reconstructed criteria is: "A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence."⁸

Although I suppose I must discuss these criteria more fully, and in part again (below), I will mention their general status here. Hume introduces these in the first Inquiry. He uses and emphasizes them in Section X, and re-emphasizes them in the Dialogues. In these locations they serve admirably as bases for criticizing the inadequacy of other methods and the status of their conclusions. Although in part presupposing the statement of the criteria after the first Inquiry, even in the Dialogues, Hume also shows his understanding of inferential limits in Section XI of the first Inquiry, and discusses and uses the criteria in a special and forceful way in the Natural History. Hume presents his "new logics" in the Third Step, and then puts the set to work and "to the test" in the Fourth Step.

Fourth step.—In his Fourth Step, Hume remains aware of the results of his analysis in Step Two and aware of the fact that "few," if any, operate consistently according to the criteria set that he proposes in Step Three. Hume also recognizes that belief persists. Belief remains a real fact

⁸Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. x, p. 110.
of human nature, i.e., a phenomenon of human experience. Proceeding from this recognition, a fairly realistic one and a recognition achieved after his "critical analysis" of Step Two, Hume uses the criteria that he proposes in Step Three. His move is to attempt to (affirm and) vindicate (verify or confirm) the criteria through further analysis and explanation, and to show their corrective and evaluative adequacy.

Belief persists. Hume wants to know "why?" If belief, or a belief, is so persistent, and it is not adequately founded on the grounds and evidence usually claimed, how does belief, or the belief, arise in human nature? Granting the reality of the belief, how does it persist? Why does it persist, if it, indeed, is alogical? What is its nature? Upon what does it depend?

It is here, in Hume's attempts to answer this group of questions—if anywhere—that the reductionistic charge or de facto descriptivist charge have some degree of appropriateness. These charges may take a form somewhat similar to the following: Hume does nothing but psychology. He engages in nothing but de facto description. He does not do philosophy. Etc. (I have mentioned something about these emphases already\(^9\); I will have to return to them again shortly, in relation to further discussion of Hume's criteria and judgment.) For the present, let it be admitted

\(^9\)Ref. above, chap. iv, pp. 180-191.
that Hume does attempt to explain the origin or genesis--"genetic fallacy" also echoes in our thought at this admission. Hume does speak of belief proneness and of "propensities" and "instincts" concerning belief and beliefs. "Natural History" does play a part in his work, especially at this stage.\(^{10}\) To stop here, at this point and with this part, would seem to do two things: it would seem to "validate" or confirm these charges; and it would greatly simplify the interpreter's task. There is a third thing that this would do, however: it would result in deliberately ignoring the additional parts of Hume's procedure or method.

Hume does not stop simply with an indication or identification of a "propensity" or "instinct." These are not "final," for example, in the sense (that we may have been led to think) that his inquiry ends in a kind of "mental geography" in which "mental" has been replaced by non-mental "propensities." Rather, Hume goes on to at least two additional operations. Although he locates many "propensities" and "instincts," and ascribes much to them (to which I have deliberately called attention earlier\(^{11}\)), he provides for the opposition of (at least) some "propensities." This is a corrective action. He uses criteria for correctives of "instincts" and "propensities." Even though they are

\(^{10}\text{Cf. The Natural History of Religion and sec x of the first Inquiry for similar emphases on this point.}\)

\(^{11}\text{For example, ref. above, pp. 188-189.}\)
"natural," some propensities are to be opposed and corrected according to his "new logics." For that matter, even in "discovery" of "propensities" Hume employs the "principles" of his reconstructed standards of belief and judgment, i.e., those bases upon which "the wise" believe and judge or upon which they should. These are cognitive in nature, not essentially and only emotional. He provides them, uses them, and urges their adoption by the "just reasoner."

Hume also judges the value and consequences of beliefs and inferences from knowledge-claims, and (again, as I have noted earlier) of his proposed new "logics" and philosophy. It is worth noting that these steps in method seem particularly relevant for the "two different manners" in which "the science of human nature" can be viewed and studied; in Section I of the first Inquiry Hume says "the one considers man chiefly as born for action," while "the other" "considers man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being." Again: "Man is a reasonable being"; "man is a sociable" and "also an active being." Man "as a reasonable being" would be concerned with criteria, and practical consequences would be of considerable concern for man as a "sociable" and "an active being."

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12 Ref. above, chap. iv, pp. 177-180.
13 *Enquiry* (ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. i, p. 5).
In Section X Hume starts with a given statement or meaning of "miracle" and belief, examines the status of the belief and evidence, reaffirms criteria, and then not only finds a propensity but also proposes correctives, and speaks of practical consequences. Or: Step One, Step Two, Step Three, and Step Four. In the Natural History he traces development of the tenets of "theism," employs criteria for corrective purposes, and considers consequences of beliefs in types of religious tenets.

Stages of Argument, and "Proof"

In his inquiry concerning religion, Hume uses the "three stages of argument" quite strikingly in relation to his Fourth Step. He starts, for example, with a point frequently observed or experienced, i.e., with some "experiments." Then he later notes the regularity of that point, which has now become a general occurrence. Then, still later, this same point, built now upon uniformity, seems to have achieved the status, not of generality, but of a universal. The move is from some exceptions, to none worth considering, to the absence of any exceptions. Hume makes this move, e.g., with regard both to the belief in religious principles and to the nature of consequences that are "connected" with religious belief in more "popular" forms; his conclusions achieve the status of "proof" in both cases—or so it seems.
The general structure of "experimental" procedure or "method" was to form hypotheses from observations of particulars or a number of particular observations. Then, having formed hypotheses about the pattern of particulars, refer this generalization back to experience of particulars for confirmation. If it still held, then it is referred to all particulars (say, for the sake of carefulness, of type A), and it achieves the status of a universal and certain explanatory rule to which there are no exceptions. Moving from an undetermined mode of a few, to a probable rule for many, this "hypothesis" changes to "proof" and is certain. This—and Hume's procedure—bears some similarity to Hume's structure of degrees of probability and "proof" for uniformity. Yet, the probable "proof" easily jumps to the certainty that can be assigned properly only to "demonstration."

Persistent Difficulties

Once we "discover" Hume's procedure in his "logics" and when we are able to understand this work as "propaedeutics," and when we recognize that for Hume the scope of the "logics" and "propaedeutics" is (for) the area of "moral philosophy," it is less difficult to find Hume's guide and his directions toward solutions for some persisting puzzles about his "works on religion." The real difficulties, here as elsewhere, consist in detecting what Hume actually does and does not do—not in finding others who are willing to
tell us what he has and has not done. However, there are some problems that have a peculiar persistence; they are strongly entrenched in the "tradition" that I mentioned in Chapter I, and in the less formal but equally real "mind-set." For this reason, even though I have given some attention to aspects of them earlier, attention to these difficulties and an advance of earlier discussion are fitting here.

The "Two-Part Hypothesis" Again

Although I discussed Hume's "two-part hypothesis" to some extent, specifically in the context of the first Inquiry,16 Some further comment apparently must be made; it is fitting here to consider the relation of this "two-part hypothesis" to judgment and warranted belief and criteria.

Among the most interesting facts of Hume's process of inquiry are the facts that what he refers to as "propensity" or "instinct" in human nature is not always his final termination point of inquiry, and that such "propensity" or "instinct" is not a sensationalistic atomic simple. Rather, Hume proceeds beyond this point and the "propensity" achieved through reflective analysis is an unanalyzable complex.

Yet, how can such a thing be possible, and how can

such things fit together, given Hume's "proposition," i.e.,
his "Simples Test" and his "Associationist Principles"?
This form of objection or question and a traditional answer
take too much for granted; too much is considered "given,"
too many "facts," which are not borne up by the evidence of
Hume's procedure, are assumed. This calls for further ex-
plication.

What is assumed? Chiefly that Hume adheres complete-
ly and slavishly to what I have termed his (or, a) "two-part
hypothesis." Part I is the Reductionist Model or the sup-
posed "Simples Test" for meaningfulness; Part II is the
"Associationist Mechanism." (And, of course, a number of
consequences are claimed to follow from such adherence.)
There is a certain attraction about this, not the least of
which is the simplicity of the interpreter's task, viz.,
simply to point out "the obvious" conclusions. One of the
difficulties with such an interpretation or "supposed to"
case, however, is that Hume does not operate this way, at
least not quite the way he is supposed to in order to adhere
to the conditions of this interpretation. There is some
similarity here to the temptation to stop short of Hume's
full work with respect to scepticism. There is the similar-
ity that we would then discover a "philosophic sceptic" in-
deed. There is a similar difficulty also: namely, that
either the "mind" is adequate to ascertain its own limits
and explain clearly those things it can and cannot deal
with and "know," and hence overcome its own self-proclaimed limitations; or, the "mind" is not adequate to ascertain its own limits, and hence, does not possess credentials or ability to engage in self-analysis— which Hume does.

The claim of such an interpretation is roughly similar to the following. Hume is supposed to employ the first part as the simple, exhaustive, final test, condition, or definition of meaningfulness. (It will be apparent that I am grouping several versions together; this is because I understand them to depend upon certain common assumptions.) The Reductionist model seems to be the analysis of compounds to simples, compound ideas to simple ideas, and further, simple ideas to simple "impressions" of sensation. The technique prescribes that if we can resolve (reduce) an idea or compound idea to a simple idea and that to a simple "sensation," we then have a clear idea, a term free from ambiguity, and terms and ideas that are meaningful. Meeting this test is the prerequisite for meaningfulness; what cannot or does not meet this test is therefore without meaningfulness, or is meaningless.

A careful reader cannot help but notice that Hume simply does not, or does not simply, follow this in precise detail and without significant exception. If he had, his conclusions would have been: if there is no simple impression ("sensation"), achieved through reductive analysis of compounds, there is no meaning. But this is not so for Hume.
Hume uses both parts of the "two-part hypothesis." However, he seldom concludes the obvious sensationalist consequence appropriate to the first part, and seldom stops with a simple associationist designation appropriate to the second part. In practice, Hume proceeds along "accepted" lines, but only so far; then he departs. His departure, however, apparently has not been noticed universally.

Hume uses the "Simples Test" to check for meaning, obscurity and ambiguity; I discussed how he explains and exemplifies this use, or perhaps these uses, in Section V and Sections VII and VIII. In Section VIII, for example, Hume deals with ambiguity and "verbal disputes" arising from ambiguity. In Section VII he deals with obscurity and the difficulties surrounding confused ideas. He was in touch with terms and words and their common use; I have noted that in his earlier contact with religious problems he started with "common opinion." A trace of this persists in his philosophical maturity. He was concerned with meanings, chiefly that they be clear and that we be aware of how they are annexed to words, and that we take steps to avoid loose association and confusion. He was concerned that our ideas be clear, and that we be "clear" about the status of our ideas; and, regardless of the possibility or impossibility of tracing them to a simple "sensation" or impression,

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we should be aware of their status, and being aware would assist our evaluation of their meaning. However, there can be meaningful ideas even though they cannot be traced or reduced to a sensationalistic simple. Disputes, where verbal only, can be resolved by removing the ambiguity of terms and discovering clear, reasonable meanings. Removing obscurity of ideas, a distinguishable but related matter, assists such resolution.18

Yes, Hume uses the "simples test." But, as I have just mentioned, his use amounts to a limited use, and thus perhaps a recognition of the limited usefulness of the point "if a proper use were made of it,"19 as well as the necessity for "a proper application of it."20 He does not pursue the "simples test" unreservedly to its obvious conclusion, (in addition) for example, in reference to the "solution" of necessary connection and cause.21 He does not deny that they have meaning. Rather, even though no reductionistic analysis to a simple sense "impression" is possible, these still have meaning. Nor does the supposedly

18Cf. these remarks in secs. vii and viii of the first Enquiry with the footnotes that Hume places in the Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, sec. xii, p. 219; this footnote is in Hume's own person, not attributed to any of the "characters" of the "dialogues."


obvious conclusion follow in his treatment of necessity and liberty.\textsuperscript{22} Nor in his analysis of inference, expectation, and belief, as a whole.\textsuperscript{23} It seems that the import of this, then, is: if we cannot resolve, i.e., reduce, an idea in this brute sensationist way, we must recognize it is an irreducible complex that nevertheless seems to have the force of an impression of sense and certainly continues to have meaning. The Reductionist Model, then, is of limited usefulness, and, whether Hume explicitly emphasizes admission of it or not, his procedure bears out that its usefulness is limited; he proceeds as if he were, at least at times, aware of this.

Hume uses the principles of the association of ideas, the second part of the "two-part hypothesis," as principles of explanation for the operations of the mind upon its contents, i.e., its ideas. Although he takes them to be operations in unreflective "human nature," Hume discovers them by reflective analysis. Also, he uses them in his reflective methodology. The regularity involved with these "associations" is probably more important than the enumeration of the principles, for regularity is more of a pervading and logically prior presupposition for Hume. Hume was

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Enquiry} \textit{CHU}, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. viii. Cf. above, pp. 201-206.

\textsuperscript{23}Ref. above, n. 18.
committed to the broad scope of uniformity in all nature, including human nature.

Confusion arises easily through trying to force the whole of what Hume does into a latter-day sensation-ism. Factually, the reduction of space and discussion, i.e., of Section III in the final form of the first Inquiry, that Hume gave to these principles may well be indicative of his growing dissatisfaction with his "inventions." Yet, he retained the idea, closing with recognition of incompleteness and his inability to supply, or perhaps even seriously attempt, in the later period, to supply, convincing "proof" of his list. He uses "connect" and its forms six times in the final reduced form of Section III; he uses "association" only twice. And he retained commitment that the relation of ideas (association is a relation) is regular and that there are "principles" not only by which the ideas regularly occur and the mind operates upon them but also by which such order and operations are explainable.

With respect to the first part of the so-called "simples test." Hume recognized that this test has limits of usefulness as a test (or as the criterion) of meaningfulness. Yet, he retains it, using it to the "appropriate" limits, but seems to have noted difficulties involved in unrestricted use when he was so concerned to emphasize that successful

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24 Cf. above, pp. 189-190.
consequences depend on its "appropriate" and "proper" use. He also seems to recognize that any reductionist analysis of ideas to "simple impressions" of a brute sensationalist form neither adequately solves the problems of meaning and value (evaluation), nor provides needed criteria for reflective judgment. Even the tracing, perhaps "reducing," of ideas to the origin that he does is not a final point of fulfillment in Hume's endeavor, not at least as a sensationalist thesis would have it. Rather he examines usual proposed and claimed bases for beliefs, finds them wanting, and proposes new bases or criteria, bases which he attempts to embody and exemplify in his methodology and reflective analysis.

Reflective Analysis and Criteria for Belief and Judgment

Hume refers to the "experimental method." His method is "experimental" or "experiential" in that his "experiments" are selected from human nature or the experience of man--his own, that of others, history. It is true, and of some import, that his selection and collection have considerable bearing on the status of his conclusions. Yet his activity consists in more than selection and collection. Hume engages in reflective analysis upon man's experience and selected "experiments." Most of the beliefs and "ideas" of beliefs that challenged Hume most and maintained his interest longest were not impressions of the "senses" per se,
that is, not "sensations" of a sensation-ism; rather, they were "impressions" deriving from man's reflection upon his experience, or Hume's reflection upon common experience of man. 25

Belief, evidence, and human nature are among Hume's central and constant concerns. The way men "think" interested Hume, especially what, how, and why, and the evidence and evidential grounds that they propose for what and why they believe. That men believe is one thing. Hume does not deny this fact of belief but rather affirms it. That there is evidence adequate to support, establish, or justify their belief structure is quite another thing. Hume does deny the adequacy of evidence usually cited for this purpose (or, for these purposes). That men continue to believe, regardless of the status of the adequacy of the usually cited supporting evidence, Hume does not deny but rather affirms.

Yet it must be noted that Hume's analysis is the result of a reflective activity. He uses and presupposes a number of (what, to strict sensation-ism, would be) those "unknowns" and "inexplicable" ideas which he tries to analyze. The method he uses goes beyond the limits of negative inquiry to the discovery, if not of a strictly simple "sensation," at least of a feeling that he cannot further

25 Cf. Basson, D. Hume, pp. 19-20, 25f, 92f; Basson there tells us of "Hume's notion of experiment," how such experiments are invariably introspective in nature, and how he deals with things which are perfectly obvious to anyone. It seems as if Mr. Basson may have missed several points here.
explicate or reduce according to the two models of the basic
two-part hypothesis. Belief and custom, habit and educa-
tion, experience, evidence, and human nature are central
cases at point. He speaks of understanding, of "impress-
sions" of reflection, of mind and the mind operating upon
the data of sense and the data of its own ideas and opera-
tions; he attempts to explain meaning and evaluate evidence
and knowledge-claims, and he attempts to give criteria for
wise judgment.

Hume's inquiry beyond the sceptical and the negative
may suggest an alogical basis, especially when considered in
light of the inappropriate "logics" of the methods usually
employed. Yet Hume proposes a new "logics," his supplement
or corrective for the neglected and inappropriate uses in
the "logics of probability and other measures of evidence";
his "logics" is a propaedeutic, conceived as necessary for
proper examination and inquiry and evaluation in the area of
"moral philosophy." He criticizes methods as a part of his
method, yet this is not the whole of his method. He goes on,
using an extension of the "experimental method"; I have
termed this his second level of method.26 That is, having
proposed criteria for standards (degrees) of reliable (well-
founded or warranted) belief, Hume goes on to exemplify his
method and criteria, and judges and provides grounds for

26 Cf. above, chap. iii, pp. 140-145, "Two Levels."
judging his conclusions, by these reconstructed standards which he proposes. Here, in going beyond mere origin to reflective development of "mind" and grounds for judgment is a matter of importance.

But what about this "feeling" that I mentioned above? In point of fact, Hume conceives and describes "feeling" after the fashion, not of an end reached after reduction of an analyzable compound, but of an unanalyzable complex. "Expectation" is a kind of feeling. "Belief" is a (kind of) feeling or manner of expected conception of the as yet unexperienced (future) event. "Necessary connexion" is a feeling, a felt connection in the "mind." "Proof" is a felt certainty. Religion, or rather the tenets of "theism," as construed by Hume, are termed a feeling and are related to man's attempt to deal with the "future."

But I have said (admitted) that Hume engages in tracing an idea's origin and deals with "propensities." Is this not really the end of his "Enquiries" and his "enquiries"? No. It is true that, in Section X, e.g., as elsewhere, Hume speaks often of "the strong propensity of mankind," "the usual propensity of mankind," and "inclination," "passion," and "sensible tendency," and "our

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27 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. x, p. 118.
28 Ibid., p. 119.
29 Ibid., pp. 119, 117.
natural way" and "man's inclination."30 Yet, to stop here, however tempting, is to ignore completely another equally real side of Hume's activity—and his words. This side I have been referring to as his reconstructed standards or criteria for wise judgment and warranted belief.

Also in Section X, e.g., and elsewhere, Hume speaks of the procedure of "a just reasoner,"31 how "the wise" should proceed,32 what "solution" is appropriate when "we judge" properly or appropriately,33 the "usual reasoning" that men follow in areas of inquiry and operation,34 how we should or ought to bring in "check" certain propensities and inclinations and departures from "just reasoning," chiefly by a "check from sense and learning" ("good sense" and reflective evaluation).35 He is much concerned with how the "just reasoner" operates "when at last he fixes his judgement"36 and with "all judgements of this kind."37

What rules or criteria or reconstructed standards

30 Enquiry of Hume, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 121.
31 Ibid., p. 124.
32 Ibid., p. 125.
33 Ibid., pp. 126, 128.
34 Ibid., p. 117.
35 Ibid., sec. x, p. 119.
36 Ibid., p. 111.
37 Ibid., p. 112.
does Hume propose? According to Hume the rules that "a wise man" or "just reasoner" ought to follow are the following. He ought to recognize that:

Though experience be our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact; it must be acknowledged, that this guide is not altogether infallible, but in some cases is apt to lead us into errors. . . . All effects follow not with like certainty from their supposed causes. Some events are found, in all countries and all ages, to have been constantly conjoined together; Others are found to have been more variable, and sometimes to disappoint our expectations; so that, in our reasonings concerning matter of fact, there are all imaginable degrees of assurance, from the highest certainty to the lowest species of moral evidence. 38

A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full proof of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: He weighs the opposite experiments: He considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments: to that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgment, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability. All probability, then, supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence, proportioned to the superiority. A hundred instances or experiments on one side, and fifty on another, afford a doubtful expectation of any event; though a hundred uniform experiments, with only one that is contradictory, reasonably beget a pretty strong degree of assurance. In all cases, we must balance the opposite experiments, where they are opposite, and deduct the smaller number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence. 39

38 Ibid., p. 110.
39 Ibid., pp. 110-111.
Hume structured this range in a footnote in Section VI, where he says:

But to conform our language more to common use, we ought to divide arguments into demonstrations, proofs, and probabilities. By proofs meaning such arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt or opposition.\(^{40}\)

Hume's discussion or presentation in this section, "Of Probability," is the essence of a standard.\(^{41}\) This was what he was concerned to direct attention to in the Abstract, viz., of probability and those other measures of evidence.

Though we give the preference to that which has been found most usual, and believe that this effect will exist, we must not overlook the other effects, but must assign to each of them a particular weight and authority, in proportion as we have found it to be more or less frequent.\(^{42}\)

Again: "All causes are not conjoined to their usual effects with like uniformity."\(^{43}\)

Thus, according to the conditions set in "Of Probability" and those reinforced and admitted in other locations, "a wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence." The range of argument, evidence, and belief are set according to the criteria for just reasoning and sound judgment. These are reconstructed standards for consideration of relevant evidence through reflective analysis

\(^{40}\)Ibid., sec. vi, p. 56, n. 1.

\(^{41}\)Especially, p. 58.

\(^{42}\)Enquiry CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. vi, p. 58.

\(^{43}\)Ibid., sec. viii, p. 86.
and evaluation, and the exercise of a corrected judgment for warranted belief. (As I have mentioned, though Hume carefully sets these in one level of method, he exceeds the bounds of his guide when he exercises or uses them on another level of method.)

Hume recognizes belief as "an act of the mind." Belief has the force of distinguishing "ideas of the judgment" from "fictions of the imagination." Belief provides "the governing principles of our actions." Again, then, belief is relevant for man as "a reasonable being" and for man as a "social" and "active being."

Belief is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgement from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more weight and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; enforces them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of our actions.\(^4\)

It should be inserted here that when Hume notes that "this manner of conception arises from a customary conjunction of the object with something present to the memory and senses,"\(^5\) he allows for the effect of education and training. This comes in for brief though not unimportant mention at different places in his inquiries. He calls attention to "the great force of custom and education, which mould the human mind from its infancy and form it into a


fixed and established character” in the first Inquiry. 46

This seems to provide some reason for what would otherwise seem to be an irrelevant lengthy discussion of educational programs or curricula in the opening section of the Dialogues. 47

Just as the effect of Hume's work is an act of reflective judgment, so the criteria he proposes are given for reflective evaluation of the evidence, for well-founded belief, or the warrants of belief and judgment of opinion. Considering beliefs and balancing belief according to the weight and relevance of the evidence is an act of judgment. Reflectively evaluating or assessing the warrant of beliefs is an act of judgment, employing criteria. This Hume does, and he proposes that others engage in this activity and accept these criteria of judgment, or at least the "few" "wise" and "just reasoners."

‘Inquiry Concerning Religion’

Bases for this Label

My major concerns have been to show that Hume uses the same method when he inquires in the area of religion as he uses in his so-called general philosophy; to show that a sense of perspective, different from the traditional

46 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. viii, p. 86.
approach, is needed to understand Hume's works in their order of proportional importance; and to indicate what these "conditions" are. These I believe I have already indicated and shown. However, I also remarked that in the process of providing for these conditions, method, context, and perspective, the basis for some answers to the questions serving as termini of my study would also be provided. Thus, perhaps I should point out samples or illustrative cases of how this is so, viz., by attending to at least some aspects of Hume's inquiries in religion, while not in any way pretending to the completeness of a "commentary."

Before I turn to these examples, however, I will indicate the general structure of Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' The main reason (reasons, actually) that I refer to these works with this label is that, considered together, they exemplify Hume's process of inquiry. They embody and are structured according to his steps of method. His stages of argument are pushed into service for extreme conclusions, no apology for "proof" claims. He exemplifies judgment, and uses his criteria of judgment in reflective analysis upon a given content of selectively collected "experiments" or "experiences." And, not the least of the reasons, Hume gives us more than "hints" of the relatedness or relation that exists between these three works. These works, or this 'Inquiry,' embody and highlight specifically those concerns that are central in Hume's philosophical inquiries. These
reasons and the conclusions following from them should hardly be a surprise, though that such evidence exists seems not to have been universally recognized. Yet that Hume follows a familiar pattern in his treatment of religion is (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Basson) "what we would expect" if we were to hold that Hume uses and follows the same method when he inquires into religion as he employs in the whole of his "moral philosophy." I hold such a view, chiefly because Hume uses the same method.

But it might possibly still be objected, Hume does not do this in the Dialogues. That is quite true. As a matter of fact, this has been one of the points that I have maintained from the first chapter. However, to argue that since Hume does not precisely and unequivocally demonstrate the totality of method and content within the limits of the Dialogues, therefore he does not concern himself with these matters when he treats the area of religion, is to commit a factual, if not also a logical, blunder. The tacit or assumed premise, which is incorrect (false), is that the Dialogues is the whole of Hume's treatment of religion, and that any "ordered analysis" with respect to this topic of inquiry must derive from the Dialogues-only.

The exact reproduction of Hume's methodological steps and contents of concern are not found unequivocally in the Dialogues alone. The contention and assumption of the
prescriptive force of this commitment about the "Dialogues-only" has produced more confusion than enlightenment, and serves as at least some grounds for ignoring so "oblique" a work until a sound interpretive perspective is acquired from more reliable "conditions." Yet in the 'Inquiry Concerning Religion' Hume combines negative analysis with positive corrective, logical inquiry with concern for practical consequences. Logic, biography, and Hume's directions seem united in pointing to the paradigmatic import of this area.

Specific structure: Phases of 'Inquiry'.—Regardless of what now seems to me to be the united testimony of evidence (or, as Hume would say, "'tis evident"), this has not always been completely obvious to all students of Hume. At least part of the obscurity may have been produced by the difficulties of understanding the duality of contexts and plurality of functions of Sections X and XI of the first Inquiry. One could infer that it is easy to miss these contexts and functions (as well as the sameness of method and other points), and, having missed these, misinterpretation easily follows. Hume includes "religion" and "theological issues" in this work of "first studies" and "epistemological" inquiry. Hume does not simply reproduce these sections in later works. Rather they constitute the first phase of his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion," especially Section X. These sections are not simply "about religion." Rather, they are also integral parts (of the structure and design) of the
"logics" or first Inquiry. At the same time, they are about or involved in religious inquiry.

Put in a general descriptive form, these Sections and Phase I include the following. In Section X Hume presents the range and conditions of warranted belief, its standards and limits when "experience" is extended beyond direct experience to indirect experience; he includes concern with "just reasoning" posed against or serving as restriction upon "propensity." He examines, within the context of the first Inquiry, the basis of (for) "revealed religion"; he examines the credibility of the means by which "miracles" are so often used to "establish" one or another "system of religion."

In Section XI Hume includes an examination of the outer limits of "just reasoning." He indicates and inquires concerning the range, conditions, and limits of inference and "knowledge" by inference. This he does in attending to the "design argument" and inferential consequences. These sections exemplify the heart of Hume's first Inquiry—in a real sense, of his continuing "enquiries"—applied and with consequences drawn.

Hume was not unaware of this fact. With specific intention he determined to use these sections as the basis for a more detailed account of several issues. His treatment of "religion" in two further "phases" was the result. The more detailed account, which constitutes an extension of inquiry
as well as a more detailed examination, was published later and separately, but still this combination serves as a paradigm of his philosophy and method. (I have noted before that when Hume was engaged in preparation of the *Natural History*, he changed the title of Section XI. He more clearly deals with "consequences" in the *Natural History*, and the revised title of Section XI only indicates implications for some consequences and in "general." Even these, however, are introduced in the later work.)

Hume's early, continuing, and final concern with the area of religion also leads to the conclusion of the paradigmatic status of these works, viz., his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' Recall that Hume's early hope in the *Treatise* was that, whatever improvements resulted from his philosophy,

*these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion.*

And, from his last published work, the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Hume speaks through Pamphilus:

*But these are topics so interesting that we cannot restrain our restless enquiry with regard to them;*

Hume apparently began writing the *Dialogues* (in all probability, based on much earlier notes) during or shortly after:

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after his involvement with the revision of the first Inquiry for its second edition (1750-51). Professor Kemp Smith remarks that:

The manuscript of Hume's Dialogues in the library of the Royal Society of Edinburgh . . . gives what we may believe to be the first version of the Dialogues, as composed in the period 1751-5.50 (It is in his critical examination of the manuscript, of its phrasing, additions, corrections, notes, and the water-marks of the paper and the use of these to determine the dates of the different revisions and parts, that I believe Professor Kemp Smith presented a "definitive" and excellent, ingenious, and invaluable study for students of Hume.51) Kemp Smith also notes, in a rather peripheral way, that Hume's Natural History of Religion was "composed almost simultaneously with the Dialogues."52 Although Kemp Smith doesn't bother to support it (at the place of statement), there is evidence for this point, e.g., in Hume's correspondence to Millar and in the account of the difficulties of publication of the "Four Dissertations."53

Hume provides the key to understanding the relation between the Dialogues and the Natural History. He does not

employ the "devisive" or "oblique" dialogue form when, in the opening paragraph of the "Author's Introduction" to the *Natural History*, he says:

as every enquiry, which regards religion, is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular, which challenge our attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its origin in human nature.54

In the *Dialogues* Hume directs attention to the first of these "two questions." And in the *Natural History* Hume directs attention to "the other question, concerning the origin of religion in human nature," viz.:

What those principles are, which give rise to the original belief, and what those accidents and causes are, which direct its operations, is the subject of our present enquiry.55

Thus, Hume provides the key to understanding the relation between the *Dialogues* and the *Natural History* and for their constituting, respectively, Phase II and Phase III of his "Inquiry Concerning Religion."

Now if there is any reason to take Hume seriously on these points or directions, certain interesting consequences follow. There are two fairly good reasons to take Hume seriously: these are the topics with which Hume deals in the respective works; and, in these works and in dealing with these topics Hume employs precisely the method that he uses in his "logics." Thus, it seems to follow that Hume

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55 Ibid.
treats the area of "religion" as a "science," viz., as a subject of inquiry, and that Hume proposes to employ the same method in this phase of inquiry that he uses in the first Inquiry. The first Inquiry is thus doubly related to these works: it is related to them as "first studies," concerning methodology and what was called "logics"; and it is related to them in that they constitute expansions of paradigm areas, as well as partial duplication of content.

There is a further relation, namely, the first Inquiry contains a part, Phase I, of Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.'

There is, or should be, now a better basis for understanding why these three works, the first Inquiry, Dialogues, and Natural History, possess strikingly similar topics, arguments, expressions, illustrations, and central issues. In addition to those already mentioned, consider the following. The "argument from design" is discussed in both Section XI and the Dialogues. Limits of inference are at issue in both Section XI (Enquiry cHU, i.e.) and the Dialogues. Practical consequences are of considerable importance in Section XI and in the Natural History; they are of some concern in the Dialogues, also. The "miraculous" and "propensity" and the relation of the two, as well as corrective suggestions, constitute important concerns of

both Section X and the Natural History. The actions of the "vulgar" and the value of amazement produced by propensities and the unnatural are concerns in both Section X and the Natural History; so are history and uniformity. Concern over "origins" of ideas and concepts is importantly a part of Section XI and the Natural History. A concern with and use of corrective standards appear as integral parts of Section X and the Natural History and of the Dialogues. (Let these serve as examples.) Considered together, these three works may not inappropriately be termed 'Hume's Inquiry Concerning Religion.' At the same time, this 'Inquiry' constitutes a paradigm of Hume's mature philosophy and the fulfillment of a persisting goal.

There are further consequences. If this way of understanding Hume and his works is correct, then much of the treatment by Kemp Smith and Basson is quite questionable and much of their treatment of Hume and his works takes on a difference of meaning, different from what Hume gives in his analysis and arguments. I propose to consider several aspects of these three works by Hume; these aspects are in the works; either they have been neglected or, when treated, their import seems to have been misunderstood. By attending to these aspects I hope to further provide a more proper perspective and enhance the credibility of this more balanced view.
Aspects of Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion'

Hume proceeds along the lines of his "experimental" or "experiential" method. But, in the case of "religion," an additional problem arises, one with which he has to come to terms. That is, the appeal made so often to "the miraculous" or "Revelation." Hume has to deal with this before he can turn attention to the establishment of religion by forms of argument. It is true that some of the spokesmen for religion did speak of demonstrating that something was a revelation or of proving revelation and miracle, but Hume was not unaware of this.

Hume did not depend upon the Dialogues-alone or even primarily to answer this initial or "orthodox" stance concerning revelation or the miraculous. Rather he treated it principally in the Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, in Section X "Of Miracles." Since this, then, constitutes his first phase of treatment of the religious issue, it seems appropriate to direct attention to it first. The three works that may be considered as Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion,' I have said, consist in the first Inquiry, the Dialogues, and the Natural History. They are appropriately considered in that order, and it is more than baselessly conjectural that, in addition to their philo-
sophical internal relation, Hume conceived them in this order and attempted to write them in this order. It is
worthy of note that biographical and temporal order seem to coincide with "logical" order here.

"Miracles," Testimony and belief.--The matter before us now consists in an examination of the import and significance of Sections X and XI in their dual context and with their plural functions. It might be well to keep in mind that Hume attempts to treat of probabilities and those other measures of evidence on which life and action entirely depend, and which are our guides even in most of our philosophical speculations.

What Hume does in Section X "Of Miracles" may be put or grouped under three headings: the internal relation to the argument of the first Inquiry; "an act of courage"; and Phase I of his 'Inquiry' concerning religion.

Hume points out the internal relation of this section to the structure of the Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding in the footnote (generally ignored) of Section IX. In effect he explains that while we depend on introspection of self and observation of others and animals for "experiments," we also depend largely on extending our "observations" through history, historical reports, or the testimony of others. This constitutes a report of actions and events, and being a step beyond or more removed from direct experience, this "indirect" experience should be examined for

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57 Ref. above, chap. v, pp. 250-256.
reliability or the basis of belief. Although the whole note is of relevance, consider the following three paragraphs especially.

7. When we reason from analogies, the man, who has the greater experience or the greater promptitude of suggesting analogies, will be the better reasoner.

8. Bypasses from prejudice, education, passion, party, &c. hang more upon one mind than another.

9. After we have acquired a confidence in human testimony, books and conversation enlarge much more the sphere of one man's experience and thought than those of another.59

Thus does Hume prepare for Section X, "Of Miracles."

So enamoured with the term "miracles" do we become that we tend to overlook a positive point here. Hume says that testimony of men ("history") is usually reliable, because there is usually a correspondence between testimony or the witnesses' reports and the event or "fact" reported. In this section Hume gives the criteria for "a confidence in human testimony" or this "enlarged sphere of experience and thought," viz., his enlarged source of "experiments."

So much does Hume depend upon this source, including his treatment of religion, especially in the Natural History, that some positive assurance concerning reliability indeed is relevant.

For some time I was considerably puzzled over why this section should come, as it does, after Hume apparently

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59 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. ix, p. 107, n. 1. Italics mine.
contends that he has given a "proof" of his thesis or analysis in Section IX. However, the problem seems less troubling when we consider: that not only does "exception" constitute a decidedly relevant concern for our "experimental moral philosopher," but that this kind or type of "exception," i.e., secular or religious "miracle" (religiously, related to revelation by the divinity), constitutes the most relevant of the class, because "miracle" and "testimony" were held to be counters or "exceptions" to Hume's whole line of reasoning. Actually, Hume is engaged in a "double-play" here. I have called attention to the frequently neglected point that the positive point in this section, i.e., X, is that history or human testimony is usually reliable, for there is usually a correspondence between testimony and fact—Hume, when exercising conscious care, would have to say the two are frequently "conjoined." But there are exceptions, the most striking of which is testimony concerning religious miracles. Not a small part of the "striking" characteristic involves the claim, usually explicitly made, that the event about which testimony is given actually occurred, and that the testimony is authentic and reliable. Now, if Hume can deal with this class of exception or exceptions, not only will he provide a basis for "enlarging his sphere of experiments," but also he will provide further confirmatory evidence for the status of his method, i.e., in the very act of dealing with that which is usually
considered to be an exception to his whole approach. (Reference to "miracles" and various uses of such events were common among both religious orthodoxy and deviants from orthodoxy.)

Second, in publishing this "Essay," as it became known, Hume at last fulfills, or embarks upon fulfilling, an "act of courage" to counter his confessed "act of cowardice." The exclusion of "Some Reasonings concerning Miracles" from the Treatise is what Hume referred to as his "cowardice"; he considered this excluded portion to be among the work's best or "noblest parts." Now, in his mature philosophy, Hume took this step, his first step, in the explicit public treatment of "religious" issues or what is usually taken as such. Although this may be considered a biographical fact, it is also a philosophical fact in that this concern is of philosophical significance for both "inquiries." Bluntly put, Hume struggled with "religion" on an intellectual and philosophical level as well as on an emotional and psychological level, and it's high time we recognized and admitted it.60

60 I have avoided mention and introduction of Hume's Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, at least as much as possible, for two reasons. (One important exception, involving a traditional interpretation, is in chap. ii, pp. 85-88, above; cf. pp. 78-85.) First, not many of the "essays" are especially relevant for Hume's "mature" statement of his philosophy or for the paradigm that I propose that he formed. Second, mention of these essays, at any length, would involve me in a somewhat broader thesis than the one
Third, Hume treated or inquired into one phase of the area of religion, viz., that which is non-natural, or

I propose, namely, that three works, the *Inquiry* and *Dialogues*, and *Natural History*, contain the principles of interpretation within them, and that these works, taken together, constitute Hume's mature and approved statement of his work on religion; and, centrally, my statement of intent, viz., that I am concerned to provide, not a complete and detailed, exhaustive commentary, but rather a much needed perspective.

However, there are a few comments that I cannot refrain from making. But, I will introduce them in a footnote. There are special indications of an evolving methodological development in other of Hume's works. Hume wrote about "two species of false religion" quite a bit earlier than the 1750's. "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" was one of his Essays MPL, Essay X, and was published in Vol. I in 1741. But let me review some points before I extend comments related to them. (1) Not quite so incidentally, this was the group of "Essays" that Hume had originally intended to have published "in a weekly periodical," as "periodical essays": ref. Mossner, *Life*, p. 138. And Mossner notes: "Describing the anonymous writer as a 'new Author,' Hume in the preface affords the first outward sign that Hume was already beginning to dissociate himself from the Treatise." Ref. Mossner, *Life*, p. 139; cf. above, chap. ii, pp. 85-88. (ii) I have noted in the text of chap. ii above, a common confusion of "Essays" MPL with Philosophical Essays and certain unfortunate consequences. (iii) Hume was quite disappointed about the reception, or lack thereof, of his first volume of the Treatise. This is not a matter of controversy. Interpretation of this fact may be, but the fact is hardly open to question. Nor is the fact that Hume, almost immediately after completing the second volume of the Treatise for publication, turned to preparation of the Essays, MPL. It may be that many of the topics that he discusses in these Essays had originally been intended as the fulfillment of his "system," and that this phase, possibly projected as Books IV and V of the Treatise, was now withheld from publication in that form. Withheld because, that is, of the "dictates of the public" in not being widely enthusiastic about the first volume. Hume's correspondence of the period and reflection in later times indicate that he believed there was considerable need for revision of his original project.

Regardless of the conjectural aspects of this matter, it is not conjectural that the Essays, MPL is a most interesting example of the principles of Hume's philosophy and
in the language of theology, "special revelation," "supernatural." This was considered to be the basis or founding methodology applied or "put to work" in very "practical" areas. He speaks out with remarkable assurance in many of these essays—remarkable, indeed, for "an unmitigated Sceptic."

(iv) Although most of these "Essays" are generally ignored, in some of them Hume is most severely and openly critical of religion and clergy. (By the remark that most of these are generally ignored, I mean that this is the case when such concerns as those of this study are involved. If the general topics of "religion" and "Hume's attitude toward religion" are involved "in general," there are certain exceptions: viz., "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," and one or more of the four essays entitled "The Epicurean," "The Stoic," "The Platonist," and "The Sceptic." With these, the introductory footnote by means of which Hume interprets the purpose of the four is, however, seldom taken seriously. Perhaps another essay is relevant, and sometimes considered, viz., "Of the Dignity or Meaness of Human Nature." In other words, Essays X, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, and XI, respectively—some or all—may be considered, and these are chiefly from Vol. I. In final approved form, there are two volumes, twenty-three essays in the first volume and sixteen in the second.) Indeed he is outspoken to such an extent that one might be tempted to borrow Kemp Smith's description of the Dialogues, and say he seems to be "much more sheerly negative than has generally been held." Ref. Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. vi. I cannot but wonder if these essays and their severe criticism of the clergy could not have had a greater effect than the Treatise on "the clergy" who so strongly and successfully opposed Hume's candidacy for university professorships, esp. at Edingurgh in 1744-1745. (As I have noted in the text above, Mossner believes that the opposition was due to the very-much-alive influence of the Treatise.)

(v) This much is beyond conjecture, although I do not recall having found others make much of it: In the Essays, MPL Hume speaks of "false religion," of "superstition," and of "enthusiasm" as "corruptions of true religion"; he speaks of the effects of these, of the "clergy" as well as the "priests"; of the variety of "sects," religious as well as political and other, and shows a striking knowledge of both the labels of identification and the issues or topics of discussion and controversy in the religious area (arena) of his time and earlier. And, of no less and perhaps more importance, there are traces of just such a methodological structure as (I have found that) Hume displays more
principle of "religion." It was frequently put forward as the claim for and the authenticating event of what was fully developed in the first Inquiry, and there are repeated uses of and reference to most of those points that I have held are central to Hume's mature philosophy.

It is interesting, but somewhat disturbing, to "discover" the contrast of tone and words of these Essays with those of the Dialogues and then consider Kemp Smith's insistence that Hume, who knew that he would not live to see the Dialogues in print or to feel any possible rebuke or reaction, was following prudential safeguards in order to get the work published in the mid- to late-1770's. We might reasonably ask where, then, are the needs for such press-demanded safeguards in this work published more than thirty to thirty-five years earlier? (The publication date of the Essays, MPL, 1741-1742; of the Dialogues, 1779--Hume's last revision of the latter work, Kemp Smith shows, was probably in 1776, shortly before his death.) Or, do we ignore the changes in this period? Consider: (a) both the formal and informal changes that were occurring in "Great Britain" in the late 1600's and early 1700's. Among the former (formal) was the repeal in 1695 of the rigid, restrictive press licensing act of 1662; also, the Toleration Acts of 1689 and 1712. And, although laws against blasphemy were renewed in 1698, they were not uniformly or severely enforced, generally. In many cases, not even tact was needed to get practically any view on religious matters expressed and published. 
(b) Informally, so to speak, there was a change going on also: e.g., the rise of a critical spirit of or toward religious establishment and doctrines; the rise of confidence in reason and a new view of human nature, as well as a vicious attack upon "superstition." So, historically, on two counts, there was a growing liberty. (c) Consider Hume's second essay in Vol. I of Essays, MPL, published in 1741. (d) Consider the fact that foreign presses were still available. (They were generously used.) (e) And, consider the fact that more explicitly critical works than Hume's Dialogues were published and circulated widely.

Then, consider the alternative (possibility) that the "confession" of Philo in the Dialogues (last part, sec. xii) and the "concessions" in sec. x and sec. xi of the first Inquiry may not have been the prudential safeguard technique, but (a) an internally significant and deliberate inclusion to further the argument, (b) an autobiographical statement of Hume's own progress of mind, and (c) a reflection or exemplification of Hume's philosophy and (d) his method. This alternative, so long ignored, is, I believe,
called "true religion." Hume examined the evidence that was and can be produced for the process of authenticating a "miracle," in reason, experience, and the testimony of witnesses, "history." The latter, testimony of men, verbal or written history, is ultimately the ground upon which belief more in accord with Hume, his works, and the facts.

An examination of the writings that Hume refers to, works from his immediate and near historical epochs, and some consideration of the topics discussed and terms used, provide bases for certain things of interest to come into focus. Hume was not alone in using certain terms and using them with critical "negative" meaning, e.g., "superstition." Rather, in one sense and a real sense, Hume was at one with the rising criticism or critical spirit of his era. However, he did not go to the extremes that some did; indeed, he hardly seems so shockingly negative, especially when his writings are compared with some of those critics of religion who were professedly religious. Could it be that Hume, in the case of religion, as apparently in a number of other issues, was attempting to propose a "moderation" and undergird a reconciling project between Scepticism in its Pyrrhonian extreme form and Credulity in its unreflective and misguided forms, rather than undercut all grounds for and of "belief"?

(Cf. Essays. MPL, ed. Green and Grose, passim; Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, esp. secs. i, vii, xii, as well as secs. x and xi; also, Enquiry cPM, ed. Selby-Bigge, passim. Note, esp. Hume's comments on instinct, reason, sentiment, sense experience, also.)

No sooner does Hume submit to his confessed "act of cowardice" (ca. 1737, decision; 1739 publication) than evidence becomes available of his study of religion and preparation for publication of his "results" in the Essays I (pub. ca. 1741). Also, it is of interest to note the outspokenness of Hume in the essay "Of National Characters," published in 1748, the same year as his Philosophical Essays. There we can see Hume's position and method evolving, as well as that "restless imagination" that cannot leave the area of religion alone. And although Kemp Smith might say (with some justice, here) that Hume was using "special devices" in the Essays. MPL, viz., talking about topics "Moral, Political" and later "Literary," the careful and reflective reader hardly needs to depend upon this "device" to recognize what Hume wrote and how this is related to his central themes, belief, evidence, human nature, and his methodology.
in past "miracles" must depend, and so it was claimed by some of the leading proponents of religion in Hume's era and in writings of earlier eras.

Hume, then, works with several ideas in this section. First, they constitute essential parts of his philosophy. Second, they are essential parts of the religious discussion of his era. Third, they involve just the kind of issues with which Hume is (has been) most concerned. Fourth, the aspect of testimony and history are essential for extending his fund or sources of "experiments." The issues in the discussion are: What can be known of a miracle? How can a miracle be authenticated? How is the testimony to the miraculous related to our experience and to Hume's reconstructed standards of belief and judgment? Or: the nature of a miracle; knowledge of a miracle; and inference from a miracle or from testimony concerning a miracle and concerning reported events. Hume considers the arguments of or from "Reason" and experience that are put forward to establish a miracle in fact. Of necessity, i.e., when one has not himself witnessed or directly experienced a miracle, information of such events must spread to us (or to others than the one or more who directly experienced such an event) through accounts or, broadly construed, through historical testimony. This means expanding our experience from "direct" immediate sense and memory to "indirect" experience or "indirect sense"; that is, to the testimony of witnesses.
Then, Hume examines the conditions for the reliability of such testimony. After this he considers what can be "inferred" from these "facts," for "religion" and "belief," according to "just reasoning."

It may be well to note, at this point, certain of the things that Hume did and did not do, viz., with respect to this section and his analysis in it. Hume does not deny the possibility of the occurrence of a miracle. He does not deny that belief is placed in and upon a miracle or so-called miraculous events. The question with which Hume is concerned here is the complex query: what is the reliability of the evidence put forward for the occurrence

61 Kemp Smith considers this section to be "Hume's argument against miracles" and this seems to commit him to a misunderstanding of the primary and complex concerns of this section. Ref. Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 45. Of course, this doesn't fit badly with Kemp Smith's interpretation of the motive behind Hume's inclusion of these two sections in which he raises "theological issues." Basson, apparently still following devotedly, also insists that this section "deals destructively with the possibility of miraculous events." Ref. Basson, D. Hume, p. 18.

Although there would be little agreement with what I have termed the "dual context" and "plural functions" of secs. x and xi, some commentators and students of Hume have been more perceptive on this count than Kemp Smith and Basson. B. M. Laing, e.g., does take a step toward recognizing Hume's purpose in sec. x, when he interprets that section as a "discussion of evidence," "religious issues being employed as a medium for a detached examination of logical issues." But he does not seem to understand the full importance of the section to the first Inquiry as a whole, for example. Ref. B. M. Laing, "Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion," Philosophy, XII (April, 1937), 180; cf. B. M. Laing, David Hume (London: E. Benn Ltd., 1932), pp. 73, 260-261. Flew and Sternfeld do students of Hume a considerable service, as I have mentioned above, chap. ii, pp. 88-93.
of such an event, i.e., of the testimony of the witnesses, especially as it relates to religion? But not to religion alone. And: what is the justification of this for the claimed authentication of a "system of religion" or religious tenets claimed to be "true religion"? Hume does deny that a miracle can be proven by testimony sufficiently to constitute the authenticating criteria for a "system of religion," i.e., a body of doctrine, or that by which the system becomes "established" as divine, divinely approved, or "from God." The differences here are not trivial.

In Section X, "Of Miracles," Hume examines the basis for, and the evidence with regard to, belief in the testimony of men. Examples of such testimony are reports concerning events that may be termed "unusual," "miraculous," and "marvellous." The section follows upon the principles explicated in the preceding sections of Hume's first Inquiry, as well as somewhat on the lines of the sermon by Tillotson that Hume mentions. Hume's primary concern is the establishment of the proper or wise basis for belief, in the exercise of reason or reflection upon the evidence obtainable by experience and observation. He clearly states this when he writes that, since in reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence there are all degrees of assurance, belief (of "a wise man") should be proportioned to the evidence.  

he proposes to apply his principles to a particular instance, the species of reasoning derived from the testimony of men.63

In "revealed religion" the authentication of religious doctrines by "miracles" was (is?) fairly common. Hume attempts to deal with what he considers to be the logically prior question or concern, viz., the aspect of the authentication of a miracle. This, at the same time, is a part of the more general problem of the reliability of "historical" reports. Hume emphasized that belief should be proportioned to the evidence. Here he emphasizes and explains that the assurance derived from, or the belief placed in, human testimony comes from, and only from, the guide of previous observation and experience. This testimony, he asserts, has usually conformed to the "event" testified to and this not from any necessary connection between "testimony and fact."

The general maxim upon which he bases this thesis is:

that no objects have any discoverable connexion together, and that all the inferences, which we can draw from one to another, are founded merely on our experience of their constant and regular conjunction.64

Since the evidence which is derived from human testimony is founded on past experience, it varies with that experience. That is, the evidence is considered either as a "proof" or as a probability, according to whether the conjunction between "any particular kind of report and any kind

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63 Ibid., p. 111.
64 Ibid.
of object" has been found to be constant or variable. Where there has been a constant conjunction, in experience, as well as in experience of testimony conjoined to fact, there rests a felt "proof." Where there is variation in experienced occurrences and in the conjunction of testimony with reality, the variations constitute contrary evidence; the balance or result, achieved by judging one set of evidence against the other or contrary set, represents the degree of probability to be assigned.

The reason that any credibility is given to the testimony of witnesses or historians is due to the fact that a conformity between testimony and "reality" is customarily found. When the fact is familiar to the hearers and usual in their experience, a high degree of belief results. When, however, the fact (i.e., supposed fact) attested to is unusual and unfamiliar to the experience of the hearers, the degree of assurance in the report diminishes in accord to the degree of strangeness or uniqueness of the attested to event. Thus arises concern over reports regarding the unusual or "marvellous" and the contrary to nature or the "miraculous." 65

The "marvellous" is the extraordinary or that which is not conformable to experience. In proportion to the degree of similarity or analogy it bears to the events of

experience, to that degree does one properly assign it probability. Similarly, to that degree does one, or "the wise" one, assign or proportion his belief to the testimony of man and with regard to such an event.66

A "miracle" Hume defines as "a violation of the laws of nature."67 The laws of nature have been established from a uniformity of experience, and such uniformity of experience "amounts to a proof."68 Now, since by the very meaning or imputed import of the term, a "miracle" cannot ever happen in the common course of nature, and there is a proof concerning the uniformity of experience upon which the laws of nature are established, this constitutes a full proof against the establishment of any such "miracle."69 That is, from a consideration of the meaning or "definition" given to such a "miracle," even granting that a "miracle" somehow be given the status of "proof," Hume points out that the whole of experience and "laws" established by experience

66 Ibid., p. 113.
67 Ibid., p. 114.
68 In sec. v, pp. 47ff (first Inquiry), Hume explains belief as a mode of feeling, and in sec. iv he states that demonstrative or intuitive certainty arise only from "relations of ideas" and that the contrary to fact is possible in "matter of fact and existence." Yet in sec. vi, p. 56, n. 1, he divides arguments into demonstrative, proofs, and probabilities, "by proof meaning such arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt or opposition."
and confirmed by experience, constitute an opposing "proof." This does not deny the existence of or the occurrence of a miracle. Rather, Hume, in a striking sweep of exercising a rationalistic argument form ("by Reason"), points up what follows from this definition of "miracle," viz., a counter from all experience to the existence of the event to which testimony is given, and, hence, to the possibility of testimony establishing such an event or occurrence. Then, since this event, by its very meaning, is claimant to the status of the exceptional, and even more, the violation of the uniformity in principle (and in fact), then, by the terms of the argument, that regularity and uniformity of which it is the (supposed) violation constitute

70 Ref. n. 68 (p. 271, just above), esp. Hume's meaning of "proof." It is just such that he seems to be speaking of in sec. vi, when he says: "There are some causes which are entirely uniform and constant in producing a particular effect; and no instance has ever yet been found of any failure or irregularity in their operation." Ref. Enquiry ch. II, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 57. And, again: "Where the past has been entirely regular and uniform, we expect the event with the greatest assurance, and leave no room for any contrary supposition." Ref. same work, p. 58.

71 Cf. Flew, Hume's Phil. of Belief, chap. vii, esp. pp. 173-179. Also, it is highly enlightening to refer to the sermon by Tillotson that Hume was most probably referring to in the beginning of sec. x. Ref. John Tillotson, Works (Two vol. ed.; second ed.; London: By Ralph Barker: For Timothy Goodwin, et al., 1717), II, 493-508, "The Miracles Wrought in Confirmation of Christianity." Here he is concerned with two main questions and giving answers to them, viz., "What is a Miracle?" and "In what Circumstances and with what limitations Miracles are sufficient Testimony to the Truth and Divinity of any Doctrine?"
a "proof" against justified belief in the "miracle." This then, is the result of reasoned analysis for warranted judgment.

The testimony of men regarding miracles, then, is quite open to doubt. The hearer should balance the one side against the other and reject whichever proves to be the greater "miracle." If the falsehood of the testimony, whoever gives the testimony, would be more miraculous than the event which he related; then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief and opinion.

Hume then "shews"—by four reasons—why "there never was a miraculous event established on so full an evidence" as human testimony amounting to an entire proof. Should these

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72 Cf. the following remarks, made "in praise of" Hume and his use of "reason": "It is an important provision of a religious commitment that there is always plenty of evidence to warrant the venture but never enough to make it a certainty. Every philosopher has been confused who has intimated that knowledge of God can ever be more than probable, and such claims do not coincide with the interests of religion." Ref. N. F. Jacobson, "The Uses of Reason in Religion: A Note on David Hume," Journal of Religion, XXXIX (April, 1959), 104-105.


74 Briefly, these four reasons are: (1) In all history no miracle has been attested to by a sufficient number of men possessing such good-sense and learning as to secure others against the delusions of the witnesses; of integrity such as guards against their design to deceive others; of such reputation in the eyes of others that the witnesses would have much to lose if caught in any falsehood; and at the same time they were attesting to facts (events) performed in such a public manner and in so celebrated a place as to make detection unavoidable. All these circumstances
conditions be met somehow, that is, should "the several different causes" from which "this contrariety of evidence, in the present case, may be derived," be overcome, then Hume admits the possibility of miracles and of such kind as to admit of proof from human testimony—except in the case of a miracle posed as the foundation of "a system of religion."

are requisite "to give a full assurance in the testimony of men." Ref. Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 116-117. (2) Although men are commonly guided by the maxim that the objects and events of which they have no experience resemble those of which they have, that the most usual is the most probable, and that when arguments are opposed preference should be given to those founded on the greater number of past experiences, they do not follow this in regard to the miraculous. They observe this maxim and these "rules" with regard to the extraordinary, but the mind has a propensity to admit such facts as are affirmed absurd and miraculous. Also, the passion of wonder and surprise, which Hume calls an agreeable emotion arising from miracles, tends to bring men to belief in the miraculous. Thus, because the mind tends to accept the miraculous on the very grounds upon which it should reject those things, testimony of the miraculous is questionable. Ref. Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 117-119. (3) Miracles are found most frequently among the ignorant and barbarous, and as civilization increases miracles decrease in direct or exact ratio. Hume does note of the "propensity of mankind towards the marvellous" that "though this inclination may at intervals receive a check from sense and learning, it can never be thoroughly extirpated from human nature." Ref. Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 119. (4) There is no testimony of any miracles which is not opposed by "an infinite number of witnesses" attesting to other miracles; both testimonies and miracles are deemed contraries. The opposition tends to discount and destroy both sides; this is the case with the testimony to the miraculous as the miraculous is used for purposes of authenticating the "popular religions" and their "systems." Ref. Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 121-123.

Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 112. This is his earlier preview. Note the emphatic concern with the character and motives of the supposed witnesses, the character of "human nature," methods of witnesses, and propensities and operations of the "mind" of "mankind." (Hume's terms.)
Hume is here quite explicit in regard to his reference to religion, on two counts: (1) by following the principle of subtracting contrary evidence or experience and giving belief or proper judgment to either the one side or the other, in proportion to the degree of that which remains,

this subtraction, with regard to all popular religions, amounts to an entire annihilation; and therefore we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle and make it a just foundation for any system of religion. 76

Note that Hume speaks of "just foundation"; he speaks on the basis of a foundation following from reflective analysis, conducted according to his reconstructed standards for judgment and warranted belief. This is the path of the "wise" and the "just reasoner." Here one who follows it recognizes but is not afraid to oppose, to "control," "natural propensities" and finds no satisfaction in de facto description only. But the "wise" are "few"—and contrasted with these "few" "just reasoners" are "the vulgar," who, it should be remembered,

receive greedily, without examination, whatever soothes superstition, and promotes wonder. 77

76 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 127.
77 Ibid., p. 126. Terms and spelling are Hume's.
CHAPTER VI

PHILOSOPHIC PARADIGM (CONTINUED)

Further development and use.—In what I have termed Phase I of his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion,' Hume, in effect, discounts the place of "miracle" as the authenticating criteria for doctrines of religion or religious systems; this is because of the difficulties involved in authenticating "miracles," a logically prior difficulty. This treatment serves as the springboard for entering into a discussion of what would be considerably less of a "difficulty" "with the good reasoner." Hume's first landing is in Section XI, in attending to "argument" in religion. Here Hume considers, in dialogue form, "the chief or sole argument for a divine existence (which I never questioned) namely, that which is derived from the order of nature."¹ His later development of this aspect of Section XI appears in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, where he considers "reasonings" about religion, centering on uniformity, regularity, analogy, and design, not the "miraculous." Several of these emphases are mentioned in Section XI as well.

¹*Enquiry CHU,* ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 135.
And, as he does through his first Inquiry, so in the 'Inquiry Concerning Religion,' Hume then turns to the aspect of "propensity" and how the ideas of theism arise in "mankind" or "human nature." This he does in the Natural History of Religion. But he also carries through on a theme indicated by the original title of Section XI of the first Inquiry, viz., "Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Religion." Although Hume ostensibly deals with the origin of ideas in the Natural History, the "moral philosopher" who has engaged in reflective analysis and proposed stricter standards of judgment cannot stick to the pattern of a restrictive "origin seeking." Instead, he refers to his standards, their use, and, strangely for a "reductionistic Pyrrhonist," presents some rather remarkable heightened conceptions of "deity," along with scathing judgments of the depths of hypocrisy of the behavior of the confessed devotees of such a deity.

The "miraculous" plays a further part in Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' In Phase III in the Natural History, Hume points out that the curiosity of mankind is first caught by what is considered to be the unnatural, the prodigious, the "miraculous." In the midst of this circumstance of uncertainty man's fears and hopes concerning the future are aroused. The very novelty of the occurrence sets man "a trembling, sacrificing, and praying."\(^2\) To each of

\(^2\)Natural History, ed. Root, p. 25.
these uncertain, unaccountable and contrary events man assigns a "god" who takes the place of the unknown cause in each event; this characterizes polytheism and idolatry.  

Even theism, the type of theism which arises from polytheism "naturally" though "non-rationally," is based on or defended on the basis of, the "miraculous." These "miracles" Hume considers to be "rationally" an improper foundation for "true religion." While they are used by the vulgar to argue—argue, Hume would insist, is totally inappropriate to designate what the vulgar do—for a supreme intelligence, these so-called miraculous events are "with the good reasoner" "the chief difficulties" in admitting such a being and the most opposite to the plan of "a wise superintendant."

Out of this situation of confusion and concern with contrary happenings, and from a concentration of concern on the immediate events and needs of human life, arises the problem of "a particular providence." (Hume introduces this concern in Section XI of the first Inquiry; he explains and discusses it in the Natural History.) From the first assignment of intelligent power to the unknown causes effecting human life, there arises a recognition of conflicting purposes and opposed desires, both among men who conceive the

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3 Ibid., pp. 39-41.
4 Ibid., pp. 41-42.
5 Ibid., p. 41.
the causes differently and among the causes themselves which men conceive. That is, men know that they often desire different things in their own lives, and they see or interpret these differences as areas of conflict. So, also, do they see their "pre-gods," the causes, and later their "gods" in a developed polytheism. The events of life are kept separate, and when the "gods" are assigned to particular events, these events become their particular area(s) of responsibility and activity, i.e., their particular providences.

When certain groups or nations take a particular "god" or "God" to be limited to their group and their desires, when theism is based upon the vulgar concern for the miraculous, and when different religions assume a "God" opposed to other "Gods" of other religions and peoples, the same problem of a particular providence arises. Conflict of providence is particularly evident where theisms are actively engaged in opposition, each claiming to have the "One True God." In theisms that have retained a lesser divinity, conflict of providence grows also. The universal tendency of man to conceive all beings like himself, brings him to attribute appetites, passions, tempers, and other human-like qualities to his deity. And the principles of man's natural

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6 Of. my comments about Hume's early concern and despair over opposing claims to prove or confirm "common opinion" by turning to opposing "Rationalistic arguments," each of which was on a par with the others. Ref. above chap. ii.

7 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 29.
ters and his propensity to adulation tend to bring him to conceive the same "God" as possessing different and contrary attributes, according to which set of principles gain prominence in man's nature at a particular time. 8

The only "rational" solution to these sets of difficulties is to "correct these natural propensities by experience and reflection." 9 Only by so doing can man give any "rational and intelligible worship" to God. Attention, concern and curiosity must be directed away from the immediate events of human life, that is, such as hold the curiosity of the vulgar, and directed to "the whole frame of nature," which "bespeaks an intelligent author." 10 By widening his frame of reference from that which appears "unusual" ("miraculous") to the whole of nature that has thus far come under his experience, man comes to see a regularity and uniformity; and, in it all, through a contemplation of or a reflection upon the whole, upon the works of nature, even in himself, he sees a design and an order. It is interesting to note that Hume seems to make a special point of including the following quotation in both the Dialogues and the Natural History: "A little philosophy makes men atheists; A great deal converts them to religion." 11 According to "Hume," a little

8 Ibid., pp. 46-48.
9 Ibid., p. 29.
10 Ibid., p. 21.
reflection leads man to the recognition that he has put his emphasis in religion on the wrong place (or "things"), and his "faith" collapses. (Consider the discussion of the "training" or educational program by Philo and Demea, in the early pages of Hume's Dialogues.) But further reflection leads man to the recognition of a single author or divine "mind" behind (or the cause of) "nature" and leads him back to religion—on a new foundation: not on the miraculous, but on the regularity of nature, explained or construed analogically; this involves a somewhat different "religions" stance, also.

Thus does Hume provide the setting for a critical discussion and examination of the place of "reason" and of "reasoned argument" in religion. The particularly relevant parts of his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion' are: Section XI of the first Inquiry and the Dialogues, both of which are dialogue-form. However, the Dialogues and dialogue-form apparently have been exceedingly troublesome for students of Hume. (This I believe I have shown sufficiently already. I have noted also that full analysis of so "oblique" a work as the Dialogues, rather than setting the conditions of total interpretation of the area, might profitably follow from a changed perspective. Certainly detailed comment exceeds the goals and central purpose of this study. Still, some brief comments on "reasoned argument" may be appropriate. And, I should, or indeed, perhaps I must, give a
Further brief consideration to Section XI of the first Inquiry.

Reasoned argument.—I have remarked that Section X and Section XI have dual contexts and serve plural functions. What Hume does in Section XI may be grouped under four headings: the internal relation to the argument of the first Inquiry; a preliminary consideration of the "sole argument" posed in "Natural Religion"; consideration or examination of what can be inferred from this argument from design, as well as from other beliefs; and a beginning of inquiry concerning the "practical consequences of natural religion." (It should be obvious that there is an interrelation between these headings and some degree of overlap in these designations.)

Again, as in the case of Section X, reference to the footnote in Section IX is relevant; there Hume points out the internal relation of Section XI (also) to the structure of the first Inquiry. In effect Hume explains that training and constant acquaintance with the regularity and uniformity of nature create in "human nature" a general "habit of mind" that man employs as a principle of or for the operation of "thought." This, for Hume, is an analogical operation. Given "even one experiment" (i.e., "experience"), if it be vivid and "free from all foreign circumstances," man takes it as "the foundation of reasoning," and, employing the familiar principle, "we always transfer the known to the unknown, and conceive the latter to resemble the former," we
"expect" and "believe" "with some degree of certainty." Although the numbered part 1 is probably especially relevant here, I will quote the first six parts (parts 7 through 9 were quoted in Chapter V, p. 259, in relation to Section X).

1. When we have lived any time, and have been accustomed to the uniformity of nature, we acquire a general habit, by which we always transfer the known to the unknown, and conceive the latter to resemble the former. By means of this general habitual principle, we regard even one experiment as the foundation of reasoning, and expect a similar event with some degree of certainty, where the experiment has been made accurately, and free from all foreign circumstances. It is therefore considered as a matter of great importance to observe the consequences of things; and as one man may very much surpass another in attention and memory and observation, this will make a very great difference in their reasoning.

2. Where there is a complication of causes to produce any effect, one mind may be much larger than another, and better able to comprehend the whole system of objects, and to infer justly their consequences.

3. One man is able to carry on a chain of consequences to a greater length than another.

4. Few men can think long without running into a confusion of ideas, and mistaking one for another; and there are various degrees of this infirmity.

5. The circumstances, on which the effect depends, is frequently involved in other circumstances, which are foreign and extrinsic. The separation of it often requires great attention, accuracy, and subtilty.

6. The forming of general maxims from particular observations is a very nice operation; and nothing is more usual, from haste or a narrowness of mind, which sees not on all sides, than to commit mistakes in this particular.\(^\text{12}\)

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Number 7, recall, explained that:

When we reason from analogies, the man, who has the greater experience or the greater promptitude of suggesting analogies, will be the better reasoner.

Here a number of things are relevant. Note particularly that Hume points up the importance of consequences, the value of the ability to comprehend a whole system, and the need to infer justly. Note also the contrast of the kind of mind or understanding that Hume describes here with the quite "narrow" and incapable understanding that he attributes to "the vulgar." Attention, good memory, accuracy and "subtilty" are needed "to infer justly," which is the task of "the better reasoner." He also attempts to form general maxims from particular observations, and must deal with his natural "mental" operations and with the force of "even one experiment."

There is a relation here with the program of education discussed in the Dialogues and mentioned in the first Inquiry. In the Dialogues Demea describes a course of training that attends first to the various "disciplines" or "sciences," and only then introduces the student to "religion as a science." Philo apparently approves of such a program. Philo's approval comes, not because of an appreciation for the miraculous, but rather because of the reflective approach.

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to the subject, the similarities of operations involved, and
the recognition of the similar status and analogical charac-
ter of the arguments. They are discussing education or a
habit of mind in reference to Cleanthes' training of Pamphil-
us, the supposed narrator of the Dialogues concerning Natu-
ral Religion. 14

In this footnote in Section IX, again in a seemingly
casual remark in Section X, and in the opening paragraph of
Section XI, Hume provides the setting and produces the basic
framework for the discussion in Section XI. In Section X,
Hume says:

... it is impossible for us to know the attri-
butes or actions of such a Being like "Almighty,"
otherwise than from the experience which we have
of his productions, in the usual course of
nature. 15

This is a basic tenet of "Natural Religion" as Hume construes
the area. After criticism of "miracle" through testimony as
the basis for religion, the most probable candidate is a
form or some form of argument. How man or "human nature"
operates in argument and "thinking" is an important concern
of Hume's "logics," but what about operations in this area?
There seems to be one "chief or sole argument" that may be
adequate, the "argument from design" which "is derived from
the order of nature." This is posed on the basis of

14 Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, part I, pp. 130-
132.

15 Enquiry CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 129.
"uniformity of nature," a transference of the "known to the unknown," and a regard for "even one experiment as the foundation of reasoning"; it employs attention and memory and observation and "subtilty."

In the opening part of Section XI, Hume, in a masterly bit of understatement, remarks that the "principles" that he presents here seem to "bear some relation to the chain of reasoning carried on throughout this enquiry." The author's reference to "the chain of reasoning" and his comment that it has been "carried on throughout this enquiry" do not seem to fit well with any version of the piecemeal or fame-seeking or irrelevant addition theses concerning Sections X and XI.

But, interesting though these structural comments may be, how are they related? They are related through what I have termed the dual contexts and plural functions of these two sections. Man uses his experience and goes beyond it: he not only has direct sense, he also has indirect experience, as Hume provides in Section X. Man expects and believes; he infers beyond his experience and claims the status of "knowledge" for his inferential beliefs. Hume presents criteria and limits for such inferential beliefs and knowledge claims; he proposes that they be corrected or reconstructed according to his reconstructed standards for

16 Ibid., sec. xi, p. 132.
warranted belief and wise judgment. These Hume gives in earlier sections of his "logics" or first Inquiry. Now he considers that he must indicate correct standards or the proper proportion for the "wise" to follow in regard to inferences.

It is not an accident that this section comes after the "proof" given in Section IX (no more than, as noted above was it the case with Section X). The "argument," Hume sensed, could be (and was) considered a major alternative to his work and "proof." "Reason" as employed in "Natural Religion" was basic. Faith in Reason and in the force of the argument was shared by both orthodox and heretics, and both put forth the capacity and the argument (respectively) as achieving and yielding certainty. If the argument is posed on the grounds claimed for it, the complete certainty hardly fits with what can be achieved in "matter of fact and existence"--or Hume is wrong. Hume does not think that he is wrong. Yet there seems to be something about this argument that is attractive for Hume; he never seems to completely dismiss it.

However, almost unlimited inferences were made on the basis of the (assumed) soundness of the argument. Hume mentions two such widely held doctrines or "beliefs." One was the so-called "porch view of life." Man lives only upon the porch of a mansion of existence; he lives currently in
a probationary state and he will be rewarded or punished in an after-life; the concept of a "future state" is employed to control or encourage a type of human behavior. A second involves the particular providence of a given Deity (about which I have remarked above, concerning Hume's treatment of this in the *Natural History*; some further comment will be made below). Although Hume deals with a "logical" point, the results of his corrective work, he believed, had or should have some bearing on "the practical consequences of natural religion" also. (Hence the relevance of the original title of this section, which was changed after he dealt more with these in the *Natural History*.)

Emphasis in this section is upon regularity and the uniformity of nature—not the miraculous—which seems to be the chief foundation left for "religion" after Hume's criticism of testimony and the miraculous in Section X. And, as well as beginning an examination of the basic argument for natural religion, Hume begins considering the relation of "religion" and its argument to "morality." i.e., ethics.

Hume closes "Of Miracles" with reference to "faith" as the basis of "religion." In religion, as in common life and in the lives of philosophers, belief persists. But what can be inferred justly from such "belief" or beliefs? The corrective presented in "Of Miracles" and following Hume's "chain of reasoning," is that belief should be proportioned to "the evidence" and to regularity or uniformity of nature
and experience. Scepticism, though methodologically utilized, is ruled out as a satisfactory final position in that it is useless; it stands in need of correction by common sense and reflection. In Section XI Hume proposes that belief and inferences from belief are warranted and just, granted observance of the regularity-uniformity condition, only by limiting inference to a proportional status of cause and effect; that is, in an inference from effect to cause (which, it is admitted, is the case with the argument from design) the cause inferred may be sufficient to produce, or to have produced, the observed effect, but no more, no greater. Nor can a return by inference be made from the cause to an enhanced effect to accord with an unnecessarily enhanced cause, and so on. These restrictions constitute the limits of inference, and just and warranted inferential operations and belief. True, we are involved in an analogical expansion, but not capriciously so, for there are rules for the just reasoner. Still, within human nature there is a tendency to be so struck by the force or repetition of "one experiment" that man unhesitatingly transfers the operations or habit of mind from one area of experienced objects to another, readily inferring the unknown (and thus unexperienced) to be like the known. This is a part of man's nature, and is used in our education, especially in religious training. What has often gone unnoticed--by many, though not, I think, by Hume--is the fact that repetitive
processes of training, for example, under a religious tutor, establish a "habit of mind" by repeated enforcement of a given train of association or conjunction, so that upon the appearance of one object (or "system" or aspect thereof) the mind conceives its usual attendant or conjunct—not only conceives, but also expects and believes.

Hume's "friend" comments:

The religious philosophers, not satisfied with the tradition of your forefathers, and doctrines of your priests (in which I willingly acquiesce), indulge a rash curiosity, in trying how far they can establish religion upon the principles of reason; and they thereby excite, instead of satisfying, the doubts, which naturally arise from a diligent and scrutinious enquiry.\(^\text{17}\)

But ostensibly it is not the task of this section to "examine the justness of this argument" (the task of the Dialogues). Rather "allow it to be as solid" as any proponents insist\(^\text{18}\); the question is: what can be inferred from it, and what are its consequences? Actually, the matter is not so clear-cut, for in order to speak of just and unjust inferences from the argument, aspects of the status and nature of the argument must be analyzed, at least some must be.

You then, . . . have acknowledged, that the chief or sole argument for a divine existence

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\(^{17}\text{Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 135.}\)

Flew, who holds that secs. x and xi should be considered together, remarks of the "timely" nature of Hume's concern with the "argument." He also explores some wider consequences of Hume's critical examination of "religion" in these sections. Ref. Flew, Hume's Phil. of Belief, chaps. viii & ix.

\(^{18}\text{Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 135.}\)
(which I never questioned) is derived from the order of nature; where there appear such marks of intelligence and design, that you think it extravagant to assign for its cause, either chance, or the blind and unguided force of matter. You allow, that this is an argument drawn from effects to causes. From the order of the work, you infer, that there must have been project and forethought in the workman. . . . and you pretend not to establish the conclusion in a greater latitude than the phenomena of nature will justify.19

When we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly sufficient to produce the effect. . . . If the cause, assigned for an effect, be not sufficient to produce it, we must either reject that cause, or add to it such qualities as will give it a just proportion to the effect. But if we ascribe to it farther qualities, or affirm it capable of producing other effects, we can only indulge the licence of conjecture, and arbitrarily suppose the existence of qualities and energies, without reason or authority.20

The same rule holds, whether the cause assigned be brute unconscious matter, or a rational intelligent being. . . . The cause must be proportioned to the effect. . . . 21

Allowing, therefore, the gods to be the authors of the existence or order of the universe; it follows, that they possess that precise degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in their workmanship; but nothing farther can ever be proved. . . . So far as the traces of any attributes, at present, appear, so far may we conclude these attributes to exist. . . . The knowledge of the cause being derived solely from the effect, they must be exactly adjusted to each other; and

19 Ibid., sec. xi, pp. 135-136.
20 Ibid., p. 136.
21 Ibid.
the one can never refer to anything farther, or
be the foundation of any new inference or con-
cclusion.\textsuperscript{22}

Let your gods, therefore, O philosophers, be suited
to the present appearances of nature . . .\textsuperscript{23}

It is, I think, quite probable that it will be ob-
jected, almost immediately: But Hume says more than this in
this section! And he is more "critical" than this group of
quotations shows! Of course he says more. But let us ad-
mit that he does say these things that have been directly
quoted. That first. Then, let us also note that neither in
this section nor in the later \textit{Dialogues} does Hume seem to
find this form or limited "reasoning" worthy of dismissal
"out of hand"; rather, there is a persistent basis for argu-
ment that Hume cannot "shake" the suspicion that this "argu-
ment," when these corrective limitations are observed, is
worthy of continued consideration. Indeed, there is an in-
teresting similarity between these regulations of inference,
this use of reconstructed standards, and the "revised" con-
cept of deity that Cleanthes proposes in Part XI of the \textit{Dia-
logues}\textsuperscript{24} and Hume's later added paragraph, the next to last
paragraph in the final approved form, of the \textit{Dialogues}, in
Part XII where Philo seems, we are usually told, to say some

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Enquiry} \textit{CHU}, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Hume's Dialogues}, ed. Kemp Smith, e.g., p. 203.
strange things.\textsuperscript{25} It is, I think, quite true that the latter comment about the kind of person who "will fly to revealed truth with the greatest avidity"\textsuperscript{26} is, indeed, "strange" and ill-fits with Hume's rather clear stance concerning "miracles" and "revelation." But the rest of that paragraph, however, no longer sounds quite so strange. Instead, it seems possible, if not quite a bit more probable, that this assessment is Hume's critical conclusion of the result of following his limits of inference and reconstructed standards, and that, based on regularity and a habit of mind, this kind of concept of the "cause or causes" or "deity," while a far cry from the omni-God of orthodoxy, is in some measure "justified" by "just reasoning" of the "few" "wise."

Most of the severe criticisms in the Dialogues and Section XI of the first Inquiry are directed against claims for conclusions far in excess of these and claims that these excessive conclusions follow from precise use of "the experimental method" or "reasoning from experience." This applies also to the comments about the different chains of reasoning. That is, one is able to infer from effect to cause "and returning back from the cause, to form new inferences concerning the effect" when we are acquainted with, e.g., man and his motives, inclinations, habits, productions, etc.,

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., pp. 227-228.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 227.
through a number of ways and a plurality of instances. Here is a situation in which one is acquainted with and inferring from a series of causes and a series of effects. In the case of "the universe" and order and its "cause," however, the claim usually involves and includes a singularity of cause and effect, not an inferred instance in a repeated, familiar series of a specified type.

There are, however, a few other points that seem to have some bearing on this "difficulty." In both Section XI and the Dialogues Hume uses a dialogue-form. Yet, in each work Hume breaks-in, i.e., departs from, the dialogue-form in order to speak as himself, not vaguely and ambiguously through some "character." To be sure I refer to two footnotes, but that Hume is moved to speak beyond the balance of dialogue and takes this means to do so, is the point; and this point remains and merits special attention in a dialogue-form. In the Dialogues Hume says:

It seems evident, that the dispute between the sceptics and dogmatists is entirely verbal, or at least regards only the degrees of doubt and assurance, which we ought to indulge with regard to all reasoning; And such disputes are commonly at the bottom, verbal, and admit not of any precise determination. No philosophical dogmatist denies, that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science; and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable. No sceptic denies, that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning with regard to all kind of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security. The only difference, then, between
these sects, if they merit that name, is, that the sceptic, from habit, caprice, or inclination, insists most on the difficulties; the dogmatist, for like reasons, on the necessity.\textsuperscript{27}

And, in Section XI of the first \textit{Inquiry}, Hume points out:

\begin{quote}
In general, it may, I think, be established as a maxim, that where any cause is known only by its particular effects, it must be impossible to infer any new effects from that cause; since the qualities, which are requisite to produce these new effects along with the former, must either be different, or superior, or of more extensive operation, than those which simply produced the effect, whence alone the cause is supposed to be known to us. We can never, therefore, have any reason to suppose the existence of these qualities. . . . Let the inferred cause be exactly proportioned (as it should be) to the known effect; and it is impossible that it can possess any qualities, from which new or different effects can be inferred.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Further, Hume speaks frequently of the habit of mind that is acquired through length of experience and a familiarity with regularities. Man "naturally" transfers his mode of "thinking" and "reasoning" from one area to another. This should be kept in mind when, near the close of Section XI, "Hume" appears to criticize the idea that anyone can know a cause completely through its effects in a situation where both the cause and the effect are fully unique—the point of the basic argument is that there is some similarity. And, if men are trained through repetition, such a process is not single, i.e., there is a kind of series within the process,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27] \textit{Hume's Dialogues}, ed. Kemp Smith, part xii, p. 219, n. 1.
\item[28] \textit{Enquiry CHU}, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 145, n. 1. Italics Hume's.
\end{footnotes}
and the force builds upon a series of instances that has become customary.

The argument claims to use observation, experience, and analogy. The analogy depends upon a similarity of causes and effects. This is a basic part of the revised and limited argument—such similarity—based upon an appeal to regularity in nature and in human nature. It is, even according to the force of the "argument" the same "reasoning" involved in both cases. It appeals to causal reasoning, a basic process in man's operation in relation to organizing events and "things" in his life and action and in "just reasoning."

Consider the following. The first quotation is from Section XI of the first Inquiry. The second and third are from the beginning and concluding sections, respectively, of the Dialogues. The fourth is from the opening paragraph of Section IX of the first Inquiry, Hume's "Proof" section.

(1) The religious hypothesis, therefore, must be considered only as a particular method of accounting for the visible phenomena of the universe; but no just reasoner will ever presume to infer from it any single fact, and alter or add to the phenomena, in any single particular. If you think, that the appearances of things prove such causes, it is allowable for you to draw an inference concerning the existence of these causes. In such complicated and sublime subjects, every one should be indulged in the liberty of conjecture and argument. But here you ought to rest.29

29Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xi, p. 139.
There are some subjects, however, to which dialogue-writing is peculiarly adapted, and where it is still preferable to the direct and simple method of composition.

Any point of doctrine, which is so obvious, that it scarcely admits of dispute, but at the same time so important, that it cannot be too often inculcated, seems to require some such method of handling it; where the novelty of the manner may compensate the triteness of the subject, where the vivacity of conversation may enforce the precept, and where the variety of lights, presented by various personages and characters, may appear neither tedious nor redundant.

Any question of philosophy, on the other hand, which is so obscure and uncertain, that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it; if it should be treated at all; seems to lead us naturally into the style of dialogue and conversation. Reasonable men may be allowed to differ, where no one can reasonably be positive: Opposite sentiments, even without any decision, afford an agreeable amusement; And if the subject be curious and interesting, the book carries us, in a manner, into company; and unites the two greatest and purest pleasures of human life, study and society.

Happily, these circumstances are all to be found in the subject of NATURAL RELIGION. What truth so obvious, so certain, as the being of a God, which the most ignorant ages have acknowledged, for which the most refined geniuses have ambitiously striven to produce new proofs and arguments? What truth so important as this, which is the ground of all our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society, and the only principle which ought never to be a moment absent from our thoughts and meditations? But in treating of this obvious and important truth; what

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31 Ibid., Hume's italics.
32 Ibid., p. 128. Italics Hume's.
obscure questions occur, concerning the nature of that divine Being; his attributes, his decrees, his plan of providence? These have been always subjected to the disputations of men: Concerning these, human reason has not reached any certain determination; But these are topics so interesting, that we cannot restrain our restless enquiry with regard to them; though nothing but doubt, uncertainty, and contradictions, have, as yet, been the result of our most accurate researches. 33

(3) If the whole of natural theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence: If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it afford no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no farther than to human intelligence; and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind: If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs; and believe that the arguments, on which it is established, exceed the objections which lie against it? Some astonishment indeed will naturally arise from the greatness of the object: Some melancholy from its obscurity: Some contempt of human reason, that it can give no solution more satisfactory with regard to so extraordinary and magnificent a question. 34

(4) All our reasonings concerning matter of fact are founded on a species of Analogy, which leads us to expect from any cause the same events, which we have observed to result from similar causes. Where the causes are entirely similar, the analogy is perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is regarded as certain and conclusive; . . . But where the objects have not so exact a similarity, the analogy is less perfect, and the inference is less

33Ibid. Italics Hume's.
34Ibid. Italics Hume's.
conclusive; though still it has some force, in proportion to the degree of similarity and resemblance.\(^{35}\)

Just as Hume deals with testimony and history and also with a special kind of testimony in Section X, so in Section XI he deals with inference, limits and conditions and "just reasoning" concerning inferential processes and with a special kind of inference. He deals with dual contexts and shows not only the main argument of the first Inquiry, but also undertakes the first steps in his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' In the first quotation, i.e., quotation (1), Hume, or at least one of the characters in his "dialogue," points up the limitations of the special kind of inference. Here, also, the preparation is made for the "explanation" for the dialogue-form; and this is the introductory theme of the Dialogues, viz., the first paragraph in quotation (2) above, and also in paragraphs two and three. There is some similarity between the perspectives of "doctrine" and "philosophy" mentioned in paragraphs two and three and Hume's footnote-remark concerning the perspectives of the "dogmatist" and the "sceptic."\(^{36}\)

Hume's use of "obscure" in these quotations from the Dialogues builds upon his work in Section VII of the

\(^{35}\)Enquiry CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. ix, p. 104.

\(^{36}\)Ref. above, pp. 294-295.
first Inquiry; in this section, as I have indicated above, Hume is especially concerned with "obscurity" of ideas. Not the denial of (the reality of) ideas, but concern with obscurity of ideas. I believe I have provided an adequate basis to point out a further similarity between these paragraphs and the opening lines of Section XII of the first Inquiry; there Hume also points out a further strangeness involving denial, viz., the strangeness of the denial that any man of thought is an atheist while at the same time those who make the denial expend considerable effort to develop proofs of the existence of a deity. At the same location he also remarks that it is quite doubtful that anyone can ever remain in the position of Pyrrhonism or extreme scepticism.

Now it is true that paragraphs two and three of the quotation from the Dialogues, i.e., (2) above, contain some exaggerated remarks and some of Hume's "irony." Part of the basis for this has been noted already, and I will comment further on the basis for these remarks in treating Phase III of his 'Inquiry,' shortly. However, we are not justified in dismissing the whole in a sweeping fashion as non-Humean and totally negative, as Kemp Smith, Basson, and others seem to

37Ref. above, chap. iv, pp. 198-201; cf. also, my remarks concerning sec. viii, above, pp. 201-206.

be willing and enthusiastic to do. Not when Hume uses a version of the "argument from design" in explicating issues earlier in the first Inquiry, and refers to "the whole course of nature" and the force of regularity. This gives or it seems to give more merit to taking the remarks in quotation (3) somewhat more seriously, and recognizing that along with the negative reaction of Hume to the usefulness and effects of "religion" in men's lives, he did not find the "argument from design" absurd or easily dismissed—not for Hume.

Sections X and XI, then, seem designed (deliberately) by Hume to set the essentials of the special problem area of religion within the context of his "propaedeutics" and the "logics" for the whole of "moral philosophy." These sections seem almost too obviously related to the Dialogues. Perhaps the "obvious" has hidden the more important relationship; that is, obviously religion is mentioned in all, but the methodological relationship may provide the basis for a better understanding of what is involved, viz., themes, dual

39 Cf. Clive's praise of Hume for avoiding "the scars of direct identification which characterizes most significant nineteenth century and contemporary literature on religion," and how, in the Dialogues, Hume, through the characters, presents "a genuinely dialectical situation where each perspective comes into separate collision with the others." Ref. Geoffrey Clive, "Hume's Dialogues Reconsidered," Journal of Religion, XXXIX (April, 1959), 118 and 112, respectively.

40 For example, ref. Enquiry CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. iv, pp. 28-29; sec. vii, pp. 69-70; sec. viii, pp. 83-84 and 86-88.
contexts, plural functions, dialogue-form, import of regularities and seeming exceptions, for example. Hume, using the essentials of the same method, engages in Phase II of the 'Inquiry Concerning Religion' in the Dialogues. True, in a measure he has prepared for this work not only by Section X "Of Miracles" in Phase I, but through analysis and topics in Section XI, also; but this I have already noted.

The methodological stages or "steps" structured and exemplified in the Inquiry seem related to Hume's intellectual biography and may provide some suggestions for understanding the "characters" in the Dialogues. Demea, described as an unyielding adherent to rigid inflexible orthodoxy, holds a combined faith in demonstrative proof and absolute certainty, including the capacity of man to "know," and at the same time strongly emphasizes the incapacity of human reason. In religious matters he is certain and this includes the being and nature of God and "revelation." Hume was opposed to such "Reason," recognizing such technique to be logically inappropriate in matter of fact and existence, as well as pointing up the strange status of inconclusiveness of "Rationalistic" certain cogent but opposing arguments and conclusions. The place of testimony concerning miracles and knowledge of revelation as the authenticating criteria for a "system of religion" I have noted above.

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Philo, described as having the disposition of careless scepticism, generally—there are exceptions—represents a position that Hume could not long or satisfactorily adhere to, even in the context of the first Inquiry, i.e., his "logics." That is, although extreme scepticism seemed to be the result of at least one stage of critical inquiry and adoption of the position was quite tempting, some concessions to "belief" and judgment, something more than a "suspence of judgment," had to be made; certainly some must be made in order to live and survive. Philo the sceptic makes "concessions," at least some of which seem worthy of taking more seriously than students of Hume generally seem willing to do.

Cleanthes, described as being of accurate philosophical turn, holds a more "mitigated" position; it is neither

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42 Ibid.

43 Popkin recognizes the relevance of this insistence, although he emphasizes the "irrational" character of belief rather than those aspects of Hume's to which I have called special attention, viz., that Hume mentions, proposes, and uses standards, reconstructed criteria and is involved with judgments and warranted belief structured according to these criteria and standards. Popkin holds that Pyrrhonism follows from Hume's "analysis." Once the "verbal problem" (to use a common coin) is overcome, viz., Popkin's reference to Hume as "the complete" and the "perfect Pyrrhonist," the insight of Popkin's conclusion comes forth: "He alone believed that both the difficulties and the necessity exist." Ref. Richard H. Popkin, "David Hume: His Pyrrhonism and His Critique of Pyrrhonism," in V. C. Chappell (ed.), Hume: A Collection of Critical Essays (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 53-98; note esp. pp. 54, 56, and 97-98.

44 Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 128.
the adamant inflexible orthodoxy (dogmatism?) of Demea, nor
the biting "cavils" of scepticism of Philo. In the first
_Inquiry_ Hume dares to speak of his work, of his philosophy,
as involving a "reconciling project." Cleanthes presents
the argument from design; Hume seems unwilling to dismiss
this argument in spite of the objections that could be
raised against it. It is Cleanthes who proposes the concept
of a Deity more in accord with the character of the effect,
nature or the universe. It is Cleanthes who opposes the
logic of "Reason" and Demea, and who proposes and maintains
a persistent (proclaimed) allegiance to "the experimental
method" and to analogical reasoning. Cleanthes does not
seem to "meet" all the objections and difficulties that
Philo raises; Hume confesses that he cannot answer all the
difficulties that he (Hume) raises (in the _Treatise_ and in
the first _Inquiry_).

It would seem safe to say that the description, por-
trayal, and stances of the characters of the _Dialogues_ "bear"
more than "some remote analogy" to Hume's intellectual biog-
raphy and to the methodology of the "logics." Further, even
the statement of the issue with which the _Dialogues_ is sup-
posed to be concerned involves "belief" and "inference,"
knowledge-claims, "reasonings," human nature and consequen-
ties of claimed knowledge and argument. Hume employs and em-
phazizes his reconstructed standards for warranted belief
and correct judgment. Yet, as with the methodological steps
in the first Inquiry, the Dialogues concludes with the recognition that belief persists—even, it seems, in the sceptic. If Philo's "concessions" are exaggerated beyond the warrant of the reconstructed standards—and at least some of them are—and this is not entirely for "prudential safeguard" reasons, what is the meaning? The "confession" of Philo at the end of the Dialogues has seemed completely absurd to generations of philosophers who have considered that Philo, a "respectable sceptic," simply could not say such things. Yet Hume was capable of using exaggeration to make a point; it is hardly absurd to consider that he might employ this technique in what is generally conceded to be a highly skillful work. Extreme scepticism is useless; the sceptic is a man; human nature is "remarkably the same" in all men and in all ages; "mankind" has a "propensity" "towards the marvellous"; "though this inclination may at intervals receive a check from sense and learning, it can never be thoroughly extirpated from human nature."^^; belief-

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^^Enquiry cHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. x, p. 119. Cf. "In the case of belief in 'miracles'... our sense of the usual and credible is violently but, on the whole, pleasantly shaken. Accordingly, we feel, enjoy, and wish to prolong the resulting 'passion' of surprise and wonder. We welcome, rather than reject, testimony tending to arouse or sustain this 'passion,' this 'vivacity' of the idea." Ref. Ralph S. Pomeroy, "Hume On the Testimony for Miracles," Speech Monographs, XXIX (March, 1962), 9. Cf. this and Popkin's emphasis on "irrational" belief (ref. above, p. 303, n. 43) with William T. Blackstone, "Hume and Ritschlian Theology," The Personalist, XLII (Autumn, 1961), 561-570; note esp. Blackstone's comments concerning the "arational or pre-rational grounds for any sort of empirical inference whatever"--p. 563.
proveness and "belief" remain—a part of human nature and even of the sceptic when his "reflective" guard is dropped and he "is as other men." As I noted in the development of the first Inquiry, as Hume notes in the "steps" of his method, so here also: still the fact of continued belief is "unexplained." This is left at the conclusion of the Dialogues, and is included in Philo's "testimony."

Historically, this concession of Philo's was added by Hume after he (Hume) had become good friends with the so-called "Moderate clergy." But this addition and the closing of the Dialogues make this work fit-up, i.e., provide the basis for its connection, with the further work of Phase III in Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' It prepares for Phase III, the Natural History. I noted earlier how, in the opening or "Author's Introduction" to the latter work, Hume specifically and deliberately spells out the relation of the problems with which these two Phases deal. This is a further indication of how and, perhaps, why the Dialogues, taken by itself, may easily become confusing and is incomplete. There is, as I have insisted and as Hume described, describes and exemplifies, an additional facet or step of Hume's method. In this case, Hume exemplifies the next step in the Natural History, viz., the rise, origin, status of basic belief in "human nature" and the corrective guides for the just reasoner in dealing with the basic beliefs and propensities that are natural to "mankind."
Principles, concepts, and consequences.—What basis do or can "the primary principles of genuine theism" or "true religion" have in "reason" or "reasoning"? This is a complex question; the question and an answer to it involves both Phase II and Phase III of Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' (Properly speaking, it involves more, viz., all three phases of this 'Inquiry' and the first Inquiry.) In the Dialogues "reasoning" is emphasized; "primary principles" are emphasized in the Natural History, but so also are "true religion" and the place of reflection in relation to "genuine theism." Given the plan of this study, perhaps the question can be handled most profitably by the following procedure. First, I will review a few points that I made earlier and that are involved in both of the dual contexts (i.e., in that of the first Inquiry and in that of Hume's paradigm 'Inquiry') and in Phase II and Section XI. Then I will direct attention to a portion of the conversation between Cleanthes and Philo that seems to emphasize further the relation of the last or concluding part of the Dialogues and the opening part of the Natural History. This should indicate further the relation or interrelation of the works that constitute the "phases" of Hume's 'Inquiry' and the fact that Hume continues to use the same method, as well as provide some preparatory suggestions for an answer to the question.

In Section X\textsuperscript{47} and Section XI\textsuperscript{48} of the first Inquiry Hume explicitly refers to the argument from design and the force that proponents claim for it. In forming the argument from design in the Dialogues, Cleanthes appeals to that "species of analogy" upon which, according to Hume (in Section IX of the first Inquiry), "all our reasonings concerning matter of fact and existence are founded."\textsuperscript{49} In the case of this argument-form, Hume proposes limits of inference, and reconstructed standards for warranted belief and correct judgment.\textsuperscript{50} In the Dialogues, Hume, speaking as himself, inserts comments concerning the "verbal" dispute between dogmatist and sceptic; he notes that one emphasizes difficulties, the other necessity, while both may be closer than either assumes or realizes.\textsuperscript{51} Kemp Smith considers (many, if not all) additions made in the last, i.e., the 1776, revision of the Dialogues to be philosophically suspect, especially such "concessions" as seem to be put in

\textsuperscript{47}AskCU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 129; cf. above, p. 285.

\textsuperscript{48}AskCU, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 135-136; cf. above, pp. 290-291.

\textsuperscript{49}AskCU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 104; cf. above, pp. 298-299.

\textsuperscript{50}AskCU, ed. Selby-Bigge, pp. 136, 137 and p. 145, n. 1; cf. above, pp. 290-291, and p. 295.

\textsuperscript{51}Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 219, n. 1; cf. above, pp. 294-295.
Philo's mouth in his last comments in the Dialogues; so, let us consider some of the conversation between Cleanthes and Philo that, according to Kemp Smith's own criteria and judgment, does not date from the 1776 revision.

Cleanthes proposes his "reasonings" on the basis of "evidence" obtained by experience and observation; through most of the Dialogues the "argument" is considered to be the result of reflection upon experience. The argument is inferential and analogical. The argument, as stated and maintained in the Dialogues, may be put briefly as follows. Attention is directed to the "natural" objects of experience. Order and design are detected, "observed," in the world of nature. Experience testifies that an effect of human production, an artifact, displaying order and design, has (and proceeds from) human mind, intelligence, or a designer, as its cause. Such order and adjustment or design as is found in nature exceeds but resembles that found in a human product. From the design in the world and its parts (effects), a superior mind, intelligence, or designer may be inferred (as its cause). Since the effects resemble each other, we infer, by "rules of analogy," that the causes also resemble each other and that the author of nature (world) is somewhat similar to the mind or intelligence of man.\(^{52}\)

Part XII of the Dialogues opens with the remark,

\(^{52}\)Ref., e.g., Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 143.
apparently by Pamphilus, the supposed narrator, that: "After Demea's departure, Cleanthes and Philo continued the conversation in the following manner." Cleanthes, seemingly in accord with the inferential limitations proposed in the dialogue and also by Hume's direct intrusion in the first Inquiry, earlier revised his original inference to the concept of a finitely perfect being. Now Cleanthes remarks to Philo:

Your spirit of controversy, joined to your abhorrence of vulgar superstition, carries you strange lengths, when engaged in an argument; and there is nothing so sacred and venerable, even in your own eyes, which you spare on that occasion. 

Demea had left because he was more than a little disturbed over some of the "strange lengths."

I must confess, replied Philo, that I am less cautious on the subject of natural religion than on any other; both because I know that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of any man of common sense, and because no one, I am confident, in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions. You, in particular, Cleanthes, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy; you are sensible, that, notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason, in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of nature. A purpose, an intention, or design strikes everywhere the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it. ... thus all the sciences almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent Author; and


54 Ibid.
their authority is often so much the greater, as
they do not directly profess that intention. 55

Cleanthes, in response to these remarks (and others
of related theme), says:

The comparison of the universe to a machine of
human contrivance is so obvious and natural, and
is justified by so many instances of order and de-
sign in nature, that it must immediately strike
all unprejudiced apprehensions, and procure uni-
versal approbation. Whoever attempts to weaken
this theory, cannot pretend to succeed by estab-
lishing in its place any other that is precise
and determinate; It is sufficient for him, if
he start doubts and difficulties; and by remote
and abstract views of things, reach that suspense
of judgment, which is here the utmost boundary of
his wishes. But besides that this state of mind
is in itself unsatisfactory, it can never be
steadily maintained against such striking appear-
cances as continually engage us into the religious
hypothesis. A false, absurd system, human nature,
from the force of prejudice, is capable of ad-
hering to with obstinacy and perseverance: But
no system at all, in opposition to a theory, sup-
ported by strong and obvious reason, by natural
propensity, and by early education, I think it
absolutely impossible to maintain or defend. 56

Note the combination of enforcing elements that Cleanthes
indicates: strong and "obvious" reason, the obviousness of
the experience, natural propensity (in human nature), and
education, as well as recurring examples. With his view of
no acceptable alternative to "the propensity for a system,
perhaps, he says, the objector to this "religious hypothe-
sis" may only achieve a "suspence of judgment." Philo

56 Ibid., p. 216.
replies.

So little, replied Philo, do I esteem this suspense of judgment in the present case to be possible, that I am apt to suspect there enters somewhat of a dispute of words into this controversy, more than is usually imagined. That the works of nature bear a great analogy to the productions of art is evident; and according to all the rules of good reasoning, we ought to infer, if we argue at all concerning them, that their causes have a proportional analogy. But as there are also considerable differences, we have reason to suppose a proportional difference in the causes; and in particular ought to attribute a much higher degree of power and energy to the supreme cause than any we have ever observed in mankind. Here then the existence of a Deity is plainly ascertained by reason; and if we make it a question, whether, on account of these analogies, we can properly call him a mind or intelligence, notwithstanding the vast difference, which may reasonably be supposed between him and human minds; what is this but a mere verbal controversy? No man can deny the analogies between the effects: To restrain ourselves from enquiring concerning the causes is scarcely possible: From this enquiry, the legitimate conclusion is, that the causes have also an analogy: And if we are not contented with calling the first and supreme cause a GOD or DEITY, but desire to vary the expression; what can we call him but MIND or THOUGHT, to which he is justly supposed to bear a considerable resemblance?57

Were we not convinced by a customary interpretation to the contrary, we might almost infer that Philo holds the argument from design or at least the inference or belief based on design has some merit—and Hume too, if "Philo is Hume." But, this is in a dialogue-form.

Let us turn now to a work in which Hume was not attempting to maintain a balanced dialogue. In the "Author's

Introduction" to the Natural History, author Hume writes:

The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion.58

Thus, here, and fairly frequently thereafter in the Natural History59 Hume speaks as if there were some merit in this stance or "argument," at least for the "rational enquirer" and "after serious reflection."

However, though this kind of warranted belief and limited inference, set according to reconstructed standards of inference and judgment, may be appropriate and employed by the "few" "wise reasoners," the many "vulgar" are not especially "rational enquirers"; nor does this stance or kind of "argument" characterize religion as a whole. Yet, belief and inference persist. Why? How can this be explained? Hume undertakes this by use of his fourth step of method and in Phase III of his 'Inquiry.' He attempts to use his reconstructed standards in this process.60

The "primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion" must be secondary in human nature, for, apparently, they can be changed or "perverted" and their operations sometimes "prevented." "An original instinct or primary

59 E.g., ref. Natural History, ed. Root, pp. 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30-31, 32-33, 38, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48.
60 Cf. above, chap. v, pp. 226-231.
impression of nature," explains Hume, "has been found absolutely universal" and "has always a precise determinate object." Belief in invisible, intelligent power is found "generally" among human beings, but, Hume notes in the opening paragraph of the *Natural History*, neither "perhaps" so universally held as to admit of no exception, nor is there complete uniformity in the ideas this belief has suggested where it has been and is found.

What these principles are, which give rise to the original belief, and what those accidents and causes are, which direct its operation is the subject of our present enquiry.62

Worthy of note here is the fact that what Hume calls "the original belief," the belief in invisible, intelligent power, he considers as a generality at the beginning of the *Natural History*; that is, it is found generally but "perhaps" not universally in human nature.63 Later, he holds it to be "almost universal" in mankind.64 And, finally, in the concluding section, he calls it "the universal propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power."65 This procedure is not unique in Hume's dealing with religion; I have called attention to the part these "three stages" play in Hume's

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 32.
65 Ibid., p. 75.
propaeutics or "logics" and the unfolding of his methodological process. There is a recurrence also of the way Hume treats "exceptions." He treats so-called exceptions to the universal belief in invisible, intelligent power as questionable from the start. According to his analysis of the basis of belief and reliance in the "testimony of men" (in the first Inquiry) where "the exceptional" is concerned, we can, at most, attach to such testimony, when properly considered, an exceedingly low degree of probability. So, too, now in the testimony of "travellers and historians" reporting "exceptions" in this case. Having taken note of these things, let us return to Hume's account of the origin of "religion."

Polytheism is the primary religion of uninstructed mankind. Why? Because of the "natural progress of human thought." Note that what Hume has to say here is not only relevant to some supposed "past existence" or group of men in some far-back historic period (as Kemp Smith seems to believe) but also to "the vulgar," the unreflective man whom

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66 Cf. above, pp. 230-231.
70 Contrary to Kemp Smith's assumption--and to Basson's emphasis, too--that Hume's basic concern was with a recording of past events, and, thus, with historical epochs as history, Hume is here more basically concerned with human nature.
Hume describes as that "gazing populace" who "receive greedily, without examination, whatever sooths superstition, and promotes wonder."\(^{71}\)

The mind rises gradually from inferior to superior; by abstracting from what is imperfect, it forms an idea of perfection; and slowly distinguishing the nobler parts of its own frame from the grosser, it learns to transfer only the former, much elevated and refined, to its divinity.\(^{72}\)

So far as I recall, few, if any, have noted the relation of this explanatory comment to an earlier one made by Hume in the context of the first *Inquiry*. There he states:

> The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom.\(^{73}\)

And, again:

> We have no idea of the Supreme Being but what we learn from reflection on our own faculties.\(^{74}\)

(If Hume were merely a sensation-reductionist, what reason would he have for proceeding beyond these assignments? Yet he does move beyond these.) Hume notes that both primitive man and "the ignorant multitude" are creatures of necessity.

and with analyzing and explaining how "religion" and its principles arise in human nature, and in what sense it (they) originate there. Data from "contemporary" religions form as significant a part in the work as do data from the "past."

\(^{71}\) *Enquiry chU*, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. x, p. 126.

\(^{72}\) *Natural History*, ed. Root, p. 24.


They are concerned with the immediate events of human life. The first idea of religion arises from

a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind. 75

(There is considerable difference here, between this kind of origin and concept, and that explained as coming "from reflection on our own faculties" and "reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit" the qualities "of goodness and wisdom." This "reflective" concept as it appears in the context of the argument from design, or is claimed to follow from the argument, is the concept of deity critically examined in the Dialogues; and this concept, when judged by Hume's criteria, carries over in some aspects of the Natural History. Yet, Hume went on to the next phase and his next step of method; he does mention the process of "abstracting," as the mind rises "from inferior to superior.")

But some passion must be found, some motive, to actuate the thought of men, to carry them beyond the merely present course of events. This type of man, or man in this state, is not moved by speculation, by speculative thought or speculative curiosity, or the pure love of truth; these

75 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 27.
are too refined for his gross apprehensions and narrow capacities. Hume says that:

No passions, therefore, can be supposed to work upon such barbarians, but the ordinary affections of human life; the anxious concern for happiness, the dread of future misery, the terror of death, the thirst of revenge, the appetite for food and other necessities. Agitated by hopes and fears of this nature, especially the latter, men scrutinize, with a trembling curiosity, the course of future causes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life. And in this disordered scene, with eyes still more disordered and astonished, they see the first obscure traces of divinity.\(^{76}\)

Thus, man, or man as found in the "ignorant multitude," finds himself in a world where the causes of events are concealed from him. He has neither sufficient wisdom to foresee nor power to prevent those ills with which he is constantly threatened. He hangs in a continual suspense between "life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want," which are distributed among men by "secret and unknown causes, whose operation is oft unexpected, and always unaccountable."\(^{77}\) The unknown causes become the objects of man's hope and fear. The anxious expectation of the events keeps the passions in a state of constant alarm\(^ {78}\) and the

\(^{76}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. 28.\)

\(^{77}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. 29.\)

\(^{78}\text{This and the following analysis give some basis to the suggestion in the Dialogues that religion is based on fear. Philo and Demea insist that "everyone" is brought to "a due sense of religion" by suffering and a sense of wickedness, and Philo, in part \(x\), suggests that "fear" is the basis of religion.}\)
imagination attempts to form ideas of those unknown causes on which man is so entirely dependent.

However, the comprehension of the "multitude" is so narrow that they can only conceive the unknown causes in a "general and confused manner," while the imagination must try to form some "particular and distinct idea of them." The difficulty involved is that the more the causes and their uncertainty of operation are considered, the more unsatisfactory any distinct idea of them becomes. Man would have abandoned "so arduous an attempt," according to Hume, "were it not for a propensity in human nature, which leads into a system, that gives them some satisfaction."

There is a universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. Thus, "by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection" (which in the "multitude" it is not), man conceives each object as possessing a particular invisible power. And, lacking any knowledge of the unknown causes,

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79 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 29.

80 Ibid. Ref. above, pp. 310-313. Note esp. emphasis concerning the force of "system" and "natural propensity" as mentioned or insisted by Cleanthes. Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, pp. 216, 215, 217; cf. the ease of insight here and the difficulty brought out in the quotation just above.

81 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 29. Cf.: "As we feel a customary connexion between the ideas, we transfer that feeling to the objects; as nothing is more usual than to apply to external bodies every internal sensation which they occasion." Enquiry CHU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 78, n.
and at the same time anxious concerning his future, he acknowledges his dependence on invisible powers which possess sentiment and intelligence. The unknown causes are apprehended to be of the same species and become his "gods."

The curiosity of man, in this necessitous state and with his narrow capacities, is first caught only by what he apprehends as the irregular, the unnatural, the prodigious, the accidental. (In Section X of the first Inquiry, Hume describes "the strong propensity of mankind to the extraordinary and the marvellous" and says "it can never be thoroughly extirpated from human nature."\(^{32}\) Man attributes invisible power first to the accidental, the "prodigious"; then, to each event of his life. These events are separated, for man is too limited in this state to consider them together; each becomes the particular providence of a particular invisible, intelligent power, or later, of a particular "god." So it is that there comes to be a great conflict of "gods" and of providences when these are conceived differently by different men and by different groups when a group deity is conceived. Nor are the actions of the same "god" always certain and invariable; rather, being conceived to possess passions like man himself, the "god" may pursue various passions, appetites, tempers, one at one time, another

\(^{32}\text{Ref. Enquiry chH, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. x, pp. 118 and 119, respectively. Cf. above, pp. 258-275.}
at another time. Thus the uncertainty of actions by "god."  

As accident and caprice govern man's life, in that proportion does he increase in superstition. This "primitive" type of religion engaged in by the ignorant multitude, as well as by historically primitive man, and the type of so-called worship given to its deities, constitute superstition only. The following two quotations point up Hume's conclusions on this aspect: the first, with regard to a summary of his analysis of the origin of religion in human nature, i.e., of the so-called "first religion"; the second not only points out certain shortcomings of polytheism, but suggests what he considers to constitute a "true" theism.

These then are the general principles of polytheism, founded in human nature, and little or nothing dependent on caprice and accident (referring here to both his analysis and the natural development of human nature). As the causes, which bestow happiness or misery, are, in general, very little known and very uncertain, our anxious concern endeavors to attain a determinate idea of them; and finds no better expedient than to represent them as intelligent voluntary agents, like ourselves; only somewhat superior in power and wisdom. The limited influence of these agents, and their proximity to human weakness, introduce the various distribution and division of their authority; and thereby give rise to allegory. The same principles naturally deify mortals, superior in power, courage, or understanding, and produce hero-worship; together with fabulous history and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms. And as an invisible spiritual intelligence is an object too refined for vulgar apprehension, men naturally affix it to some sensible representation; such as either the more conspicuous parts of nature, or

the statues, images, and pictures, which a more refined age forms of its divinities. 84

Almost all idolaters, of whatever age or country, concur in these general principles and conceptions; and even the particular characters and providence, which they assign to their deities, are not extremely different. 85

And the second:

To any one who considers justly of the matter, it will appear that the gods of all polytheists are no better than the elves or fairies of our ancestors, and merit as little any pious worship or veneration. These pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious atheists, and acknowledge no being, that corresponds to our idea of a deity. No first principle of mind or thought: no supreme government and administration: no divine contrivance or intention in the world. 86

Man, directed and driven by the affections of human life, namely by hopes and fears of future events and by his apprehension of the extraordinary, attributes to the unknown causes in the events of his life an invisible, intelligent power, by a natural propensity, not by rational reflection. Polytheism results from the universal tendency of human nature to conceive all beings like man himself, a tendency unchecked and uncorrected by experience and reflection, and a propensity in human nature to form a system, by which particular providences are relegated to and regulated by particular "gods."

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84 Ibid., p. 40.
85 Ibid., p. 41.
86 Ibid., p. 33.
Now to Hume's explanation of how theism arises from polytheism by natural means, or naturally in human nature. In support of his analysis of human nature and in support of the thesis that theism, based on reasoning or founded on a rational basis, could not have been the "primary religion" of mankind, Hume uses a particular process of argument which is again assumed when he turns to treat the origin of theism. The argument runs as follows. If speculative opinions be founded on arguments so clear and obvious as to carry conviction among the "generality of mankind," the same arguments which at first spread the opinions and convinced the men, will preserve these opinions in their original form. If the arguments be more "abstruse, and more remote from vulgar apprehension," they will always be limited to a few people; as soon as those persons cease to consider the arguments, the latter will disappear or "be lost."87

Reason, when obvious, prevents these corruptions; when abstruse, it keeps the principles entirely from the knowledge of the vulgar, who alone are liable to corrupt any principle or opinion.88

This process of argument and its validity Hume assumes in his contention that among people who hold a theism which is not founded on "rational" principles, the theism did not originate from argument. He "concludes" that since the vulgar, who have accepted theism, continue to "build it upon

irrational and superstitious principles," they "are never" led to accept this doctrine (theism) by any process of argument. Rather, they accept theism because of "a certain train of thinking, more suitable to their genius and capacity." 89

Briefly put, Hume considers theism to arise among the vulgar from a kind of heavenly imperialism and/or a sheer excess of adulation. 90 In the first case, many "gods" of polytheism may be recognized, but one god is given preference over the others. By a number of different ways this one god is magnified or gains in importance in the minds of the people; then "He" is considered to be the special object of their worship and adulation—until he becomes the sole God so honored, and theism arises.

In the second case, which may or may not accompany the first, praise and flattery and an increasing number of titles and powers are attributed to one deity, until, through this excess of adulation, this one "God" has (in the minds of the people) usurped the providences and powers of the other "gods," and theism arises. It is in this case that the notion of a perfect being, the creator of the world,

89 Ibid., p. 42.

90 Cf. this with the "propensity in human nature, which leads into a system," above, p. 319 and n. 80, same page. Ref. Natural History, ed. Root, p. 29.
is attained. When such a notion or concept is attained, and while the persons confine themselves to this conception of divinity, Hume explains:

they coincide, by chance, with the principles of reason and true philosophy; though they are guided to that notion, not by reason, of which they are in a great measure incapable, but by the adulation and fears of the most vulgar superstition.91

Where the notion of theism is already established, it should "naturally" lead to a dismissal of every other object of worship and reverence. But it does not. Rather, Hume explains, where any group has maintained a lesser saint or divinity, the people have elevated the lesser divinity, by their worship, to a higher state, sometimes to a position equal to that of the "God" of the established theism.92 According to Hume:

the principles of religion have a kind of flux and reflux in the human mind, and ... men have a natural tendency to rise from idolatry to theism, and to sink from theism into idolatry.93

"The vulgar, that is, indeed, all mankind, a few excepted, being ignorant and uninstructed," cannot attain the principles of genuine theism; and even if the notion of theism is accepted by them, the need for a sensible object of devotion and the appeal back to unknown causes bring about the


92 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 43.

93 Ibid., pp. 46-47.
abandonment of the conception of a supreme, spiritual "God."

Another threat to theism is "a kind of contradiction" that exists between two different principles of human nature which enter into religion; depending upon which of these takes precedence at a given time, that principle effects (and affects) the conception of deity that man holds. These two principles are: man's natural terrors, and man's propensity to adulation.

The feeble apprehensions of men cannot be satisfied with conceiving their deity as a pure spirit and perfect intelligence; and yet their natural terrors keep them from imputing to him the least shadow of limitation and imperfections. They fluctuate between these opposite sentiments.  

Here is an indication of the kind of concept of deity that Hume considered worthy of "rational" man and "genuine Theism." But his lament is: "when will the people be reasonable?"

Where religion was concerned, Hume was "detached"—so, e.g., Kemp Smith, Root, and Olive remind us. Yet, for a "detached observer," a "religious outsider," Hume speaks of remarkably "high" concepts of deity. This, however, is

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94 Ibid., p. 48.
95 Ibid., p. 61.
not often mentioned. Hume's "negative" charge is not primarily against this concept of deity. His negative "attack" is not even unequivocally against the argument from design or the concept of deity (analogous to mind or intelligence) inferred from it—or, perhaps, associated with it—when his reconstructed standards for limitation of inference and warranted belief are observed. Yet the real point of Hume's negative charge against "religion" is related to this "high" or heightened conception of deity; specifically it involves what he takes to be the consequences of "believing" persons, i.e., their motives and behavior. He points out that regardless of great and greatly proclaimed concepts of theism, the morality of those who proclaim these concepts constitute a refutation of what would be acceptable to such a Being.

In the first Inquiry Hume says that we consider there to be a "uniformity in human motives and actions." In Section XI, his "friend" terms the "religious hypothesis" "uncertain and useless." But technically, all other "matter of fact and existence" is not certain either, only probable. How is the "hypothesis" useless, and why? The uselessness consists in the break between actions and motives in accord with such proclaimed belief(s). Facts of

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97 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. viii, p. 84.
98 Ibid., sec. xi, p. 142.
experience testify to the irrelevance of the "religious hypothesis" as a motive for morality, even though it may possess a degree of epistemic acceptability or probability.

Now philosophy and that version or part of religion "which is nothing but a species of philosophy" cannot "give us measures of conduct and behavior different from those which are furnished by reflection on common life," so Hume's "friend" holds. Yet "Hume" reminds him that he has fallaciously "conclude[d] that religious doctrines and reasonings can have no influence on life, because they ought to have no influence." Actually "man reason" differently and infer rewards and punishments and other incentives to conduct "from the belief of a divine Existence." "Whether this reasoning of theirs be just or not, is no matter. Its influence on their life and conduct must still be the same." 101

Pamphilus, in his introductory "letter," speaks in the language of the religiously committed when he says "the being of God" is "the ground of all our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society." 102 This is criticized in the course of the Dialogues, as well

100Ibid., p. 147.
101Ibid.
102Hume's Dialogues, ed. Kemp Smith, p. 128.
as in the first *Inquiry*, viz., through indication of the limitations of inference from the "religious hypothesis."

(In the introduction to the *Treatise* Hume was particularly concerned about the directives of religion for human action or conduct.) Although Hume indicates that errors in philosophy are absurd while in religion they are dangerous, he also remarks: "When any opinion leads to absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain that an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence." Hume holds that the experienced consequences of religious devotedness are uniformly dangerous, i.e., considering the actions of religious devotees; yet he does not say the belief or conception (opinion) of theism is certainly false.

Men make certain professions or statements of beliefs. Their practices hardly seem consequences of these asserted beliefs. (Hume observes that we take motives and actions to be uniform.) Instead of moral behavior appropriate to the concept of deity, the "religious" ("religious vulgar"—and some "reasoners"?) act in ways that may be more accurately described as immoral.

Attention to a few portions of the *Natural History* will show or exemplify Hume's description of "genuine Theism" and the immoral or "strange" behavior of proponents of

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such a "refined" or heightened concept of deity. Since this side or combined emphasis of Hume's work is not frequently emphasized—at least in the way that Hume does say it—it is worth noting the vividness of the conflict and aspects of which he speaks. Here (again, or still) method, stages, and "reasonings" are at work, i.e., here is Hume's method in use. Here he steps out of "suspense of judgment," makes judgments, points out consequences of beliefs and how human actions should be appropriately related to belief.105

"Idolatrous worship," though possessing the great value of a "tolerating spirit," is subject to a considerable danger. It is with decided ease "that any practice or opinion, however barbarous or corrupted, may be authorized by it"; when this happens, "full scope is given, for knavery to impose on credulity, till morals and humanity be expelled [from] the religious systems of mankind."106

Theism is opposite both in its advantages and disadvantages. As that system supposes one sole deity, the perfection of reason and goodness, it should, if justly prosecuted, banish every thing trivious, unreasonable, or inhuman from religious worship, and set before men the most illustrious example, as well as the most commanding motives, of justice and benevolence. These mighty advantages are not indeed over-balanced (for that is not possible), but somewhat diminished, by inconveniences, which arise from the vices and prejudices of mankind. While one sole object of devotion

105 Cf. above, chap. iv, p. 175, steps of method, the fourth step and (iv), specifically. Here is the same methodological concern as mentioned above, with respect to the first Inquiry.

is acknowledged, the worship of other deities is regarded as absurd and impious. Nay, this unity of object seems naturally to require the unity of faith and ceremonies, and furnishes designing men with a pretence for representing their adversaries as profane, and the objects of divine as well as human vengeance.107

Hume explains that "from the comparison of theism and idolatry," assumed to be "extremes," "we may form some other observations, which will also confirm the vulgar observation, that the corruption of the best things gives rise to the worst."108 The following "comparison" is particularly interesting when considered in light of Cleanthes' revision of deity to a finitely perfect being and the description by Philo of the "cause or causes" in the latter section of the Dialogues.

Where the deity is represented as infinitely superior to mankind, this belief, though altogether just, is apt, when joined with superstitious terrors, to sink the human mind into the lowest submission and abasement, and to represent the monkish virtues of mortification, penance, humility, and passive suffering, as the only qualities which are acceptable to him. But where the gods are conceived to be only a little superior to mankind, and to have been, many of them, advanced from that inferior rank, we are more at our ease, in our addresses to them, and may even, without profaneness aspire sometimes to a rivalry and emulation of them. Hence activity, spirit, courage, magnanimity, love of liberty, and all the virtues which aggrandize a people.109

Hume had doubts concerning the area and knowledge-

claims of religion; Hume admitted his doubts and attempted to come to terms with them. Not all mankind makes such admissions or endeavors to deal with the doubts in the ways that Hume did. "With Regard to Doubt or Conviction" (which is the title of Part XII of the Natural History), Hume makes the following charge, or, as he says, "we may observe":

We may observe, that, notwithstanding the dogmatical, imperious style of all superstition, the conviction of the religionists, in all ages, is more affected than real, and scarcely ever approaches, in any degree, to that solid belief and persuasion, which governs us in the common affairs of life. Men dare not avow, even to their own hearts, the doubts which they entertain on such subjects: They make a merit of implicit faith; and disguise to themselves their real infidelity, by the strongest asseverations and the most positive bigotry. But nature is too hard for all their endeavours, and suffers not the obscure, glimmering light, afforded in those shadowy regions, to equal the strong impressions, made by common sense and by experience. The usual course of men's conduct belies their words, and shows, that their assent in these matters is some unaccountable operation of the mind between disbelief and conviction, but approaching much nearer to the former than to the latter.110

But surely we have seen enough of Hume's criticism of various forms of religion and of reasonings in religion to infer in a just manner that, whether he is Philo or Cleanthes or himself, the restricted concept of deity or mind or "cause" that he allows or might allow is for the "few" and is sufficiently different from "religious" concepts to be

110 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 60.
considered quite the opposite of "true religion." Hume advises:

The inference is by no means just, that, because a system of religion has made no deep impression on the minds of a people, it must therefore have been positively rejected by all men of common sense, and that opposite principles, in spite of the prejudices of education, were generally established by argument and reasoning. I know not, but a contrary inference may be more probable. \[111\]

In the last two Parts of the *Natural History* Hume writes with a passionate conviction of certainty, a certainty that admits or leaves "no room for doubt or opposition" \[112\] and seems to admit of no possible exceptions. Gradually he has built his case: from some particular cases, to generality or most cases, and then to a certainty that goes beyond the tentativeness of an empirical philosopher's probability in "proof." "This . . . holds universally" he proclaims of the strange lack of moral practice appropriate to the attested belief in a high-theistic concept of deity.

Here is a move through his "three stages of argument." Similarly, though less strongly, the "propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power" has become "the universal propensity"; "if not an original instinct," it is "at least a general attendant of human nature." \[113\] Part XIV is termed

\[113\] *Natural History*, ed. Root, p. 71; cf. p. 70.
"Bad Influence of Popular Religions on Morality"; Part XV, the concluding part, is a "General Corollary." So clearly and forcefully does Hume speak (write) at this point that most of what have seemed to be but strange emphases may be recognized in Hume’s own statements of the matters.

Here I cannot forbear observing a fact, which may be worth the attention of such as make human nature the object of their enquiry. It is certain, that, in every religion, however sublime the verbal definition which it gives of its divinity, many of the votaries, perhaps the greatest number, will still seek the divine favour, not by virtue and good morals, which alone can be acceptable to a perfect being, but either by frivolous observances, by intemperate zeal, by raptuous extasies, or by the belief of mysterious and absurd opinions. 114

Now, consider the developments:

if we should suppose, what never happens, that a popular religion were found, in which it was expressly declared, that nothing but morality could gain the divine favour; if an order of priests were instituted to inculcate this opinion, in daily sermons, and with all the arts of persuasion; yet so inveterate are the people’s prejudices, that, for want of some other superstition, they would make the very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals. 115

Hume continues with the assertion:

This observation, then, holds universally: But still one may be at some loss to account for it. It is not sufficient to observe, that the people, every where, degrade their deities into a similitude with themselves, and consider them merely as a species of human creatures, somewhat more potent and intelligent. This will not remove the difficulty. For there is no man so stupid, as that,

114 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 70. Italics mine.
115 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
judging by his natural reason, he would not esteem virtue and honesty the most valuable qualities, which any person could possess. Why not ascribe the same sentiment to his deity? Why not make all religion, or the chief part of it, to consist in these attainments? 116

Earlier, under the heading "Impious Conceptions of the Divine Nature in Popular Religions of Both Kinds," Hume called attention to "a kind of contradiction" that existed "between the different principles of human nature, which enter into religion." 117 When "our natural terrors" dominate man or the human understanding, they "present the notion of a devilish and malicious deity: Our propensity to adulation leads us to acknowledge an excellent and divine." 118

116 Ibid., p. 71. Hume proposes an answer: nothing that a man does, or "a superstitious man does, in the common course of interest, sentiment, inclination and benevolent behavior does he consider is "properly performed for the sake of his deity" or that will win favor for himself from his deity. "He considers not, that the most genuine method of serving the divinity is by promoting the happiness of his creatures." Ref. Natural History, ed. Root, p. 72; cf. p. 71.

117 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 66.

118 Ibid. Note how Hume's further development in this part both relates to and gives some basis for the argument in the Dialogues and the emphasis on fear and terrors in the Dialogues and the next part, xiv, of the Natural History. "But as men farther exalt their idea of their divinity; it is their notion of his power and knowledge only, not of his goodness, which is improved. On the contrary, in proportion to the supposed extent of his science and authority, their terrors naturally augment; while they believe, that no secrecy can conceal them from his scrutiny, and that even the inmost recesses of their breast lie open before him. They must then be careful not to form expressly any sentiment of blame and disapprobation. All must be applause ravishment, extacy. And while their gloomy apprehensions make them ascribe to him measures of conduct, which, in
Though the stupidity of men, barbarous and uninstructed, be so great, that they may not see a sovereign author in the more obvious works of nature, to which they are so much familiarized; yet it scarcely seems possible, that any one of good understanding should reject that idea, when once it is suggested to him. A purpose, an intention, a design is evident in every thing; and when our comprehension is so far enlarged as to contemplate the first rise of this visible system, we must adopt, with the strongest conviction, the idea of some intelligent cause or author. The uniform maxims, too, which prevail throughout the whole frame of the universe, naturally, if not necessarily, lead us to conceive this intelligence as single and undivided, where the prejudices of education oppose not so reasonable a theory.119

And, yet, there is a persistence of the difficulty: regardless of the height of conception of deity that men claim in theism and "true religion," their moral behavior or conduct does not seem appropriate.

The universal propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power, if not an original instinct,
being at least a general attendant of human nature, may be considered as a kind of mark or stamp, which the divine workman has set upon his work; and nothing surely can more dignify mankind, than to be thus selected from all other parts of the creation, and to bear the image or impression of the universal Creator. But consult this image, as it appears in the popular religions of the world. How is the deity disfigured in our representations of him! How much is he degraded even below the character, which we should naturally, in common life, ascribe to a man of sense and virtue!120

What a noble privilege is it of human reason to attain the knowledge of the supreme Being; and, from the visible works of nature, be enabled to infer so sublime a principle as its supreme Creator? But turn the reverse of the medal. Survey most nations and most ages. Examine the religious principles, which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will scarcely be persuaded, that they are any thing but sick men's dreams; Or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monikes in human shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being, who dignifies himself with the name of rational.121

Hear the verbal protestations of all men: Nothing so certain as their religious tenets. Examine their lives: You will scarcely think that they repose the smallest confidence in them.122

What so pure as some of the morals, included in some theological systems? What so corrupt as some of the practices, to which these systems give rise?123

Well might Hume, given the accuracy of his evaluation and analysis, conclude: "The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an

120 Ibid., p. 75.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., p. 76.
inexplicable mystery;" "for when will the people be reasonable?"124

But, perhaps the accuracy of his evaluation and of his analysis is too much to "give"; it includes certain commitments with respect to his method, among other things. At least, we should be aware of what is involved in granting these values to Hume's conclusions and analysis. What religion "is" and how it can be "studied," according to the procedure of Hume, is related to certain commitments that Hume held concerning methodological adequacy and scope.

Further comments and a few hints.--Hume construes his method to be the only method that is adequate to account for the facts of experience and at the same time, the only method that corresponds to the experienced facts—it deals adequately with the nature of the subject, viz., man and his experience, "human nature." It seems clear that Hume orients all areas of inquiry to "human nature," and that this is of considerable epistemological importance. Such orientation affects both what can be known and how it can be known. Of particular relevance is Hume's conception of "human nature."

Human nature and nature are related in the thought of Hume, closely related. They are related chiefly through

124 *Natural History*, ed. Root, pp. 76 and 61.
the factors they have in common. The same principles of explanation may be used appropriately to "explain" both. Both have the same principles of operation. The same principles of uniformity are to be found in both. The same "reasoning" applies to both: natural and moral reasonings form but a single "chain of argument." In these factors reside the "clue to human nature" and the basis of Hume's understanding of "the science of man."

Hume proposed use of the "experimental method" for his "science of human nature" or "moral philosophy." The scope of special interest to Hume, and the scope for which he seems to have believed that the "experimental method" was fully appropriate, was the whole of "moral philosophy." In this general context "religion" was included. Religion as an area of inquiry or as a "science" was, for Hume, involved with man and human capacities, knowledge-claims, beliefs, evidence-claims, conduct or action, and methodological bases or claims. Conceived thusly, "religion" is a fact of "common life"; its practices and claims constitute phenomena of human experience, and with these "the experimental method" is adequate and appropriate to deal. What is adequate to deal with "the science of human nature" can deal with various manifestations and beliefs and behavior of man.

In addition to Hume's criticism of methods and to his discovery of "causes," he does not seem to be fully
satisfied to reside in the affirmation that human nature has propensities, inclinations, and sentiments. There are, he holds, criteria that "the wise" should employ in judgment. And some propensities and inclinations should be controlled, guided, or opposed. There are criteria or reconstructed standards that the "just reasoner" should use in forming correct judgments. These are corrective in nature, and constitute judgments concerning: incorrect argument forms; incorrect knowledge claims for (incorrect and) correct argument forms; too great a reliance on propensity; too easy or unreflective credulity on the part of the vulgar; and a useless and self-defeating Pyrrhonism.

Hume discovers that man acquires experience according to principles. Yet, those very principles by which experience occurs, by means of which man attempts to interpret his world and his "thought," those very principles according to which his world, actions, motives, even history and religion, have a "rationale" and meaning, are the principles that Hume uses to propose new standards of "logic," of evaluation of operations, of evidence, of founded belief. What is and how we can understand it Hume analyzes according to "principles." What ought to be Hume answers "according to principles," these principles.

Given Hume's concept of "human nature" and his understanding of the principles by which it operates, it becomes possible for man—at least the "just reasoner"—to
operate according to critical judgment based on criteria which are structured on these same principles.

A proportioned belief or warranted belief is for Hume a matter of concern for the wise: a wise man proportions his belief to the evidence. This is what Hume proposed. A belief possesses only that degree of force or warrant that is justified by the relevant evidence. Here, formally, Hume recognized levels of "probability" relevant for the entire range of "moral philosophy." Demonstrative or absolute certainty, the impossibility of that which is to be other than it is without conceptual contradiction, he excluded from the area of "matter of fact and existence."

Construed according to certainty, what remained was "proof" and lower degrees of probability, proportioned to the balance of "evidence" or the yeas and nays of experience.

It is not without interest that Hume's three stages of argument bear some similarity to the levels of probability. And that the starting point is fairly modest, viz., some particular cases or examples from experience. Next, a progression is made gradually to generalization, wherein the point pursued is "generally" the case, building upon the collected fund of particular cases. Then, the point in view at the end of the "inquiry" or at the end of the argument is much stronger, that is, the much stronger level of "proof"—which is easily taken, even by Hume it seems, to possess greater force than his methodological structure.
will allow. Here there is a uniformity of experience; there is no exception to the point; here there is "no room for doubt or opposition." Yet, easy though it may be to move or slip from uniformity of experience, even granting there is such as he insists at times—this is not unquestionable—there is no logical justification in the move to certainty. That is, where experience is indeed uniform, we may expect with the greatest assurance that it will continue largely the same; but to move from the assertion that, as a matter of fact, no exceptions have been experienced in the past, to the subtle implication that no exceptions can occur in the future, seems to be a fallacious "step of the mind" and of Hume's procedure. Let expectation be whatever it may be, let belief be ever so strong; still the move from these, in combination with past experience, on to the categorial prescription for what experience can and cannot be like seems to strike at the careful procedure that interested Hume so much and seems to exemplify that "step of the mind" that was so important in his "expose" of inferential procedure. Certainly the force of his treatment of religion seems to exemplify just such a breach of the "correct judgment" and "just reasoning" which he praises as so important for the reflective philosopher.

I suppose it could be said, and probably with some justice, that this move, if indeed Hume did make it, serves but to confirm his great point that the process of inference
and of expectation and belief are instinctual and being a propensity can never be avoided "as long as human nature remains the same." In point of fact, however, Hume not only recognized the tendency of propensities, but held that some are to be opposed and can be by the "correct judgment" and by the "just reasoner" and by "reflection." In his treatment of religion, Hume allowed his own experience to influence his selection of "experiences" or "experiments" from the collective experience of human nature, i.e., from history, past and "present." In his drive to show a full "proof," he interpreted experience as being fully uniform, ignoring—almost completely—negative instances. Such an argument form, as I have said several times before, is quite cogent and forceful even though it appears to fail to establish "justly" the point for which it claims—"truth."

In his so frequently misinterpreted Section XII of the first Inquiry (ref. above, "Scepticism"), Hume elaborates the uselessness and nihilistic dangers and consequences of Pyrrhonism or excessive scepticism. Not only Pyrrhonism but propensities as well are to be "in some measure, corrected by common sense and reflection." What is needed, instead of an excessive scepticism, is "a more mitigated scepticism," which, though it may be the result

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125 Enquiry ed. Selby-Bigge, sec. xii, p. 160, for example.
126 Ibid., p. 161.
of Pyrrhonism, is not Pyrrhonism and cannot be identified with excessive scepticism. One result to be recognized and one that Hume considers to be a positive value, is the need for more caution in inquiries, if one is to be a "just reasoner." Another value is the limitation of inquiries to their proper subjects. This is the task of "a correct Judgement." A further point that Hume makes in this supposedly "sceptical" concluding section is that "philosophical decisions" and inquiries are "reflections of common life, methodized and corrected."

Thus, it would seem fairly clear that for Hume the reflective capacity and ability of human nature is, though not universally realized, nonetheless real; otherwise, why should Hume hold it in such high value and propose that the "just reasoner," such as he considered himself to be, should employ "a correct Judgement"? That he did talk about and exemplify this "reflective" side is easily overlooked in favor of emphasis upon his "instinctual" and naturalistic bent. There is something of importance to be said for the influence of Hume's naturalistic understanding of man upon his particular treatment of "human nature" and

127 Ibid., p. 162.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
"religion." This is the or a presuppositional founda-
tion upon which Hume works in his "philosophical enquir-
ies"; but there were other presuppositions, methodological
and epistemological. And it may be a debatable question
which of these was the more fundamental and important, and
which bears dependency upon which. That Hume did recognize
his own philosophy to be a "speculative" enterprise (Kemp
Smith and others to the contrary notwithstanding) and that
Hume understood man, or at least some men, to be capable
of "reflective" activity are facts and emphases of our
"moral philosopher" that should be admitted. This capacity
of "man" sets "human nature" off from "other animals";
strange as this may sound initially, Hume hardly attributes
"the love of truth" and the ability for reflection upon the
unreflective processes of "human nature" to animals other
than man; he does compare them in "learning from experi-
ence," but he does not consider animals capable, for ex-
ample, of becoming "reflective moral philosophers."

Kemp Smith moves to a modification of the natu-
ralism attributed to Hume. "Though his real position is
positivism or naturalism, it is not of that familiar type
which seeks to limit knowledge to material phenomena, but
rather is akin to the broader, more humanistic philosophy
which was developed by Comte in his later years, and which
rests the hopes of the future on those sciences which more
immediately concern our human nature." Ref. Kemp Smith,
Phil. of D. Hume, p. 154. Cf. Marvin Fox, "Religion and
Human Nature in the Philosophy of David Hume," in Process
and Divinity, ed. Reese and Freeman, pp. 561-577.
If Hume engages in a reflective activity, then what he says about argument should be of some importance for his procedure. He is concerned with cause and effect reasoning. Reliance upon (belief in) both causal argument and its efficacy and regularity or uniformity is presupposed in Hume's analysis and explanation and is a foundation stone of his whole philosophy. These points are subjects of concern in his treatment of religion. The "argument" to which he gives most attention is the so-called argument from design. But, it may be objected, this is structured on the move from effect to cause, or so it claims. How can you argue (search or inquire) from effects to causes? Is this legitimate? Isn't a negative response to this the point of Hume's criticism of the procedure of the argument from design?

Hume starts with "evident" beliefs or "ideas" or concepts, which he treats as effects, and attempts to detect or discover their (non-evident) causes. From effects to causes. He also examines the reasons given for belief in or claimed adherence to belief-sets. In each aspect of inquiry he considers the evidence which he finds relevant and which he structures on a cause-effect or effect-cause presuppositional framework. In Section XII of the first Inquiry, on next to the last page, Hume states: "The existence, therefore, of any being can only be proved by
arguments from its cause or its effects."\(^{131}\)

The fact is, however, that selection of "evidence" for such determination of "principles" or causes is not an entirely value-free activity. There is at least an implicit judgment, made beforehand, in the area of methodological adequacy and explanatory completeness and appropriateness. The method is qualified to deal with the subject-matter; the explanation is accepted as "true" (though "true" seems somewhat inappropriate in this use; still, explanations are put forth as correct, accurate, complete, and true accounts of "the facts"). It is not unquestionable that because a given method produces an explanation of a specific thing or event, that thing or event is therefore completely and accurately dealt with—unless, of course, there are no alternatives, and the methodological decision-procedure problem has been solved. Decisions made at this level help determine what will be admitted as "relevant evidence," which of the data of "experience" are to be used and which neglected or (judged to be) irrelevant.

H. E. Root perceptively comments "that religion as a whole is made to look monochrome and suspiciously homogeneous"\(^{132}\) by Hume. This is the point. Hume's prior

\(^{131}\)\textit{Enquiry}, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 164; note Hume's use of "or" here. Cf. sec. x, p. 129, of the same work.

commitments, methodological, "metaphysical," and experien-
tial, lead to this "monochrome" character which disturbs
Root. (This I emphasized in Chapter III, when I described
Hume's process of "selection" and "selective exclusion" of
"experiments."
Hume's portrayal of religion as produc-
tive of only bad consequences and "evil" behavior is dis-
turbing to both the man of religion and the student of
methodology and philosophy. The religious man may object
because Hume's description of religion and the relation of
conduct to religious beliefs is simply not accurate, i.e.,
it does not give a "true" picture of either religion or
the conduct of the religious. For the student of philoso-
phy and methodology there is something missing also; at
least there is a suspicion that the "experimental method"
as conceived and used by Hume in this case misses some-
thing. Here the something is the character of experience
and the "collective experiences of human nature," viz.,
the existence, force, and value of "counter" or negative
instances and their effect on the theses and analysis so
cogently presented by Hume.

In Hume's certainty of methodological adequacy,
then, seems to be contained the certainty of analysis and
conclusions, as well as a decision-procedure for relevant
experiments or evidence. Natural and moral arguments link

133 Ref. above, esp. pp. 151-152.
together to form "one chain of argument"; this is "probable." Although Hume speaks of "proof" in relation to the highly probable, built upon the uniformity of experience, he seems to forget the status of "proof" is only probable and not absolute, when he constructs his treatment of "religion" in the Natural History. In his attempt to be persuasive, he goes beyond the restrictions of his methodology. The process of choosing and presenting examples of "experiences" from past and "contemporary" funds results in the selective exclusion of counter-experiences. His appeal could be to uniformity of experience, if his experience were so uniform. (I noted in Chapter I some of the "harsh treatment" that he received in the name of religion and from the "religious." 134) His appeal is to the uniformity of experience, but without the caution that he has so carefully described as appropriate for this procedure. He moves to "proof," but seemingly gives absolute force of certainty. However, Hume sets up "conditions" that allow no judgment in matter of fact ever to be certain. He speaks often in the course of his "enquiries" of general maxims, of rules, and of propositions that admit of no exception. Yet this, judged by his own criteria, would be the basis for an empirical kind of "proof," which, though yielding the highest degree of belief in matters of fact

and existence, still is based on experience. The point is that such a basis does not yield or support ("justify") more than probability, i.e., on Hume's own standards—not absolute certainty.

"There is, however, at least one contradictory phenomenon." It is, however, questionable whether this use of caution by Hume carries sufficient force to counter the sheer weight of examples cited and nature of comments made throughout the Natural History.

Here I cannot forbear observing a fact, which may be worth the attention of such as make human nature the object of their enquiry. It is certain, that, in every religion, however sublime the verbal definition which it gives of its divinity, many of the votaries, perhaps the greatest number, will still seek the divine favour, not by virtue and good morals, which alone can be acceptable to a perfect being, but either by frivolous observances, by intemperate zeal, by rapturous extasies, or by belief of mysterious and absurd opinions.

Yet, by force of examples cited and charges made, it is in the relation of religion and moral conduct that Hume seems to be most completely "sceptical" of not only the existence of good consequences but the possibility of the existence of anything but "bad influence." And here he appears to be incorrect in proceeding "beyond the evidence"; at least he "believes beyond the evidence" and appears to fail to

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135 Enquiry chU, ed. Selby-Bigge, p. 20. Hume uses these words in sec. ii to point up an exception to the thesis concerning the origin of ideas; after this he speaks of the "general maxim."

136 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 70. Italics mine.
follow his own reconstructed standards. Both in the initial collection of "experiments" (phenomena) and in referring his thesis back to experience to confirm it (which involved him in selection of confirmatory experiments), he built his case on partial evidence; this was not because of the incompleteness of experience in principle, but was due to his exercise of a "selection restriction." It seems both interesting and strange that Hume faltered in his method as used at just that point about which he was most critically concerned.

There was another side to Hume's attitude toward religion, namely "the religious hypothesis," when it was limited to the reconstructed standards that he proposed in regard to belief and inference. It is not (at least primarily) in the matter of "logics" that Hume condemns religion; nor in its initial step of inference.

Certainly Hume judges religion, as it "began" and as it "begins" in human nature and exists among the "vulgar," i.e., "all mankind, a few excepted," to be "caused" by other than a philosophical reflection. Yet, the "origin of deity" comes about, according to Hume, through man's reaction to his experience. When man begins to react to his "fears" of unknown causes, he constructs his "gods" as the proposed explanatory principles (causes) upon which the events and the future operate. This is hardly the kind of reflection that Hume prizes so highly. Yet, it is the
beginning of a relation of religion to philosophy and common sense. Philosophy responds to the unknown future also; philosophers respond to an unknown future as do other men, by using "unjustified" principles and assumptions.

The "vulgar" overlook what attracts the philosopher and the "just reasoner," dwelling on the unusual, capricious aspects of experience and hence of deity. Regularity of nature, human nature included, is of central concern to Hume. This is what is emphasized in the argument from design; this is treated as important. And the claim to employ a somewhat similar "reasoning" process to that employed by the accurate philosopher is made. All of these hold an importance for Hume. The argument seems not easily dismissed or permanently discounted by him, as it would seem to be were he deliberately intending to destroy all forms, all sense and meaning, and all bases for "religion." That what remained was less than certain is not surprising if we consider that there was a like uncertainty in most matters of fact and existence. That what remained was not a reproduction of an acceptable orthodox theology is hardly surprising; what is somewhat surprising is that Hume considers it to possess some degree of probability. Hume was fully aware that acceptance of this view would be only by the "few"; he recognized the same with respect to his philosophical position. But it seems that, "if we argue at all concerning" this matter, Hume saw greater merit in this
kind of reflective foundation for "genuine Theism" than even the "indefensible" beliefs of the tolerant "idolatry" of which so much is often made.

If there be "such a difference in the cases" so as to negate the standards of reasoning in the one area but not in the other, why is Hume's method adequate to examine "both" areas, and why is he able to achieve conclusions that belief is a part of "human nature" in one but not in the "other" area? Hume recognized the point of this question and this, I suggest, is one of the reasons he considered the argument from design as highly as he did. That man believes, that he expects and believes in the reality of that which he expects, Hume does not deny. He affirms it. That men give "reasons" for their beliefs Hume also recognizes. That men have different capacities and levels of critical ability and understanding, Hume admits. That man, even Hume, must believe after sceptical doubts, even this Hume states.

What then is the point of his concern with belief, evidence, reason, experience and standards for just reasoning and correct judgment? Hume recognizes that men make claims to knowledge and claims to certainty about their knowledge. They hold that knowledge-claims and certainties are defended and assured by reasons, arguments, and special guarantees. Hume calls these claims to a critical examination and evaluation; he examines and evaluates the "logics"
and the authenticating credentials of these epistemic claims and claimants.

He says, in effect, to the claimant: If these are your grounds for belief, or if you think these are the grounds for your belief, then consider the consequences. If it is reasoning, it is one of two kinds, for there are two kinds, two natural kinds, of reasoning and the objects of human reason are naturally divided into two kinds. To each kind there is an appropriate subject-matter and an appropriate extent (perhaps kind) of certainty. Of which kind is your structure, the structure of and for your knowledge-claim? A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence; and his inference, also.

Of course, if your belief is held without reasoning of any kind, then recognize this fact, and limit your claim to certainty appropriately and proportionately. Even here, however, Hume could not accept the fact that man believes without reasons, or that this process takes place without some rationale. A part or level of his methodology and inquiry is directed to explication, understanding, and judgment of just this area. This involves Hume in the use of method and criteria, in addition to his discussion of method. (I have termed this his two levels of method.) Both levels concern the same method and the same criteria of warranted belief and correct judgment.
Religion Hume considers to be a subject of inquiry, a phenomenon in human nature, an area in which men have beliefs. It is, for Hume, an area in which forms of argument are proposed for "proof," "demonstration," and "reasonable belief." It is an area in which reason and doctrine are put forth as bases of morality, an area where the nature and the dignity of man (human nature) are discussed and involved in beliefs. In this area "evidence," evidences of the senses, reason, experience, and history, as well as other candidates for evidential purposes, are considered. In this area men attempt to "reason" from the known to the unknown; here men react to an uncertain future. The area seems filled with conflicting methods and claims, all presupposing something about human nature, evidence, belief, and adequacy of method, the extent and certainty of knowledge and consequences for man.

Religion, namely in his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion,' constitutes a paradigm of just such an inquiry and activity and concern with issues that were central in the philosophy of Hume. Relatedly, claims in this area seemed to constitute the strongest "exceptions," or the most vocal alternatives, to Hume's "chain of reasoning." Thus, deal with them he must. In his "mature philosophy" concern with religious claims and belief and consequences assumed the status (probably the original intended status) of
structural parts of the first studies and "logics" for the whole of "moral philosophy."

Hume uses the same method in treating religion as he uses in the work designated "logics" for the entire range of "moral philosophy." He embodies the whole range of concerns and stages and steps of method in these works; he considers not only these but also the range of sources, reliability, criteria, correctives, and limits in a paradigm way in those works that constitute his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' Logic, biography, and Hume's directions seem united in pointing to the paradigmatic import of this area. Negative analysis is combined with positive correctives; logical inquiry with concern for practical consequences. Hume seeks to reconcile intelligent speculation with matters of common life and facts of experience with intelligent action.

That he had an appreciation for what this would mean in the case of "true religion" or "genuine Theism" seems rather clearly indicated by his comments and appraisal of the heightened theistic concept of deity; at the same time, that moral conduct should be related to such a conception of deity seems a clear affirmation made by Hume. Here it is almost as if he considers the concept, regardless of its guaranteed epistemological foundation or its lack of this, and indicates what ought to be the mode of
conduct appropriate to this concept or proclamation of belief. That he does not find it and that he seems to assert that he will not find it is one side; that he believes he should be able to and that such conduct ought to be so related, is another side. Of course, religious persons claimed that their morality followed from their religion; but Hume seems to hold something stronger than this.

He remarks that men seem unable to be satisfied with "conceiving their deity as a pure spirit and perfect intelligence," even though this is what "Theism" claims its God to be. Hume says of "Theism":

As that system supposes one sole deity, the perfection of reason and goodness, it should, if justly prosecuted, banish every thing frivolous, unreasonable, or inhuman from religious worship, and set before men the most illustrious example, as well as the most commanding motives of justice and benevolence.

"Virtue and good morals," he says, are what "alone can be acceptable to a perfect being." "No man" can be "so stupid," exclaims Hume,

as that, judging by his natural reason, he would not esteem virtue and honesty the most valuable qualities, which any person could possess. Why not ascribe the same sentiment to his deity? Why not make all religion, or the chief part of it, to consist in these attainments?

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137 Natural History, ed. Root, p. 48.
138 Ibid., p. 49.
139 Ibid., p. 70.
140 Ibid., p. 71.
Well might Hume say of himself and his 'Inquiry': "I must confess . . . that I am less cautious on the subject of natural religion than on any other." 141

So, my inquiry is near its conclusion. There are many things that I have not done, many issues with which I have not dealt, many problems I have not solved. Thus it seems that the results are far more modest than that idealized document of completeness which momentarily caught my vision when I first began to explore the area. A great number of aspects and problems, opened up in the course of my inquiries, remain for further attention. Some are: a more complete evaluation of Hume's treatment of religion, based upon the perspective I have proposed; consideration of his treatment in relation to his work in ethics and history, and perhaps in value; a closer comparison of the *Essays, MPL* with his 'Inquiry Concerning Religion'; a detailed working-out of the consequences and implications of the basic claims of Hume for contemporary thought; and consideration of the relation of Hume and his thought to the spokesmen for, and the thought of these spokesmen that constituted, the religious orthodoxy and heresies of his general era. Let these serve as examples of my point.

Delimitation became essential. Yet in this, the

limitedness of topical scope, there seems to be ground for an increased assurance of my claims. For, though there are many things which I have not done, one thing I have done (or I hope that I have done it): namely, that which I proposed to do in the introductory "prospectus" to this work. There I said that the main problem of this study was the question: What are the conditions that are appropriate and requisite for understanding and interpreting Hume's treatment of religion? This and finding an answer to the question constitute my chief concern.

Method and context are intimately related to this question of conditions. The problem of conditions is logically more fundamental than any soundly based detailed interpretation of Hume's thought and philosophy. This problem constitutes propaedeutics, necessary propaedeutics, for any further interpretive endeavor. An accurate understanding of method, the principles for understanding the area, found in and based upon the proper or appropriate context, provide the bases for answering the question of conditions. This central question I believe I have answered.

The appropriate context is Hume's 'Inquiry Concerning Religion.' The method involved and exemplified is what Hume called "the experimental method," the same method that he proposed for the whole of "moral philosophy." This is
the "perspective" that I have attempted to provide.

I have argued, in this study, that Hume employs a single method in his mature philosophy and that his treatment of religion is a philosophic paradigm; I have argued for these because of the procedure that Hume follows and the nature of his central concerns. His treatment of religion is a part of his mature philosophy; it is a most important part. In the 'Inquiry Concerning Religion' Hume achieves a long-term goal, and in this "work," above all others, he shows the combination of reflective activity, methodological application and short-comings, and the concern with practical application and consequences, and with those issues that form the central part of his "moral philosophy." Here Hume the man and Hume the philosopher meet; here in the reconciliation of Scepticism and Credulity Hume finds decided place to exercise his philosophic principles and reconstructed standards for warranted belief and correct judgment. Although the man apparently could get along without commitment to religious orthodoxy, the philosopher could not let the area of religion alone; religion showed in a very striking way—as Hume seems to have shown in one aspect of his treatment of religion—his point of "believing beyond the evidence." For Hume inquiry concerning religion was unavoidable; it formed a permeating influence in practically all his inquiries in "the science of human nature."

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