for A. When you learn this, you are no longer in a case of empty symmetrical evidence with respect to p, so Poston's conservatism no longer applies to help justify the belief. Indeed, you are not in a case of symmetrical evidence at all since the only evidence you now have is positively relevant to p (even if very weakly so).

Now, as I have set up this case, it surely follows from Poston's conservatism that you are in a worse (or at least not better) epistemic position with regard to p than you were before. After all, the justification that Poston claims is conferred on you before obtaining the evidence by his conservatism (what Poston calls "conservative justification" in the passage quoted above) is supposed to make your acceptance of p rational; but it is clearly not rational to accept p based on a report of a single person voting for A. Hence, Poston's conservatism implies that your epistemic situation with regard to p has gotten worse (or at least not better). And yet the only thing that happened in the intervening period is that you gained some evidence in support of p. The upshot, then, is that Poston's conservatism implies that an agent may worsen her epistemic situation with regard to accepting p by collecting evidence that supports p.

Finnur Dellsén
School of Philosophy,
University College Dublin
finnurd@gmail.com

Alan Bailey and Dan O'Brien (eds.), *The Continuum Companion to Hume*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, 447 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781474243933.

It is a bit odd that Alan Bailey and Dan O'Brien's recent collection of expert-commissioned essays on Hume is billed as a textbook. Textbooks are mainly pedagogical. While many essays in this collection fit that profile, many also seek to genuinely advance Hume scholarship. This is certainly not a bad thing. It does mean that readers fairly new to Hume may want to look elsewhere for a more flatfooted introduction to this seminal thinker. On the other hand, more seasoned readers of Hume should use this collection to broaden, challenge and enrich their grasp of his thought.

The *Bloomsbury Companion* touches most corners of Hume's thought. It includes substantial discussion of well-trodden topics: probable reasoning, scepticism, causation, religious belief, the self, motivation and free will, and moral sentimentalism. It also includes fascinating discussion of more 'peripheral' aspects of Hume's work: aesthetic taste, feminism, economics and politics. There

is comparatively little if any discussion of the passions, but unfortunately this seems par for the course in Hume scholarship.

Whether by design or by accident, a common theme permeates the collection. Most of the essays try in one way or another to assess the sceptical ramifications of Hume's naturalism. Is vivacity for Hume not only phenomenally but also epistemically salient? Did Hume ultimately doubt the epistemic justification of inductively-formed beliefs? If not, then what must have been his notion of epistemic justification? Did he reduce causation to regularity or did he merely delimit our semantic and epistemic access to it? Did his naturalistic account of our belief in personal identity actually presuppose that the mind is more than a bundle of perceptions? Did his redefinitions of 'liberty' of the will and 'necessity' imply that a certain kind of free will does not exist, or did the debate turn 'merely upon words'? Was his moral sentimentalism anti-realist about virtue and vice, and was his aesthetic sentimentalism anti-realist about beauty and deformity?

The volume is sizable and my space limited. So let us tackle the essays in clusters I find most instructive. We shall start with the essays on Hume's positive epistemology, followed by those on his negative epistemology. Then we shall address the essays on Hume's metaphysics. After this will come the essays on Hume's moral and aesthetic sentimentalism. Lastly, we shall consider the essays on Hume's project and his social, economic and political thought.

1. Hume's positive epistemology: empirical knowledge of the external world

Together, the essays on Hume's positive epistemology cast him as explaining our empirical knowledge of the mind-independent external world. This depiction of Hume is both exegetically and philosophically promising. Let us start with probable or so-called 'inductive' reasoning. In 'The Psychology and Epistemology of Hume's Account of Probable Reasoning', Lorne Falkenstein argues that Hume "declares [our inductively-formed] beliefs ultimately unjustifiable", though "despite this sceptical result Hume was able to provide for a logic of probable reasoning, grounded on natural, but unjustifiable beliefs" (p. 104). When it comes to the epistemological consequences of Hume's account, I think Falkenstein rather overstates his case. Soon it will become apparent why. But let us focus now on what I think are Falkenstein's two great insights.

First, Falkenstein observes that Hume should have explicitly considered not merely causal inferences but also non-causal probable or 'inductive' inferences that nonetheless involve one of two 'inconstant' relations besides causation: contiguity or identity. I happen to agree entirely. Hume should not only have considered, say, my disposition to believe or form a vivacious idea of a billiard-ball dispersal when perceiving any billiard-ball collision. He should also have

explicitly incorporated cases like the following: "[s]uppose I see the legs and thighs of a person in motion, while some interpos'd object conceals the rest of his body. Here 'tis certain, the imagination spreads out the whole figure. I give him a head and shoulders, and breast and neck. These members I conceive and believe him to be possessed of" (T App. 4; SBN 626). As parts of the body are coexistent, this is not a causal inference. It is nonetheless an inductive inference that involves spatial contiguity.

Second, Falkenstein elucidates Hume's naturalistic explanation of the origin and operation of inductive norms. Consider two resembling but non-identical objects. Unregulated inductive reasoning produces the belief that they have similarly resembling effects. As we inevitably encounter regular cases in which they do not, we become habituated to a higher-order belief that it is always possible for effects to proceed not from 'superficial' features in virtue of which objects resemble each other, but from 'hidden' features in virtue of which they differ. The expression of this higher-order belief in our natural correction of the first-order belief constitutes our application of the inductive norm. So Hume says, "Here is all the LOGIC I think proper to employ in my reasoning; and perhaps even this was not very necessary, but might have been supply'd by the natural principles of our understanding" (T 1.3.6.11; SBN 175).

Note that these two insights need not constrain Hume's epistemology. To illustrate, consider Falkenstein's claim that "[t]hese 'rules by which to judge of causes and effects' *justify* other causal inferences" (p. 121; my italics). There are two possible notions of justification here. One is the attenuated notion of a higher-order belief sanctioning and promoting the formation of certain first-order beliefs over others; if, however, inductively-formed beliefs are in general not epistemically justified, then the sanctioned and promoted first-order beliefs are no more likely to be true than those that are not. Another is the stronger notion, given that inductively-formed beliefs are in general epistemically justified, of sanctioned and promoted first-order beliefs being more likely true than those that are not. I suspect that Falkenstein has in mind the first notion. But he has not done the work to show that Hume withholds epistemic justification from inductively-formed beliefs.

Peter Millican helps bring this point home in 'Hume's "Scepticism" About Induction'. After decades of championing the 'sceptical' interpretation of Hume's negative account of induction, Millican appears to embrace a more conciliatory stance: Hume is an inductive 'sceptic' only on the premise "that a method of inference is to be relied upon *only* if it can be given an independent rational warrant" (p. 58). But Hume rejects this premise. How can he reject it? Against Descartes's "entirely incurable" "antecedent" scepticism, Millican notes, Hume advocates "accord[ing] our faculties some initial default authority, and [resorting] to practical scepticism about them only '*consequent* to science and enquiry,' in the event that those investigations reveal their 'fallaciousness' or 'unfitness' (EHU 12.5; SBN

150)" (p. 59). Such 'mitigated' scepticism in light of the fallibility of inductive faculties warrants cautious deployment of them, but does not negate their default *epistemic* authority. Millican's proposal is a welcome attempt to break possibly the oldest and toughest gridlock in the history of Hume scholarship.

My only concern arises when Millican confronts what seems to be the next stage of scholarly dispute over Hume's account of induction: Hume's sense of 'reason'. Once again he positions himself against Don Garrett, who thinks that Hume simply inherits Locke's sense of 'reason' as the general faculty of making inferences or producing arguments. Millican's main objection seems to be that Garrett cannot then explain why in his negative argument Hume does not consider the possibility that our presupposition of the Uniformity Principle is caused by a *bad* inference or argument, e.g., Richard Price's attempt to ground it on an intuitable Causal Maxim. Though I find intriguing Millican's counterproposal that Hume broadens 'reason' to mean the cognitive faculty aiming to conform belief to reality, I do not accept his main objection to Garrett's view. For, as Louis Loeb has argued, "Hume imposes an epistemic constraint on any causal explanation of inductive inference: the explanation of our making inductive inferences must be compatible with their being justified" (*Synthese* 2006, 330). Causation of our presupposition of the Uniformity Principle by a bad inference or argument is ruled out in principle by Hume, for it could not account for Hume's explanandum: *epistemically justified* inductively-formed beliefs.

Speaking of externalist readings of Hume, we encounter the most challenging and perhaps most rewarding essay of the collection in Tom Seppalainen and Angela Coventry's 'Hume's Empiricist Inner Epistemology: A Reassessment of the Copy Principle'. Seppalainen and Coventry focus on Hume's concept of vivacity. But really they are peddling a wholesale alternative to a dominant reading that treats Hume's vivacious *impressions* as qualia. The qualia reading sees Humean impressions as phenomenologically strong or intense qualities. As a quale, the vivacious impression of red is stronger or more intense than the idea or memory of red. On this reading impressions are neither phenomenologically nor metaphysically intentional: they neither *feel* representative of distinct objects nor *represent* them. On this picture, moreover, vivacious impressions are themselves epistemically inert: at most, the vivacity of *ideas* informs us of inner qualitative change among impressions, which does not in turn inform us of change in the mind-independent external world.

Enter the reading proposed by Seppalainen and Coventry. They see Humean vivacity not only as rendering impressions phenomenologically strong or intense but – at least when belonging to ideas that copy temporally complex impressions – as "conscious indicators of believability". The vivacity of temporally complex impressions informs us of change in the mind-independent external world, for vivacious temporally complex impressions that are thereby coherent and constant "are

involved in the causation of the belief in the external world" (pp. 42–43). Moreover, ideas of temporally complex impressions copy not only their inherent qualities but also their vivacity; so the vivacity of ideas informs us of the vivacity of the temporally complex impressions they copy. Thus the vivacity of ideas informs us, indirectly via sensory vivacity, of change in the mind-independent external world.

This proposal departs from the qualia reading on every level. In causing belief in the external world, vivacious temporally complex impressions cause the *feeling* that they are *of* the mind-independent external world. And vivacious temporally complex impressions are metaphysically intentional in that they *do* represent change in the mind-independent external world. Finally, vivacious impressions are themselves epistemically salient: the vivacity of ideas of temporally complex impressions informs us of their sensory vivacity, which in turn informs us of change in the mind-independent external world.

For all the ingenuity of their proposal, I feel that Seppalainen and Coventry could be clearer about what makes it more exegetically and philosophically plausible than the qualia reading. At one point they claim that the qualia reading rests on a misinterpretation of Hume's account of coherence and constancy: "Imagination does not 'supply' the latter qualities central to the belief-idea in the external world. Instead, imagination processes complex sensory information that already is coherent and constant" (p. 45). I find this hard to square, for instance, with Hume's remark that "all those objects, to which we attribute a continu'd existence, have a peculiar *constancy*, which distinguishes them from the impressions, whose existence depends upon our perception" (T 1.4.2.18; SBN 194). I can accept that Hume thinks of change *in the mind-independent external world* as coherent and constant. But this is not sensory change, i.e., change in our *impressions* of the mind-independent external world.

Also, I wonder how Seppalainen and Coventry would defend reading Hume as presupposing a world of mind-independent external objects that our vivacious temporally complex impressions represent. There is at least a deep question about whether he thinks the philosophical external world belief is epistemically justified beyond serving as a mere "palliative remedy" (T 1.4.2.46; SBN 211). In light of this, I would suggest that Seppalainen and Coventry weaken their claim: *if* the philosophical external world belief is epistemically justified, *then* vivacity is a conscious indicator of sensed change in the mind-independent external world.

At any rate, Seppalainen and Coventry make it possible to see Hume as explaining our empirical knowledge of the mind-independent external world in general. They make room in Hume's account for *perceptual* knowledge of the mind-independent external world, for the vivacity of ideas copies the sensory vivacity of *actual* temporally complex impressions that represent change in the mind-independent external world. But if Millican is right that Hume allows for epistemically justified

inductively-formed belief, they also make room in Hume's account for *inferential* knowledge of the mind-independent external world. Consider: an inductively-formed belief is epistemically justified; that is, it is a vivacious idea that reliably *predicts* unobserved impressions. Moreover, if the philosophical external world belief is epistemically justified, then the vivacity that partly constitutes inductively-formed belief informs us indirectly of change in the mind-independent external world. So, inductively-formed belief reliably predicts change in the mind-independent external world. If correct, this is a very significant result.

2. *Hume's negative epistemology: scepticism and religious belief*

In 'Hume on Scepticism and the Moral Sciences', Alan Bailey calls into question this rosy picture of Hume's positive epistemology. Bailey sees Hume as a radical sceptic: "Hume holds that only beliefs about very simple necessary truths that do not need to be grasped through a process of inference and beliefs about the content of our present ideas and impressions are potentially capable of being rationally justified" (pp. 146–147). Bailey calls such beliefs 'H-minimal beliefs'. Notably, they do not include inductively-formed beliefs. The challenge for Bailey is to explain how Hume's radical scepticism is compatible with his constructive science of human nature and, moreover, how Hume can expect us to endorse the conclusions of this science.

I agree with Bailey that Hume deployed sceptical arguments sincerely and accepted their conclusions as 'unanswerable', even if I do not agree with Bailey about what these arguments show. And I think Bailey should be lauded for bucking a current trend not to read Hume as a serious sceptic. I also agree with Bailey's claim that Hume's radical scepticism would be not only consistent with his science of nature but *promote* it: "the application of radically sceptical arguments, when their power and irrefutability is genuinely internalized, is an extremely efficacious way of orienting the mind towards theories supported by exemplary causal reasoning, and away from specious theories supported only by weaker principles of mental association" (p. 162).

Unfortunately, Bailey is inconsistent about whether incapability of being rationally justified entails incapability of being *epistemically* justified. He concludes that "[o]ne's willingness to accept that particular beliefs cannot be rationally justified is, moreover, entirely compatible with firmly regarding those beliefs as true and also having the meta-belief that these beliefs are the products of psychological mechanisms that mostly latch on to the truth in nearby possible worlds" (p. 164). If this is the view Bailey ascribes to Hume, then he does *not* commit Hume to incapability of being rationally justified entailing incapability of being epistemically justified. That is, he does not read Hume as a radical sceptic. Earlier, however,

Bailey has no problem sliding from incapability of being rationally justified to incapability of being epistemically justified (p. 149).

Were Bailey to follow through on his radically sceptical reading, we would have a very interesting alternative to today's non-sceptical readings: why does Hume endorse mitigated scepticism – radical scepticism moderated by "carelessness and inattention" (T 1.4.2.57; SBN 218) – as 'properly' conducted empirical enquiry? Well, in doing so he is *not* claiming that through mitigated scepticism we more reliably form true beliefs. Rather, Hume's own endorsement of mitigated scepticism is grounded on the desire or need to escape a very unpleasant state of mind. On this reading Hume expects us to go along with his science of human nature not because of its *epistemic* plausibility, but because we too gravitate away from that "malady, which can never be radically cur'd" (T 1.4.2.57; SBN 218).

While lively debate among sceptical and non-sceptical readers of Hume only continues to intensify, the interpretation of Hume's negative religious epistemology is surprisingly consistent. By consensus, Hume is epistemically ill-disposed towards religious beliefs in general. These encompass beliefs in miracles, in a divine creator and in the god of monotheistic religion. In 'Hume on Miracles', Duncan Pritchard and Alasdair Richmond explicate Hume's attack on the first set of beliefs in section 10 of *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, entitled 'Of Miracles'.

It is not really a question for Pritchard and Richmond that Hume takes beliefs in miracles to be very rarely or perhaps never epistemically justified. Rather, the question is really how much epistemic weight Hume accords to testimonial belief. On the 'strong' reading of Hume's argument against beliefs in miracles, he rules out *a priori* rationally-formed testimonial belief in a miracle. The thought would be that since a miracle is defined as a "violation of the laws of nature" (EHU 10.12; SBN 114), and since the laws of nature are our best-confirmed regularities, it is trivial that belief in a miracle will be epistemically outclassed by our beliefs in laws of nature. But Pritchard and Richmond observe that this strong reading cannot make sense of Hume's concession that "there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony" (EHU 10.36; SBN 127).

Pritchard and Richmond offer a 'weak' reading in place of the implausible strong reading: Hume concedes the slim possibility of rationally-formed testimonial belief in a miracle in cases where the testimony is sufficiently robust, e.g., where "all authors, in all languages, agree, that, from the first of January 1600, there was a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days" (EHU 10.36; SBN 127–128). Hume concedes an even slimmer possibility of rationally-formed belief in a specifically religious miracle. For our knowledge of human psychology indicates that such belief is likely produced by non-detective sources, e.g., an unconscious desire to profit from appearing as a medium of divine revelation.

Pritchard and Richmond also make the entirely valid point that Hume's stance on miracles does not presuppose reductionism about testimony, that is, the view "that the epistemic standing of a testimony-based belief must ultimately be completely traced back to, and hence in this sense *reduced to*, non-testimonial sources" (p. 236). For Hume could distinguish epistemically suitable from unsuitable conditions and specify, for instance, that the epistemic conditions in which testimony-based beliefs in miracles are formed are never suitable.

In 'David Hume and the Argument to Design', Andrew Pyle carries Hume's fight to the argument to design, or, the inference from extraordinarily beautiful or intricate entities to the existence of an intelligent cause of them. In Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, Cleanthes argues to the existence of an intelligent cause on the basis of analogy with human creation: "the Author of nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man; though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which he has executed" (DNR 2.143). Philo's objection to Cleanthes – and Hume's, Pyle seems to think – is that the analogy is illegitimate. Though the analogical inference is for Cleanthes "self-evident and undeniable" (DNR 3.155), it fails to meet the criteria for epistemically laudable 'natural' beliefs. Moreover, Philo contends in Part V of the *Dialogues*, the supposed infinitude, perfection and unity of God and the finitude, imperfection and disunity of human craftsmen and their products renders the analogy even less epistemically credible.

In 'Psychological Explanations of Religious Belief', David O'Connor addresses Hume's attack on the belief that god exists. O'Connor's general claim is that Hume's psychological explanation of the belief in god undermines its epistemic standing. In the *Natural History of Religion*, Hume explains that humans in primitive societies formed a belief in gods out of "the urgent practical need to cope with difficult and inscrutable circumstances and with the anxiety and terror they caused" (NHR 2.139). They formed the *idea* of a god through 'feature projection', or, the pre-reflective transfer of qualities of our own minds like anger and jealousy to the causes of natural events like floods and storms. The vivaciousness of this idea, making it a *belief*, stemmed from the degree to which it helped believers cope with anxiety produced by the unpredictable natural world. Fear of angering the gods by assigning them limitations turned the polytheistic belief monotheistic. O'Connor argues that since Hume's sufficient explanation does not appeal to supernatural entities, it all but destroys the reasonableness of the belief in god.

I agree that Hume's uniformly naturalistic explanation of the belief in god epistemically undermines it. And surely, Hume's explanation does not "entail that there are no gods, since it remains possible that our ideas of them could have developed in the ways Hume describes and such entities exist anyway" (p. 275). But, O'Connor claims, it does entail that there is *no reason* to believe in god. I think, however, that O'Connor must do more to explain exactly why this is. Does the

undermining require that Hume's explanation of the belief in god be accepted as *true*? O'Connor once suggests that it does: "a believer becomes *persuaded* that the gods are only our minds' progeny" (p. 272). He later suggests that the explanation need only be accepted as *plausible* or "feasible" (p. 275). Now, it seems that accepting the mere plausibility of Hume's explanation would undermine one's belief that the *only* plausible explanation of the belief in god invokes the supernatural. But it also seems that accepting the mere plausibility of Hume's explanation may *not* fully undermine one's belief that the supernatural explanation is *a* plausible explanation, even if it may diminish its plausibility. Perhaps O'Connor agrees with this. If so, it would help if he were clearer about it.

3. Hume's metaphysics: free will, causation and the self

Current interpretation of Hume's metaphysics is framed in terms of an opposition between realism and anti-realism. This applies to Hume's libertarianism (if it may be called that), causal necessitarianism, and theory of the self or the mind. Disagreement among the relevant camps shows no signs of letting up. But this collection's essays on Hume's metaphysics do at least move the debates forward. It will be useful to cover topics in the order just listed.

Constantine Sandis clarifies two aspects of Hume's theory of motivation in 'Action, Reason, and the Passions'. First, knowledge about actions (even, presumably, first-personal knowledge) is for Hume just another type of knowledge about natural events. This means that for Hume the knowledge is inferential and inductive. It also means that for Hume any action must be caused, since the Causal Maxim applies to all natural events. Second, in contrast with the simplistic 'Humean Theory of Motivation', Hume held that beliefs alone could indeed motivate, that is, cause actions. Granted, for Hume reason alone could not cause belief. But this is consistent with Hume's view that belief alone could cause action in the absence of desire.

With this background in place, let us consider James Harris's interpretation of Hume's compatibilism in 'Free Will'. If Harris is making a novel interpretive claim, it is that "what Hume brings to […] the question of liberty and necessity is a kind of agnosticism about fundamental metaphysical issues" (p. 225). Rather, Harris thinks, Hume sought to dissolve the apparent incompatibility by redefining terms. For instance, he redefines 'liberty' as an absence of constraint and coercion as opposed to a 'liberty of indifference', only the latter of which violates the Causal Maxim. The *apparent* freedom of spontaneity Hume explains away as an internal impression and illusion.

Though Harris provides helpful historical context, I must make three pleas for clarification. First, he does not spell out why "[i]t is the changes that Hume has

made to the received orthodox system with regard to material objects and causes that enable his project of reconciliation […] where Hobbes had argued that what needed to be revised was our understanding of liberty, Hume holds that it is our – that is, philosophers' – understanding of necessity that has to alter" (p. 223). To begin, Harris seems to equivocate between the necessity of causal necessitarianism and the necessity of causal determinism. The first is a quality that attends particular causal regularities. The second binds every event to a preceding cause of it. Does Harris think that Hume's account of the first or the second enables the reconciliation?

Second, I am not persuaded that Hume's reconciliation represents a metaphysical agnosticism. If Hume is right that causal determinism is true (i.e., necessarily, any event is caused), and if 'liberty of indifference' implies the possibility of an action without a determining cause, then does not Hume's reconciliation entail that there is no 'liberty of indifference'? And is this not a negative metaphysical result?

Third, I wish to hear more about why Harris denies that "Hume's way of treating the free will question might have some relevance to the so-called 'New Hume debate', that is, the debate as to whether Hume is a 'regularity theorist' about causation or, instead, a kind of realist about the existence of unobserved and unobservable causal powers" (p. 225). My own suspicion is that Hume's treatment of the free will question has no bearing on the New Hume debate because, for instance, causal determinism simply does not entail realism or anti-realism about causal powers. But it is unclear whether this is also Harris's reason.

This leads us naturally into Helen Beebee's essay 'Causation and Necessary Connection'. The New Hume debate concerns whether Hume was a regularity theorist, sceptical realist or projectivist about causation. These clashing interpretations have emerged out of three apparently inconsistent claims Hume seems to make in part 1.3 of the *Treatise*: (a) we mistakenly 'project' an internal impression of mental determination onto constantly conjoined 'non-mental' objects and events (i.e., *impressions*); (b) the component idea of necessary connection is not to be revised out of the idea of causation; and (c) our causal thought and talk is acceptable, whether because it is truth-apt or because it non-representationally expresses sentiment.

Those who consider Hume a regularity theorist render these claims consistent by taking Hume to deny (b). I agree with Beebee that this interpretation cannot be right. For Hume endorses a broad variety of causal claims employing a component idea of necessary connection. Those who consider Hume a sceptical realist and those who consider him a projectivist both render the claims consistent by finessing (a). On the sceptical realist reading, Hume locates our mistake in supposing that real necessary causal connections in the world are perceivable; in lacking an impression of necessary causal connection we also lack an adequate

representation of it, but this does not prevent our referring to that which we cannot adequately represent. On the projectivist reading, Hume locates our mistake in supposing that our internal impression of mental determination *refers at all* to a feature of relations between 'non-mental' objects and events (i.e., either impressions *or* continued and distinct existences); "[w]e make causal *judgements*, but these would appear not to have the status of *belief* for Hume, nor would they appear to be judgements *about matters of fact*" (p. 143).

So the sceptical realist and projectivist disagree mainly about the *reference* and *epistemic status* of our idea of necessary causal connection. For the sceptical realist our causal *beliefs* employ an idea of necessary causal connection that refers to a feature of relations between mind-independent objects and events (i.e., *not* impressions). For the projectivist our causal *judgements* express the *apparent* necessary causal connections attending relations among external objects and events (i.e., impressions), a product of projecting our *actual* idea of necessary causal connection – an idea of mental determination – onto them.

Textual evidence such as Hume's ubiquitous 'power' talk in the *Enquiry* weighs in favour of the sceptical realist reading. In spite of this, Beebee expresses a concern that the sceptical realist reading questionably saddles Hume with the Cartesian doctrine that "'true causes' *are* such that we *would*, if only we could penetrate into their nature, be able to infer effects from causes a priori" (p. 144). I wonder if this is true. If Hume's rhetorical strategy in *Treatise* 1.3.6 – that "[i]t shall therefore be allow'd for a moment, that the production of one object by another in any one instance implies a power; and that this power is connected with its effect" (T 1.3.6.10; SBN 91) – is any indication of his considered doxastic stance towards causal power, then Hume may be less than full-bloodedly endorsing but more than merely professing indifference to the causal power hypothesis. It appears that sceptical realism need not involve all-out endorsement of a Cartesian doctrine of 'true causes'.

This 'New Humean' dialectical framework can help illuminate the interpretive debate concerning Hume's account of our belief in personal identity. According to Hume, that belief arises from our natural tendency to mistake distinct but closely related perceptions for an identical perception. A bit of reflection reveals the error but cannot "take off this biass from the imagination" (T 1.4.6.6; SBN 254). To justify our asserting that different related objects are the same, "we often feign some new and unintelligible principle, that connects the objects together, and prevents their interruption or variation": the fictional notion of self. The only intelligible idea of self we do have is of "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (T 1.4.6.4; SBN 252).

While in 'The Self and Personal Identity' Harold Noonan reads Hume here as a reductionist about the self, Galen Strawson in "'All My Hopes Vanish": Hume on

the Mind' remains confident that Hume is not. Their disagreement manifests in a dispute over why Hume later proclaimed his account of our belief in personal identity hopelessly defective:

> Having thus loosen'd all our particular perceptions, when I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity, I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings cou'd have induced me to receive it […] In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences*, and *that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences*. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there wou'd be no difficulty in the case. (T App. 20–21; SBN 635–636)

In Noonan's view, Hume is here conceding that his explanation of our belief in personal identity is *internally* inadequate. In particular, Noonan thinks that Hume is recognising that he cannot explain our natural tendency to mistake distinct but closely related perceptions for identical perceptions: "nowhere else are we disposed to *identify* cause and effect" (p. 179). Noonan may be right that only here does Hume claim that cause and effect drives the identity-ascribing mechanism. But it is not clear that this uniqueness of the identity-ascribing mechanism in the case of personal identity should be a problem for Hume. It *feels* to the reflecting subject as if the train of different perceptions that "succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity" are one unbroken perception through a supposed variation in time. It is unclear why Hume should need to reject this explanation: "[h]owever extraordinary it may seem, it need not surprise us" (T App. 20; SBN 635).

But another problem for Noonan's interpretation is that he cannot explain and must disregard Hume's claim of an inconsistency between the principle *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences* and the principle *that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences*. Perhaps it weighs strongly in favour of the sceptical realist reading as a whole that Strawson can make very good sense of the inconsistency. Under sceptical realism, Strawson is able to distinguish the *empirically warranted* idea of the mind as a bundle of perceptions from the *non*-empirically warranted conception of a Principle-Governed Mind, i.e., a mind subject to imaginative principles of association. For Strawson, the inconsistency is this: since the mind never perceives any real connection (e.g., mind-independent causal necessity) among the distinct perceptions that constitute the mind, Hume cannot be warranted in invoking the conception of more than a 'bundle of perceptions'. But he must be so warranted in order to appeal to imaginative principles of association that cause our belief in personal identity in the first place. In prior work, Strawson

elaborates: principles of association require that an impression *remains* in the mind as an idea waiting to be called up by the imagination. But if the mind is a mere bundle of perceptions that ceases when the impression ceases, then there is no place for the remaining idea to *be*.

Exegetically, Strawson's interpretation is much more satisfying than Noonan's. It does, however, present a genuine problem for today's Humeans. As Hume himself notes, ideas would have a place to be if our perceptions were to "inhere in something simple and individual"; moreover, the conception of a Principle-Governed Mind would be empirically-warranted if we were to "perceive some real connexion among [perceptions]". But neither solution is available within an empirically-warranted science of human nature. As Strawson puts it, Humeans must "give an account of [imaginative principles of association] that makes room for the bare fact of [their] possibility" (p. 192), something they ostensibly cannot do.

4. Hume's sentimentalist ethics and aesthetics

Realism features much less prominently, if at all, in Hume's ethics and aesthetics than it likely does in Hume's metaphysics. In 'Hume and the Virtues', Dan O'Brien sums up Hume's moral theory: "we think of [actions] as being caused by [the agent] and by aspects of his or her character. Those aspects of an agent's character towards which we feel approval are virtues and those towards which we feel disapproval are vices" (p. 290). Hume's rigid distinction between virtue and vice underlies a rich and largely fluid dichotomy of kinds of virtue (e.g., 'moral', 'natural', 'artificial' and allegedly 'monkish' virtues). Reason and sentiment work in commune to produce moral judgement about a person's character traits: causal reasoning allows us to gauge their likely effects on those within a person's sphere of influence, while sympathy allows us to share in feelings of agreeableness or disagreeableness they cause.

Hume's moral theory is *sentimentalist*, which might be taken to imply quite a strong metaethical view: "[t]he vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You can never find it, till you turn your reflection to your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action […] It lies in yourself, not in the object" (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468–469). This raises a deceptively straightforward question about whether Hume is a moral anti-realist. In an important sense, Julia Driver notes in 'Hume's Sentimentalist Account of Moral Judgement', it does: there are no "*stance-independent* moral facts or properties in the world" such as intrinsic properties of actions. But Driver makes the important qualification that for Hume this does not preclude a more attenuated objectivism: "[moral] judgements, when true, are so independently of what any human being, anywhere, in any circumstance whatever, thinks of them" (p. 282).

That is, moral judgements are *true* in virtue of corresponding to facts about approval and pleasure from what Hume calls a "general point of view" (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581–582): "the intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners" (EPM 5.42; SBN 229).

Driver's qualification of Hume's metaethics provides a lens through which to examine his theory of aesthetic taste. In *Of the Standard of Taste*, Hume is similarly an anti-realist about beauty and deformity: "[b]eauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty" (SOT 7). So, there are no stance-independent aesthetic facts or properties in the world. Something Mark Rowe could be clearer about in '"Of the Standard of Taste": Decisions, Rules and Critical Argument' is that Hume's aesthetics also seems similarly *cognitivist*: aesthetic judgements admit of truth or falsity in virtue of corresponding to facts about approval by the judging subject in question. By the same token, Rowe recognizes that Hume posits certain aesthetic 'judgement conditions' (e.g., delicacy of mental taste that discerns nuances in flavour, extensive practice in discerning such nuances, etc.) facilitating the formation of true judgements about the dispositions of certain qualities of objects to cause aesthetic pleasure in the judging subject. Hume might just as easily have posited conditions in virtue of which one exercises causal reasoning and sympathy in a manner conducive to forming true moral judgements.

This appears to be the extent of the ground shared by Hume's ethics and aesthetics. Notably, the moderate objectivism Driver identifies in Hume's ethics is absent from his aesthetics. A true aesthetic judgement does not refer to what is aesthetically pleasing *from the general point of view*. Hume does nonetheless introduce the notion of a 'standard of taste', which Rowe finds problematic: "the idea that there is a standard of taste over and above the various opinions of qualified people – their joint verdict, for example, or acknowledged principles – is illusory and contrary to the spirit of Hume's own subjectivism" (p. 362), for "[w]e can thus expect a highly diverse set of people to meet [Hume's judgement conditions], and also expect that these people will hold a very wide range of legitimate aesthetic opinions" (p. 361). I wonder, though, if Rowe is correct to read Hume as committing to such a transcendent standard. It seems that Hume could just be explaining what a standard of taste *is* (i.e., a joint verdict of 'true judges') without claiming that *there ever is* a standard of the highest generality.

5. Hume's project v. social, economic and political thought

First, a word about methodology. I am not certain about Timothy Costelloe's claim in 'Hume on History' that Hume's methodology is univocal: more specifically,

that what counts as an explanation in Hume's history counts as an explanation in Hume's science of human nature (p. 365). On the face of it, this seems wrong. Arguably, Hume's dominant methodology in the *Treatise* is *inductive*. For example, "[f]rom this constant conjunction of resembling impressions I immediately conclude, that there is a great connexion betwixt our correspondent impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon that of the other" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 4). Simple ideas have been observed as constantly conjoined to prior resembling simple impressions. Thus every simple idea is preceded by a resembling simple impression.

Hume's historical methodology, on the other hand, comes through in the following: "[t]hough we are not informed of any of these circumstances by ancient historians [that well-born thanes resisted the rise of merchants or ceorles through the ranks of medieval society], they are so much founded on the nature of things, that we may admit them as a necessary and infallible consequence of the situation of the kingdom during those ages" (H 1.170). In this case, Costelloe notes, "a general knowledge of historical circumstances [and established natural principles, I will add] will support the likelihood of something having been the case" (p. 368). Presumably, the historian then weighs probabilities of alternative scenarios and chooses accordingly. This looks like *abduction*, or, inference to the best explanation.

Now perhaps Costelloe wishes only to suggest that Hume's history resembles his science of human nature in being 'beholden to evidence' and productive of knowledge through *some* application of inductive reasoning, as for example within abductive reasoning. This I do not doubt. For Hume, 'philosophical' history can cause in its audience both *belief* in and *knowledge* of otherwise inaccessible past events, the latter of which can be a further source of knowledge about "the constant and universal principles of human nature" (EHU 8.7; SBN 83). But if Costelloe wishes to double down on the claim that Hume's historical methodology is no different in kind from the methodology of his science of human nature, then he must do more work to convince us that abductive reasoning *reduces* ultimately to inductive reasoning.

Hume's methodology aside, let us turn to the broader question of his *aim*. In 'Hume's Legacy and the Idea of British Empiricism', Paul Russell reflects on the complex causal interaction between the interpretive project of Hume scholars and the self-consciously ahistorical contemporary analytic project inspired by Hume. Russell's reflections are meant to serve his endeavour to shift Hume scholarship away from the dialectic between scepticism and naturalism – caused in large part by the Kantian separation of the great 'rationalists' (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and the great 'empiricists' (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) – towards an 'irreligious' thread that ties Hume's thought together. How does Russell justify such a shift? On the received interpretation, Russell says, "[Hume's] most basic

commitments – his sceptical principles and his scientific ambitions – are in direct conflict with each other, rendering his entire philosophical system broken-backed" (p. 383). Given a principle of charity, Hume must not be promoting this doomed system. Rather, Russell holds, Hume's thought should be seen as revolving around a fundamental *irreligious* agenda.

I am unconvinced. It seems woefully premature to declare Hume's scepticism and his scientific ambitions irreconcilable. For one thing, this would ignore the wonderful progress made by this collection's essays on Hume's positive epistemology. But also, even granting that Hume's scepticism and scientific ambitions are irreconcilable, it is far from obvious that an irreligious interpretation would bring us any closer to *resolving* this conflict. And finally, Russell may have been right to posit in his prior work a stronger connection between the contents of the *Treatise* and religious themes. But this stronger connection can sit peacefully within the received interpretive framework seeking to reconcile Hume's scepticism with his scientific ambitions, for religious beliefs are just a subset of 'unphilosophical' or epistemically condemnable beliefs.

An added incentive not to adopt Russell's irreligious interpretation is that we can devote equal attention to equally important matters unrelated to religion: Hume's social, economic and political thought. Here Hume's writings paint an even clearer portrait of a thinker plugged into the dynamic circumstances of human life – friendship, love, money, justice – much unlike the Cartesian caricature of a sequestered sceptic, as Emilio Mazza observes in 'Hume's Life, Intellectual Context, and Reception'. Hume never openly espoused a philosophy of gender, but in 'Hume and Feminism' Lívia Guimarães makes a compelling case that Hume may well have been a feminist. Guimarães is unclear about whether he might have been a feminist in the sense of espousing an ethics on which feminine qualities are virtues, or in the sense of promoting the welfare of women, or both. At any rate, because Hume held that "[h]e will always be more esteemed, who possesses those talents and accomplishments, which suit his station and profession" (EPM 6.20; SBN 241–242), Hume is free to hold feminine qualities such as "insinuation, address, and charms" (EPM 3.19; SBN 191) – whether innate or conditioned – in like esteem to masculine virtues. In fact, Guimarães suggests, Hume venerates a set of qualities that are ultimately *not* gender-relative: "[f]emale valour can show itself in the field of war and in the cabinet, as much as in kneeling and pleading for a good cause" (p. 328).

Hume's thought extends beyond the social into the economic and political. In 'Hume on Economic Well-being', Margaret Schabas undermines the common impression of Hume as an economic lightweight alongside his friend Adam Smith. A number of insights and claims stand out from Hume's *Political Discourses*, which as a whole actively promoted freer trade and the individual right to pursue wealth. Schabas notes that Hume "was one of the first to emphasize that the price level of

many key goods brought to urban markets had fallen over the past few decades, as wholesale methods developed and brought about price uniformity" (p. 336). With unparalleled abductive skill he linked Western Europe's expansion of national wealth to its population growth. He predicted that America and China would replace Britain to become economic hegemonic powers. Interestingly, he extolled the virtues of merchants, manufacturing and overseas trade in enhancing learning, civility, equality and freedom, while favouring urbanisation.

Russell Hardin tells us in 'Hume's Human Nature' that Hume pioneered the explanation of the origin of political institutions from sympathy – manifested through the phenomenon of 'mirroring' (e.g., your smiling causing my smiling and the feelings associated with it) – and convention, or "the spontaneous, iterated co-ordination of large numbers of people in mutually beneficial ways". While making a welcome contribution to our understanding of Hume's political thought, Hardin unfortunately at times lapses into unsupported commentary on Hume's metaethics. So, he claims, "Hume does not present a moral theory but only a naturalist account of why we have the moral views and the political principles that we have" (p. 306). But why should a descriptive genealogy of moral or political principles preclude assent to these very principles? For example, why should his descriptive genealogy of our moral approbation of generosity preclude the view that generosity is a morally laudable virtue? Perhaps Hardin is only claiming that when Hume engages in descriptive genealogy he is not *thereby* morally theorising. Yet this is not the impression Hardin gives.

Let me conclude by asking the editors why they have chosen to order the essays in this collection as they have. Their reason may be relatively mundane: that the essays thematically follow, roughly, the chronological publication of Hume's works. Or perhaps the essays proceed by diminishing order of perceived scholarly interest. I would like to think that the reason is more deliberate and provocative: that the earlier subject-matter has *explanatory priority* over the later; for example, the principles expounded in Hume's theory of motivation in some sense explain the principles expounded in his economic and political thought.

In the absence of an explicit reason, however, I should think that it would be more *pedagogically* effective to group them in a manner similar to how I have. I should think, for instance, that discussion of Hume's sentimentalist aesthetics can immediately follow discussion of his sentimentalist ethics, and that discussion of his negative religious epistemology can immediately follow discussion of his positive epistemology. In any case, the editors have performed a valuable service. They have brought to us a collection of essays not only taking stock of the immense progress Hume scholarship has made, but also seeking boldly to carry it into its next stages.

Kevin R. Busch
St. Anne's College, Oxford
kevin.busch@philosophy.ox.ac.uk