BRILL

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF SKEPTICISM 5 (2015) 29-54

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF SKEPTICISM

brill.com/skep

Scepticism and Naturalism in Cavell and Hume

Peter S. Fosl
Transylvania University
pfosl@transy.edu

Abstract

This essay argues that the exploration of scepticism and its implications in the work of Stanley Cavell and David Hume bears more similarities than is commonly acknowledged, especially along the lines of what I wish to call "sceptical naturalism." These lines of similarity are described through the way each philosopher relates the "natural" and "nature" to the universal, the necessary, and the conventional.

Keywords

scepticism – naturalism – Cavell – Hume – agreement – convention – custom

1 Introduction

In his essay "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," originally published in 1965, Stanley Cavell remarks that "Hume is always a respectable place to begin" (2002: 86). Hume's thought is, however, rarely a place where Cavell ends, or even tarries, preferring instead to linger with Wittgenstein, Austin, and Kant, whom Cavell regards as "deeper and obscurer" than Hume (2002: 88). Cavell's making quick work of Hume, often enlisting his thought as little more than a foil, I find as remarkable as it is unfortunate, since there is much to be found in common, and much that is interestingly different, concerning scepticism in their thought.[1] I wish to tarry a bit myself, then, in this essay and reflect upon a number of the alignments and misalignments I find in the work of these two

1 One finds an almost derisive dismissal in one of Cavell's students, Timothy Gould: "Hume's tactic of playing billiards as a relief from the melancholy of reflection and skepticism is a relatively unsophisticated strategy, compared to some that I know of" (Gould 1998: 11).

© KONINKLIJKE BRILL NV, LEIDEN, 2015 | DOI 10.1163/22105700-04010003

philosophers towards the end of figuring something about how naturalism relates to scepticism in their thought.

A telling place to begin is, I think, an especially pregnant passage with which Cavell closes "Aesthetic Problems," an apology of sorts for a kind of dogmatism (the bogey of sceptical thinking) others have detected and Cavell embraces, after a fashion, in ordinary language philosophy (hereafter "OLP"):

> Kant's attention to the "universal voice" expressed in aesthetic judgment seems to me, finally, to afford some explanation of that air of dogmatism which claims about what "we" say seem to carry for critics of ordinary language procedures, and which they find repugnant and intolerant. I think that air of dogmatism is indeed present in such claims; but if that is intolerant, that is because tolerance could only mean, as in liberals it often does, that the kind of claim in question is not taken seriously. It is, after all, a claim about *our lives*; its differences, or oppositions of these that tolerance, if it is to be achieved, must be directed toward. About what we should say when, we do not expect to have to tolerate much difference, believing that if we could articulate it fully we would have spoken for all men, found the necessities common to us all. Philosophy has always hoped for that; so, perhaps has science. But Philosophy concerns those necessities we cannot, being human, fail to know. Except that nothing is more human than to deny them.
>
> 1965: 96

This remark in defense of dogmatism seems on its surface to cast Kant against type, against Kant as a philosopher who repudiated his "dogmatic slumbers"—and that through the influence of none other than David Hume.[2] But the kind of dogmatism for which Cavell offers an apology is of a peculiar sort, one that aspires not only to a distinctive kind of universality and a specific spectrum of human necessities but also to a "serious" quality of voice that is both a consequence of philosophical reflection upon scepticism and consistent with it. I wish to explore that universality, necessity, and seriousness and also advance a kind of apology of my own for Humean scepticism, on just the curious dogmatic grounds Cavell calls upon. My approach takes stock of the concept of "nature" in Cavell's and in Hume's writing, sounding out, in the sections that

2 That philosophy, moreover, has "always hoped" to speak for "all men" (and women, I wish but cannot presume to say here) is a claim about which I have my doubts. Do the Pyrrhonian sceptics, Montaigne, and Nietzsche share that hope? On gender and Cavell, as well as for an interesting account of the emotional content of scepticism, see Viehues-Bailey (2007).

follow, the way the "natural" is related for them to (1) the universal, (2) the necessary, and (3) the conventional. More particularly, I will argue that Cavell's thought along these three lines exhibits what I call a "sceptical naturalism" that positions his philosophical thinking in important ways closer to Hume's than to Kant's.

2 The Natural as the (Sceptical) Universal

In defending OLP procedures, Cavell is motivated to account for the peculiar universality characteristic of aesthetic judgment and the possibility of its seriousness in making more-than-particular and still meaningful claims about human existence that are different from analytic and synthetic-*a posteriori* assertions, the only sorts of true assertions positivists and even many analytical philosophers countenance. Cavell's formative encounters with positivists—including his observing a strained exchange at UCLA between an aggressive graduate student and Hans Meyerhoff about the meaningfulness of one of Rilke's poems—propelled him on a career of inquiring into alternative modes of expression, judgment, and perhaps even apology.[3] He finds inspiration for that alternative kind of intelligibility in Kant's third *Critique*.

Through concepts that cluster around the "*a priori*," such as "apodeictic," "necessary," "reason," "logical," "transcendental" and, of course, "deduction," Kant labors in the first *Critique* to retrieve something of the "necessities" of reasoning and knowing he thought had been too hastily abandoned by Hume's refusal of rationalistic dogmatism (B127–28). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*,

3 Cavell (2010: 252–253): "The conversation I have in mind now was between Meyerhoff and the young teaching assistant I had consulted in the logic course I was taking. A number of other students were already gathered there witnessing the event. As I approached the group the teaching assistant was saying, 'We know now that every assertion is either true or false or else neither true nor false; in the former case the assertion is meaningful, in the latter case cognitively meaningless. If you go on saying to me that this line of Rilke's is cognitively meaningful, I smile at you.' Meyerhoff was in evident distress. He would of course have heard roughly this positivist refrain before, but for some reason he had been drawn in a weak moment into an aggrieved effort to defend a work important to him on grounds that may or may not have been important to him. And this defense seemed at this moment, as similar moments have so often seemed to others, to demand that he deny what seemed undeniably true, however insufferably asserted, in this assault on his treasured convictions. To discover a different mode of response to such an assault became as if on the spot an essential part of my investment in what I would call philosophy."

Kant roots those necessities not, of course, in nature or custom but in the synthetic activity of the transcendental ego spontaneously, but not chaotically, generating for us world structuring-legislating, universal and *a priori* categories of the understanding from the shared possibilities of logical judgment. The sublime capacity for autonomous action, independent of the constraints of enslaving passions and particular interests that Kant postulates in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, finds its own ground similarly in the logical universality of the maxims of moral conduct and practical reason. Although he aspires to something like Kant's transcendental investigation—that is, to apprehending the necessary conditions for the possibilities of the topics he investigates—neither (1) the pure and *a priori* universality of transcendental argument, nor (2) the universality of inductive generalization in the empirical sciences, nor (3) the universality of deductive inference is the kind of universality for which Cavell wishes to make an apology.

Cavell, in assessing the capacities of OLP, is drawn to a different species of universality more akin to the universal voice characteristic of judgments of the beautiful Kant explores in his *The Critique of Judgment*—a universality not unlike, I wish to argue, the objective and shared judgments whose possibility Hume defends in his essay, "Of the Standard of Taste" (Hume 1985, hereafter ST). "Reflective judgments" for Kant, unlike the "determinative" judgments of empirical science and mathematics, are not guided in deductive or definite ways by prior universal concepts and schemata in their application to particulars. Rather, reflective judgments begin with particulars apprehended by individual subjects (they are "singular" judgments) and find general concepts for them. Reflective judgments speak in a universal voice—speaking "for all men," having "found the necessities common to us all"—but not the voice of the sciences, logic, or mathematics. As Cavell describes Kant: "the idea is of the expression of a conviction whose grounding remains subjective—say myself—but which expects or claims justification from the 'universal' concurrence of other subjectivities, on reflection; call this the acknowledgement of matching" (1990: xxvi).

The distance between Kant and Hume (and between Kant and Cavell), however, is well marked in this domain by Hume when *le bon David* characterizes his own analogue of the "acknowledgment of matching" in aesthetic judgment as "objective" and "universal" but crucially not "*a priori*," not even *a priori* in the "peculiar" way Kant characterizes it. Hume does not disagree with Kant that aesthetic judgments express subjective universality. Humean subjectivism is clearly signaled in his maintaining that "beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment." But Hume also strikes a more serious chord when he writes that "the

principles of taste" are "universal, and nearly if not entirely the same in all men" (ST 241), so much so that they enable him to speak and judge "as a man in general" (ST 239–240), in what is arguably something of the same universal voice Cavell intones. That the principles of taste are, however, not *a priori* for Hume is, importantly, part of what he means in calling them "sceptical" (ST 230). It implies, among other things, that Hume (as well as Cavell) differs from Kant in relation to the "peculiar" *a priori* of Kantian aesthetic judgment. Kant writes:

> Now if this universal validity is not to be based on a collection of votes and interrogation of others as to what sort of sensations they experience, but is to rest, as it were, upon an autonomy of the Subject passing judgement on the feeling of pleasure … and yet is also not to be derived from concepts; then it follows that such a judgement … has a double and also logical *peculiarity*. For, *first*, it has *universal* validity *a priori*, yet without having a logical universality according to concepts, but only the universality of a singular judgement. *Secondly*, it has a *necessity*, (which must invariably rest upon *a priori* grounds) but one which depends upon no *a priori* proofs by the representation of which it would be competent to enforce the assent which the judgment of taste demands of every one.[4]
>
> Book II, §31, 281; emphasis mine. I use the translation in KANT 1952

OLP is not an inductive science that makes language the object of empirical scientific inquiry; and like Kant, Hume advances the standard of taste not to catalogue empirical data and make inductive generalizations about what human beings happen to experience as beautiful.[5] As Kant scholar Eli Friedlander says about aesthetic judgment, "The idea of the universal voice is thus not reducible to common reactions to an object of delight in an ideal

4 Without the capacity to "enforce" assent, reflective judgments of taste can call upon reasons, but they cannot demand or compel the demand to the same uniformity of conclusion to which logical, mathematical, and even scientific reasoning makes claim. Hume and Cavell, in addition, resist Kant's claim here that necessity in judgment "must invariably rest upon *a priori* grounds."

5 Hammer (2002: 93–94) makes the same mistake about Hume, reading Hume as if he argued only for popular agreement, and not also agreement in nature as prior to and making possible critical judgments of popular agreement. Cavell, on the other hand, understands that Hume's thought turns its claims on a different fulcrum: "It is of crucial importance that neither Hume nor Descartes of the Meditations, nor indeed anyone in that continuous line of classical epistemologists from Descartes and Locke to Moore and Price, seems to be conducting scientific investigations" (2002: 60).

case" (2006: 209). Hume, despite Cavellians' caricature to the contrary, does appeal to reasoning (as well as to examples) to correct for the distortions of interest, to discern context and audience, and to formulate principles of composition as well as criticism.[6] But as the expression of the Humean critic's own *singular* act of judgment (rather than as a deductive or inductive inference with *general* principles), the Humean critic's standard differs from the "general rules" of a "second influence" (*Treatise* [T] 1.3.13.12, in Hume 2007) by which Hume advances normative standards to correct judgments in the sciences. The Humean critic presents to others his or her judgment as the subjective, universal, standard of taste, but does not aspire to enter claims that simply conform to antecedent opinion or that aim merely to influence consequent opinion. Instead, the standard of taste leverages claims to which others are always expected (in both the normative and prescriptive senses of "expect") to conform in agreement—an agreement the expectation of which is importantly not a prediction, and which, in practice, we can also always already expect to escape us. Kant reads the *a priori* into the priority of expected agreement and retreats into putative analogies between reflective and determinate judgments in his urgency to establish a stronger kind of universality (what a sceptic might call 'a dogmatic universality'). Hume refuses temptations of that sort and appeals instead only to human experience to locate a different claim to universality (a sceptical universality), restricting characterization of judgments as *a priori* to just logical and analytical judgments: "none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasoning *a priori*, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas which are eternal and immutable" (ST 231).[7]

6 Hammer's clear account of the way the role of reason distinguishes aesthetic judgment from judgments of personal taste applies to Hume as well as Kant and Cavell: "According to Cavell, what distinguishes the grammar of aesthetic judgments from that of judgments of personal taste is that the former allow for the formation of *arguable* reasons.... But reason-giving in science or logic differs from that of art criticism: for whereas the former types of reason are designed to guarantee agreement over the conclusion among those who are competent, the latter types of reason do not guarantee such agreement" (Hammer 2002: 95).

7 Cavell (2002: 88) seems to misunderstand this about Hume, portraying his understanding of agreement as restricted to induction or popular agreement. If Cavell reads Hume as not Kantian enough, Friedlander (2006) reads Cavell as too Kantian. His generally fine essay aims to explicate through Kantian theory the universality of voice to which Cavell aspires, but it misses Cavell's "shift" away from the strong, rationalistic Kantian sense of an *a priori* towards a more Humean line of thought—which is, I suppose, just perhaps what too far a Kantian reading of Cavell's engagement with scepticism would be expected to yield.

I wish to argue, then, that Cavell's labor in these lines of investigation to find a reflective universality of voice at the risk of dogmatism aligns with Hume better than with Kant. I think this is so because Cavell, like Hume, roots the universality of the human necessities to which he gives voice in a kind of phenomenological naturalism, a naturalism articulated as an expression of what he finds to be the "truth of scepticism," discerned through a kind of sounding or weighing of experience (remaining "to this degree an empiricist"), rather than through transcendental, inductive, or *a priori* reasoning (though also remaining to a degree "at home in the a priori" in a different way) (Cavell 2004: 278).[8] While Hume's and Cavell's sceptical universal judgments evoke a distinct kind of prior claim upon others' assent, the basis of such a claim for sceptics such as Hume and Cavell is not a transcendental deduction or postulation of *a priori* universal cognitive or metaphysical structures; instead that basis can be nothing more than an appeal to what any thoughtful human being can discern, even confess,[9] concerning the distinctively human necessities, universalities, and possibilities that appear to us (to the extent that they have shown themselves) from nowhere else than inside the natural concourse of ordinary life (as if there could be somewhere else)—unsponsored and uncertified by anything beyond the way we inhabit human life itself, open always to the future refusal (or agreement) of others. As Cavell writes in *The Claim of Reason*:

> When my reasons come to an end and I am thrown back upon myself, upon my nature as it has so far shown itself, I can, supposing I cannot shift the ground of discussion, either put [someone who does not follow my use of language] out of my sight … or I can use the occasion to go over the ground I had hitherto thought foregone.
>
> 1999: 125

8 Cavell's interest in naturalism is, in fact, long standing. It was central to his very first publication with fellow UCLA student Alexander Sesonske. In that article, Cavell and Sesonske labor to find agreement between naturalistic and non-naturalistic approaches to ethics—to heal or overcome the rift or gap between the two: "Classically, the primary rift, splitting possible approaches to moral philosophy, has been between the naturalistic and the non-naturalistic theories…. It is our thesis that the agreements between these two views far overshadow the disagreements…. We are convinced that it is possible … to provide an analysis which will resolve the main grievances…." (Cavell & Sesonske 1951: 5). It is also in this, his first publication, in which Cavell broaches the concept of "dogma," what one is dogmatic about (1951: 5 n.2).

9 Gould (2013) interestingly, and I think rightly, relates Cavell's (as I would relate Hume's) evoking a universality of voice to a special mode of confession.

As a refusal of the dogmatic rationalism that Kant still embraces but Hume rejects, Cavell might well have written "*only* as it has so far shown itself." Understanding this, it may not be too misleading to think of the peculiar universality which Hume and Cavell recognize in aesthetic judgment as that of a "sceptical *a priori*."

In *A Pitch of Philosophy*, Cavell wonders: "Who beside myself could give me the authority to speak *for us*?" (2009: 9, emphasis mine). He finds that authority in ordinary language through the methods of OLP, which identify "grammatical sentences" and "shared criteria" for human life that are not restricted to a specific practice (such as painting or opera or physics or prayer or chess) but underwrite them.[10] Cavell appeals to Wittgenstein's private language argument to maintain that we already share with others in agreements about this kind of criteria.[11] The very possibility of engaging in any meaningful language and conduct at all—including sceptical doubt or questioning whether we share criteria—already requires that we do share them:

> For the phenomena which constitute the criteria of something's being so are fully *in the nature of things*—they are part of those very general facts

10 See Wittgenstein (1953: #232, 251, 293, 295, 371, 373, 458, 496, 497). Wittgenstein himself seems to suggest that hinge propositions serve a function like that attributed to grammatical propositions in the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) when he describes them in *On Certainty* (OC) as the "foundations of our language-games" (1972: §§401–403).

11 Richard Fleming does a particularly good job of explaining the way the private language argument may be read to function transcendentally within the overall argument of Cavell's *Claim of Reason*: "An insistence on our 'private' and exclusive existence breaks the natural connection and opens an epistemological gap between the inner self and the outer body, between myself and others, between an expression and what it expresses.... Wittgenstein's so-called 'private language argument' opposes and stands against this insistence on a private conception of the self and others" (Fleming 1993: 140). Of course, as the Humean sceptic understands, a transcendental argument is nevertheless an argument and therefore vulnerable to sceptical doubt and disruption through self-reflexive sceptical arguments against reason of the sort Hume advances. Barry Stroud recognizes this when he points out in what is sometimes called the "inference to reality" problem that a sceptic may respond to a transcendental argument to establish S as the necessary condition for the possibility of X by maintaining that scepticism about X would remain undefeated "if we believe that S is true, or it looks for all the world as if S is true, but that S needn't actually be true" (Stroud 1968: 241–256; see also Cassam 2008 and Smith & Sullivan 2011). We might, I think, still avoid this critique and read Cavell as engaged in a transcendental project, but not in transcendental argument; perhaps we might, following Wittgenstein, call Cavell's strategy, like OLP's method of presenting examples, a method of transcendental "showing."

> of nature or of human life against the background of which our concepts mean anything at all, and in particular, mean something *about* what we call "the nature of things" or "the world."
>
> CAVELL 1999: 106

Relating something's "being so" to "nature" recalls Hume's association of the natural with the "essential,"[12] but OLP conceives of the human essence not in a metaphysics of Platonic or Aristotelian forms but in what is expressed by the shared criteria and grammatical sentences of the everyday forms of life and the form of human life we inhabit.[13]

The attempt to give voice to just this sort of "nature," just this sort of "very general" fact, the essential humanness of our forms of (common, ordinary, everyday) life, what no human being can fail to know, is precisely what provokes the sort of concerns about intolerance Cavell staves off through an apology for a peculiar "dogmatism" in the name of taking our lives seriously. Berry (2011: 37) describes very well that concern: "Kant does not appear to worry, as does Cultural Studies, that overcoming my parochialism might actually be manifesting it, projecting onto the art of other peoples and times, not the contentless form of human subjectivity, but the historically relative content of my own"—historically relative content (as well as form) that, as Terry Eagleton (1990: chs. 2, 3) argues, has been ideologically determined.[14]

For Cavell, however, there is a difference between speaking for *others* and speaking for *us*—at least as much, I think, as there is between speaking *for* others and speaking *with* others, or *through* others, or *to* others—among which speaking *down to* others arrogantly or oppressively or coercively or ideologically is just one of many modes, not the only one, of speaking to others.[15] That difference is at least called upon (perhaps naively) when Kant writes that reflective judgments present no grounds upon which to "enforce" their claims.

---

12 See Hume, T 1.4.6.14, cf. 3.2.2.19, and "Advertisement" (hereafter A). See also Hume's *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* 1.6, 6.33 (Hume 1998).

13 Wittgenstein writes: "Essence is expressed by grammar" (PI #371). According to Cavell, Wittgenstein "like Socrates, wants to know what the thing in question *is*; he, too, is after *essence*" (1999: 98).

14 Alcoff (1991–1992) explores the issue with regard to the privileged speaking for the oppressed. H. Smith (2002) has developed a fascinating critique of false universals, especially the false universals of "man" in early modern thought. While Cavell may read the refusal to consider a universal voice a feeble kind of appeal to tolerance, it remains one of the truths of scepticism that the risk of the sort of oppressive dogmatism about which Berry worries may not be eliminable from human life, and is therefore often if not always worth our attention.

15 See his account of Emerson's remark, "I will stand here for humanity," in Cavell (1990: ch. 1).

Mulhall (1994: 32–33) picks up on this quality and reads the impossibility of enforcement in aesthetic judgment as an indicator that Cavell supports the liberal ideal of a "freely willed community."[16]

Berry's concern, however, is not misplaced—imperialism is all too real. But when liberatory critique is rarefied into metaphysical dogma in opposition to the dogma of oppressive universalist rationalism, it risks reading "culture" along the same misguidedly sceptical lines Cavell pinpoints in early modern epistemology when it conceives the "subject" as sealed within itself. Self-appointed defenders of "other" cultures can risk imagining them as if, like the modern self, they are entirely self-contained (as if their autonomy depended upon their remaining self-contained), vulnerable, and perhaps armed behind the barricades of purportedly clearly defined boundaries it is impermissible (impossible) to cross—and from the point of view of which all cultures besides one's own (as if we each inhabited only one) and all others besides oneself can only appear as radically other, as either oppressed or oppressive, masochist or sadist, or else completely alone—*tout autre est tout autre*.[17]

3 Natural "Necessities We Cannot … Fail to Know"

I mark an alignment here in Cavell's work, *malgré lui*, between his appeal to criteria that are among the "very general facts of nature or of human life" (call them "natural criteria") and Hume's use of "natural" in his theory of "natural relations" among ideas, as well as what have come to be called Humean "natural beliefs"—e.g., belief in the independent existence of objects. I also note that Cavell's contention about criteria being so fully in the "nature of things" is central not only to his serious response to Berry's concern with philosophy's sometimes oppressive, pseudo-universal voice, but also to insistent post-structuralist claims about the ubiquity and *a priori* quality of radical contingency.[18]

16 Mulhall generally misreads the normative role of reason in Hume—as if the "Humean" rejects "the idea that there is a logic to aesthetic judgment at all" (1994: 25)—as well as the sceptical claim to universality in aesthetics when he interprets Cavell's "plural that is still first person" (2002: 96) as if it were in truth only first person. For more on scepticism with regard to other minds in relation to the external world, see Mulhall's essay in this volume.

17 "Every other is totally other" (Derrida 1997: 232). Related comparisons between Cavell and Derrida, emphasizing Cavell's qualification of difference and otherness may be found in Michael Fischer's (1989) unsympathetic book comparing them. For Sartre, similarly, people can only be sadists or masochists before one another (1983: Part III, ch. 3).

18 For example, the fundamental contingency Gilles Deleuze (1991) finds in Hume.

The seriousness of Cavell's response to assertions of radical contingency in his writing about nature and shared human criteria aligns well, I think, with Hume when Hume writes about a kind of distinctively human cement that "nature" affords against the sheer contingencies of relations of ideas rooted in the powers of imagination:

> Our imagination has a great authority over our ideas; and there are no ideas that are different from each other, which it cannot separate, and join, and compose into all the varieties of fiction. But notwithstanding the empire of the imagination there is a secret tie or union among particular ideas, which causes the mind to conjoin them more frequently together, and makes the one, upon its appearance, introduce the other. Hence arises what we call the *apropos* of discourse: hence the connection of writing: and hence that thread, or chain of thought, which a man naturally supports even in the loosest *reverie*....[19] 'Twill be easy to conceive of what vast consequence these principles must be in the science of human nature, if we consider, that so far as regards the mind, these are the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object exterior to ourselves. For as it is by means of thought only that any thing operates upon our passions, and as these are the only ties of our thoughts, they are really *to us* the cement of the universe, and all the operations of the mind must, in a great measure, depend on them.
>
> A 35

Quickly reading this account of natural relations—that "secret union" resisting contingency, the "only links" that bind the universe "together," and "connect" both "writing" and each of us with any other "person or object exterior to ourselves"—one might be forgiven for interpreting Hume as psychologizing, as Cavell does (1999: 213), or as simply constructing a naturalized epistemology along the sort of causal lines Quine recommends, enlisting a naturalism that conceives of "nature" as the causal order. Hume himself thinks of nature this way often, for example in contrast to miracles (T 3.1.2.7; Hume 2000: 16n). But the natural gravity that binds the parts of the universe and different minds together connects not only discourse but also what is *apropos* or appropriate—meet,

19 Among the text replaced by the ellipsis here is Hume's exemplifying the relation of causation thus: "These principles of association are reduced to three, *viz. Resemblance*; a picture naturally makes us think of the man it was drawn for. *Contiguity*; when *St. Dennis* is mentioned, the idea of *Paris* naturally occurs. *Causation*; when we think of the son, we are apt to carry our attention to the father."

proper, and meaningful—of discourse (therefore of the world and others?); it is not just nature as the field of scientific explanation, but also nature as the ground of philosophical and grammatical normativity to which Hume appeals.

Hume confesses that "there is none more ambiguous and equivocal" (T 3.1.2.7) than the definition of "nature."[20] But it is crucial to Hume's philosophical rather than psychological investigations that the "nature" he confronts in those desperate sceptical moments of *Treatise*, Book 1, Part 4, is different from and prior to ideas about the causal order. Indeed, philosophical systems of every kind are at that moment in his narrative without credibility. For Hume, rather, nature as he confronts it in Part 4's phenomenology of scepticism is only the pressure, the press of impressions, to conceptualize experiences and act. It is not theories of causal reasoning or *a priori* concepts that underwrite this press; it is rather the press that underwrites theories of causal reasoning and conceptual necessity.

"Nature" for Hume, then, is perhaps not too tendentiously described as the propelling propensities that make possible thinking, perceiving, and doing despite arguments or fantasies to the contrary, propensities which we might deny but which will not be denied, what Schmidt (forthcoming) calls the "unbidden." The natural for Hume impresses itself upon us without reason, prior to reason, in reasoning, with more or less "force and vivacity." Hume, accordingly, reads "perceptions" as "impressions," and along similar lines Wright (2002a: 160) describes perception as an "impingement on awareness." Impinging, impressing, and appearing in unbidden ways, moving easily along when we yield to it, resisting us when we oppose it, Hume's natural, like Cavell's, includes what Sartre (1983) called a "coeficient of adversity"; it is what Samuel Johnson pointed towards, confusedly and desperately, when he kicked a stone to refute Berkeley, a stone standing for the world no less than Descartes's ball of wax or Cavell's tomato.[21] Nature is that sweep that carries not only Hume's "leaky and weatherbeaten vessel along" (T 1.4.7.9–10), but also the still-moving world as a whole, dragged along in the current of that "onward trick of nature" that "is too strong for us" to resist meaningfully.[22]

---

20 There, at T 3.1.2, Hume contrasts "nature" with what is (1) miraculous, (2) unusual, and (3) artificial.

21 Cavell resists the idea that a philosophical example like a stone, or a tomato, can sensibly stand for the world as a whole: "All of existence is squeezed into the philosopher's tomato when he rolls it towards his overwhelming question" (1999: 236; 158 161, 218–219).

22 Emerson (1987: 250) writes: "The secret of the illusoriness is in the necessity of a succession of moods or objects. Gladly we would anchor, but the anchorage is quicksand. This onward trick of nature is too strong for us. *Pero si muove*." Cavell might have observed

Emerson, contrary to Kant, finds that there may possibly be sceptical "quicksand" at the bottom of our river of experience rather than the secure "anchorage" in external objects Kant transcendentally argues is the condition of the possibility of phenomenal succession.[23] For Emerson, as for Cavell: "*Pero si muove*." So it is, too, with the ongoing press of nature confronted by Hume, who, anticipating Quine, bravely refuses the putatively secure dogma Malebranche extolled, perhaps cognizant of Milton's warning that temptingly secure anchorage may prove horribly otherwise.[24] And Cavell, like Hume, sets out to "sail the Atlantic and Pacific of one's being alone" (Cavell 1981a: 54), far from anchorage, Kantian or otherwise, acknowledging the gaps between ourselves, others, and the world that scepticism exploits, all the while testing what presses upon us naturally, or as what we take to be naturally, in the experience of our everyday lives.

This sense of the natural, then, signals those ways of thinking and acting to which we find in experience (not through *a priori* or transcendental reasoning) we must submit, to which we cannot help but submit and, moreover, without which reasoning and concepts themselves would be impossible. Not only is the natural for Hume that which "I *just do*" (Cavell 1999: 125), and am drawn to do, it is what I must do, what I find in the course of experience and human life that I cannot do otherwise, what is a human necessity. I have elsewhere called this unbidden press of natural human necessities Hume discerns the "fatalities of our natality" (Fosl 2010) (nature as what is natal) and the human "fit" (Fosl 1994). It is, as the etymology of the word "nature" suggests, what we find to be

---

that Wittgenstein seems to follow Emerson here, too, in a more guarded fashion, writing in *On Certainty*: "It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation alerted with time, in that fluid propositions hardened and hard ones became fluid. The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift" (OC §§95–97).

23 See the boat metaphor of Kant's proof of objectivity in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B233–240).

24 Grimstad (2011: 164–165) recounts this moment of Cavell's disappointment with Kant's transcendental proof against scepticism and his difference along these lines with Kant (though without remarking on the place of the *a priori*). A variant of the ship of Theseus, Neurath's boat appears in Neurath (1983: 92); it was popularized in Quine (1964: 3). For Nicolas Malebranche's use of a boat metaphor to defend rationalist dogmatism against scepticism, an image against which Hume in turn may well have been responding, see the "Tenth Meditation" of Malebranche (1997: 190). Malebranche himself echoes Augustine's essay, "The Happy Life," which may allude to Plato's *Republic*, 486a. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Satan so large, in the lake of Hell, that a sailor might mistake him for an island and make the mortal error of anchoring to him (2004: I 196–205). Cf. Matthew 16:18.

the way of things, our way. Cavell aligns this sense of nature, too, with Emerson's idea of "Fate," describing something like Emersonian maturity with this approving quote from Emerson:

> The book of Nature is the book of Fate … Nature is what you may do. There is much you may not. We have two things, the —circumstance, and the life. Once we thought positive power was all. Now we learn that negative power, or circumstance, is half. Nature is the tyrannous circumstance, the thick skull, the sheathed snake, the ponderous, rock-like jaw; necessitated activity; violent direction; the conditions of a tool, like the locomotive, strong enough on its track, but which can do nothing but mischief off of it…
>
> CAVELL 1994: 34–35

Though not grounded in *a priori* or transcendental reasoning, the natural necessities of human life we discern through the peculiar empiricism of OLP (what Sandra Laugier [2009: 60] calls "radical empiricism") nevertheless for Cavell disclose or show what it is possible for humans to do and say and still exist in recognizably human ways:

> But is the *whole* game in service of anything? I think one may say: It is in service of the human capacity, or necessity, for play; because what *can be played*, and what play can be watched with that avidity, while not determinable a priori, is contingent upon the given capacities for human play, and for avidity.
>
> 1999: 120

That human conduct such as games is possible depends finally on natural human capacities—in games, the capacity for play. That causal reasoning is possible depends upon the natural human capacity to string ideas together as causal relations. That it is possible to recognize other humans as other *humans* depends upon agreement about what is human and of what human beings are naturally capable. But none of this is "determinable a priori."

Cavell frequently enlists the idea of "capacity" (e.g., 1999: 120, 123) for agreement rather than merely agreement itself. It is a telling choice, as it signals his recognition that the universality of voice he seeks, like the meaningfulness of many regions of human life, is an achievement, and a contingent one at that—contingent not in the sense that there are no natural limits to the range of possible agreements (that anything might be agreeable) but in the sense that the potential for agreement might not be realized, or, anyway, recognized—though

perhaps, too, it will.[25] Agreement as contingent capacity rather than just as "facts" of agreement, is part of that which the peculiar universal voice in Cavell acknowledges, that which it calls upon, calls us to consider. As Friedlander (2006: 208) puts it: "To speak of the 'possibility of an aesthetic judgement' is not to say that the judgement is only possibly correct, but rather that it is inherently showing something to be possible." Call these capacities for agreement the potential everyday, the potential ordinary.

Hume's sceptical phenomenology of the natural, unbidden necessities of thinking and perceiving that have come to be called natural beliefs prefigures Cavell's rendering of natural-but-not-*a-priori* human necessities; and Hume's account exemplifies reasonably well the sort of value Cavell finds in philosophy through its ability in ordinary experience "to see what we do, to learn our position in what we take to be necessaries, to see in what service they are necessary" (1999: 120). This being so, it is difficult to understand why, but for neglect, Cavell would suggest that Hume's view of experience is somehow a diminished sort when, for example, in *The Senses of Walden* he draws on a remark from Emerson's "Experience" to declare that what is "wrong with empiricism is not its reliance on experience but its paltry idea of experience."[26] Perhaps it is because Cavell reads Hume as what he imagines of an empiricist rather than as a philosopher of sceptical naturalism.[27]

4 Natural Conventions and Conventional Nature

For both Hume and Cavell scepticism is confronted and managed, if not refuted, through convention and custom. Cavell's declaration of the "tyranny

25 For a reading of "capacity" along more Aristotelian lines (where internal to capacity, like Aristotelian "potential," lie standards for enacting the capacity well or poorly), see Andrea Kern's essay in this volume.

26 Emerson writes of "the despair which prejudges the law by a paltry empiricism" (1987: 266).

27 A clue to Cavell's own paltry reading of Hume may be found in his referring to philosophers akin to Meyerhoff's antagonist as "Hume's descendants" (2002: 88). I share with Buckle (1999) the idea that the historiography of early modern thought is misread as a contest or conversation between rationalists and empiricists; that it is better read as a history of skepticism and dogmatism. Buckle's view focuses on the British tradition, but the lens of scepticism versus dogmatism can be extended across early modernity. Buckle writes, concerning Russell's view that Hume subverted the positive program upon which Lockean empiricists had set themselves: "The shared anti-metaphysical thrust of Lockean and Humean philosophy is effectively obscured, however, precisely by the canonical story of a trio of 'British empiricists'" (1999: 2).

of convention" means that what we can mean, say, identify, and do is determined just by the conventions of our language, the criteria to which we agree. In Wittgenstein's formulation, forms of life depend upon *Übereinkunft* (agreement) (PI 355). So, as Bloor (1983) understood Wittgenstein to maintain, the possibilities of playing football, of being a football player, reasoning, playing backgammon, painting, promising, and even simply living as a human being are determined by the prior social agreements that rule these practices through criteria for the proper application of the relevant terms, concepts, and conduct.[28] It is not, along these lines, to *a priori* reason but instead to (our capacity for) social convention that Cavell appeals in locating his universal voice.

Quine distinguishes between a more stable but not in principle un-revisable center and a less stable periphery composing the web of human beliefs (Quine & Ullian 1970; Quine 1976). Cavell, not dissimilarly, distinguishes between social (horizontal) conventions of convenience and conventions that are deep (vertical), a matter of convening human nature itself—or, anyway, what shows itself of human nature:[29]

> Wittgenstein's discovery, or rediscovery, is of the depth of convention in human life; a discovery which insists not only on the conventionality of human society but, we could say, on the conventionality of human nature itself, on what Pascal meant when he said "Custom is our nature" (*Pensées*, §89); perhaps on what an existentialist means by saying that man has no nature.
>
> 1999: 111

Hume's scepticism develops a congruent view. Echoing the Pyrrhonian tradition that precedes him, Hume argues that our believing, acting, feeling, thinking, and talking amidst a shared and enduring world of understandable objects is a matter not fundamentally of rational justification but of our immersion in the customs and habits of what he calls "common life."[30] For the Humean

28 Mulhall acknowledges "natural reactions" (1994: 118, 314), but tends towards a model of agreement as willed, conscious, social agreement among sealed-off selves in contrast to agreement that calls upon the shared natural "depths" of each of our own separate selves (1994: 33).

29 For the distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" dimensions of forms of life I am calling upon here, see Cavell (2004: 277).

30 Cf. Sextus Empiricus's description of the Pyrrhonian "fourfold" criterion for life and its deference to custom at *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I 23–24.

sceptic we in-habit the world practically, and that goes for our reasoning as well as for our appeals to universal voices more broadly:[31]

> … the supposition, *that the future resembles the past*, is not founded on arguments of any kind, but is deriv'd entirely from habit, by which we are determin'd to expect for the future the same train of objects, to which we have become accustom'd.
>
> T 1.3.12[32]

Not only causal reasoning but also other kinds of reasoning for Hume are species of custom, too. In fact, "the far greatest part of our reasonings, with all our actions and passions, can be deriv'd from nothing but custom and habit" (T 1.3.10.20). Similarly, general concepts as well as the structure of our passions are constructed for Hume through habits and customs (e.g., T 1.1.7.7).

But Cavell and Hume no more embrace a Satre-like metaphysics of boundless freedom completely detached from the natural than they do a Cartesian-Kantian-Husserlian metaphysics of pure, autonomous intellection.[33] Our capacities for custom, convention, and habit are not invented or spontaneously generated *ex nihilo*; they are, rather, natural capacities—our fate—and they establish a limited range of possibilities for agreement we can distinctively sound out with the procedures of OLP. Our "agreements," in other words, are not only (horizontal) social decisions but also (vertical) agreements in nature, in a sense agreements in being from top to bottom. About deep (vertical) convention, Cavell writes:

> someone *may* be bored by an earthquake or by the death of his child or the declaration of martial law, or *may* be angry at a pin or a cloud or a fish, just as someone may quietly (but comfortably?) sit on a chair of nails. That human beings on the whole do not respond in these ways is, therefore, seriously referred to as conventional; but now we are thinking of convention not as the arrangements a particular culture has found convenient, in terms of its history and geography, for effecting the necessities

31 For a more extensive account of my rending of the pervasive importance of custom and habit in Hume's work, see Fosl (2013).

32 See also: "that like objects, place'd in like circumstances, will always produce like effects; and as this principle has establish'd itself by a sufficient custom, it bestows an evidence and firmness on any opinion, to which it can be apply'd" (T 1.3.8.20).

33 For Edmund Husserl's critique of naturalism and psychologism, see Husserl (2001; 2013).

> of human existence, but as those forms of life which are normal to any group of creatures we call human…
>
> 1999: 111

The horizontal is grounded in the vertical. But the vertical can only be realized in the horizontal. What is natural for human beings not only underwrites convention; nature actually completes or realizes itself in convention in accord with the limits it sets, set in it: "convention is not arbitrary" (1999: 168). Hume, writing for example about the conventions of justice, similarly maintains:

> Tho' the rules of justice be *artificial*, they are not *arbitrary*. Nor is the expression improper to call them *Laws of Nature*; if by natural we understand what is common to any species, or even if we confine it to mean what is inseparable from the species.
>
> T 3.2.1.19[34]

Habit, Hume similarly and provocatively writes, like custom, "is nothing but one of the principles of nature, and derives all its force from that origin" (T 1.3.16.9).

Hume is well known for criticizing social contract theory for grounding the social order in a supposed contract or promise because contracts and promises are possible only through the antecedent existence of (1) a social order to define them and (2) the natural capacities for convention that underwrite society *per se* (T 3.2.1–11). About the convention that secures private property, for example, Hume writes: "This convention is not of the nature of a *promise*: For even promises themselves … arise from human conventions" (T 3.2.2.10); and about promises he rightly holds "*that a promise wou'd not be intelligible, before human conventions had establish'd it* (T 3.2.5.1). The consent to a social contract (implicit, ongoing, or otherwise) is made possible only by other, prior kinds of convention. So while the political order may make claims upon us, the source of those claims runs deeper than consent—an insight about political community Cavell himself at times seems to forget (1999: 23).[35] Similarly, while for Kant "nature" like culture "is a realm of rules, that is, a realm, a world," rules themselves, including the rule of causation, are possible only through prior capacities for agreement in nature. Call this Hume's rejoinder to what Cavell

34 A point about habit and society that, after a different fashion, Aristotle makes in *Nicomachean Ethics* and in *Politics*, Book 1, when he describes the human essence being realized only in society and realized most excellently through social habits.

35 Cavellians such as Hammer (2002: 129–130) follow him in this reading of Hume.

imagines to be "Kant's counter" to "Hume's skeptical discovery" (Cavell 1981b: ch. 2)—and another line of similarity between Hume and Cavell contrary to Kant.

In Hume's well known metaphor, two people row a boat together not because they have made a contract or explicit promise, analyzed the essences of space, time, and matter, or formulated physical laws, but by a different kind of agreement: "Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, tho' they have never given promises to each other.... In like manner are languages gradually establish'd by human conventions without any promise" or explicit grammar (T 3.2.2.10). What "overconventionalized" (Cavell 2004: 278) readings of Wittgenstein, such as Bloor's, miss but Cavell and Hume understand is that human convention itself requires the prior natural capacity for agreement, a kind of agreement already in itself. That humans agree in their very nature in this way makes agreeing to the most general criteria possible (conventional agreement is possible only if there is agreement in nature); and the contrapositive holds, too (without prior natural agreement, conventions cannot be possible). Thus, for Cavell as well as for Hume: "Underlying the tyranny of convention is the tyranny of nature" (1999: 123; an allusion again to Emerson's "fate"). This is part of what Cavell means by "Finding as Founding," including "finding ourselves" (1989: 36, and Part II).

Following Saul Kripke's (1982) reading of Wittgenstein's naturalism as sustaining a kind of scepticism, Crispin Wright, like Peter Strawson, reads Wittgenstein's fundamental naturalism in terms of a set of natural dispositions that yield human agreement without rational justification.[36] One can discern apparent analogs to this idea in Cavell when he writes, for example: "Our ability to communicate with him [i.e., a pupil] depends upon his 'natural understanding', his 'natural reaction', to our directions and our gestures. It depends upon our mutual attunement in judgments" (1999: 115).[37] Similarly:

> The conventions which control the application of grammatical criteria are fixed not by customs or some particular concord or agreement which might, without disrupting the texture of our lives, be changed where convenience suggests a change. (Convenience is *one* aspect of convention, or an aspect of one kind or level of convention.) They are, rather, fixed by the nature of human life itself, the human fix itself, by those "very general

36 Wright (2002b), discussed by McGinn (2013: 322). See also McDowell (1996). One might call the dispositional model Quine's as well (cf. Quine 1964).

37 Cavell quotes from Wittgenstein PI §185.

> facts of nature" which are "unnoticed only because so obvious", and, I take it in particular, very general facts of *human* nature….
>
> 1999: 110

In the recognition of the naturalness of convention, Cavell refuses Bloor-like and even Kripke-like over-conventionalism.[38] Cavell also departs here from Kant, not only in stopping short of characterizing natural limits as *a priori* and grounding them in a logical transcendental ego, but also in acknowledging that the natural is itself contingent in the sense of being no more than factical, simply what we find in ordinary, common life. Finding that there are natural limits to the size of a baseball diamond, writes Cavell, "will sometimes strike one as a discovery of the a priori" (just as the discovery of beauties apparently struck Kant); but it is also the discovery "of the utterly contingent"—that we naturally share just these capacities for these agreements about playing a game rather than those many others that are logically possible, rather than those countless others society might just arbitrarily imagine. "It should not be surprising that what is necessary is contingent upon something" (1999: 120), something we just find to be so. Cavell's universal voice of aesthetic-like judgment in OLP, therefore, aims no more to discern a naturalistic casual realism than an existentialist metaphysics of absolute freedom—no metaphysical anchor at all (for all we know there might only be quicksand or a shifting riverbed beneath us).

What ways of convening, then, are properly natural and necessary for us? Contrary to anti-sceptical realists, Cavell is careful to maintain a sense of the truth of scepticism, of living our scepticism in the sense of zetetically holding open what is to count and not count for us as natural, necessary, universal, and essentially human: "It is internal to a convention that it be open to change *in convention*, in the convening of those subject to it, in whose behavior it lives" (1999: 120). Cavell undertakes an on-going critical sounding of our conventions, exploring and testing their limits, their vulnerability to disruption, their naturalness and necessity—whether or not they are, in fact, natural and meaningful to us: "The first step in attending to our education is to observe the strangeness of our lives, our estrangement from ourselves, the lack of necessity in what we profess to be necessary" (1981a: 55).

Observing that strangeness entails thoughtfully confronting the ways we convene through shared criteria and plumbing the meaningfulness and "depth" of what, as Hume puts it, we take to be "most necessary to the

38 Hammer (2002: 23ff.) presents a solid account of Cavell's critique of Kripke's rendering of Wittgenstein, scepticism, and the *Investigations*.

establishment of human society"—those necessesities "after the agreement for the fixing and observing" of which "there remains little or nothing to be done towards settling a perfect harmony and concord" (T 3.2.2.12). There is import here for philosophical method. To "question a convention" (Cavell 1999: 125), even our most basic doxastic conventions, to recover and explore "the kind of creature in whom such capacities are exercised" (1999: 123), becomes for Cavell one of the central tasks of philosophy, what I would call sceptical philosophy:

> What I require is a convening of my culture's criteria, in order to confront them with my words and life as I pursue them and as I may imagine them: and at the same time to confront my words and life as I pursue them with the life my cultures' words may imagine for me: to confront the culture with itself along the lines in which it meets in me.... This seems to me a task that warrants the name of philosophy.... In this light, philosophy becomes the education of grownups.
>
> 1999: 125

5 Philosophy as Educative Confrontation

Russell Goodman discerns the way this task of confrontation evokes the universal voice of philosophy in reflective judgment, the distinctive naturalism of OLP's sceptical inquiry, when he writes:

> The putting in question the concept of convention allows us to frame a new sort of naturalism, which is not the concept of the contemporary naturalist in cognitive scientific style, and that is thus rooted in facts of nature even more certain, or in any case more difficult to deny than those by which those naturalists purport to be inspired: those facts are those Wittgenstein means by 'forms of life'.
>
> 2005: 90

Engaging sceptical education of this kind may, Cavell maintains, eventually result in a change in our conventions and, more basically and more stunningly, an eventual change (or perhaps rediscovery) of our very nature, the accomplishment of a "new set of natural reactions" (2003b: xii): "for grownups this [education] is not natural growth, but *change*. Conversion is a turning of our natural reactions; so it is symbolized as rebirth" (1999: 125)—a symbol Hume does not employ, signally an important difference between

them.[39] Understanding human nature (or at least the way human nature appears) as subject to change in this way makes it meaningful to speak, for Cavell, of "human natural history" or "the natural history of the human," another dimension of "finding as founding" (2004: 276, 279; see also Cavell 1989).

Acknowledging truths of scepticism, rather than formulating them as metaphysical and epistemological problems that can be solved or dissolved with epistemological or metaphysical theories, and recovering ourselves, others, and our world in an appreciation of the natural criteria we share through the kind of beings we are and have become, comprises much of Cavell's project of moral perfectionism and aspiration to the "eventual everyday." As human agreement is recovered and human finitude acknowledged, people realize the possibilities of our natural capacities to go on with one another, to continue meaningfully speaking and acting, taking responsibility for the practical work of imaginatively projecting words into new contexts expressively and agreeably, and reading one another's gestures carefully, responding to their own expressions of pleasure and pain, their tone and modulation of voice, the contexts of their utterances, testing our necessities and theirs—or not doing so. In engaging the world and others in these ways and in acknowledging the shared criteria of human existence, people become able to speak *with* and *for* as well as *to* one another, not as radical individuals but as beings who share a common human nature, a common natural history, and the capacity for human community—each as one of us. This sort of agreement becomes the kind of "intimacy with existence, or intimacy lost," Cavell wishes to achieve and recover (1984: 193; 2003a: 23).

This recovered agreement and natural capacity for agreement, as one among other fellow human beings, aligns philosophical judgment of a universal sort. We can see now more clearly why that voice draws Cavell's attention. Because his project of recovering and achieving natural human attunement both requires and in its success expresses this voice, Cavell resists characterizations of it as either (1) the universal dogmatic voice of epistemologists such as Descartes and also (2) the oppressive false-universal voice those involved in

39 Wittgenstein, too, seems to accept not only something like deeper and shallower levels of convention but also continuity between the natural and the conventional as well as the possibility a deep change or retuning in our most fundamental—say natural—alignments, our human nature, or anyway what appears to be our nature, including what count as hinge propositions, when he writes, like Emerson, about the river-bed of thoughts shifting: "But I distinguish between the movements of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other" (OC §§95–97).

cultural studies and literary theory criticize. Dogmatic epistemologists claim to solve perceived problems and fill sceptical gaps with metaphysical posits and dogmatic realisms, denying the truths of human finitude to which scepticism gives expression. Critics in cultural studies and literary theory rebuke appeals to our shared nature as nothing more than the work of political tyranny. It is central to the tasks of Cavell's sceptical investigations and sceptical instruction, then, by contrast, to discern and to speak (or at least aspire to speak) in the natural voice of human being, and understand itself doing so.[40]

References

Alcoff, L. (1991–92). "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Culture Critique* 20: 5–32.

Berry R. M. (2011). "'Is "Us" Me?' Cultural Studies and the Universality of Aesthetic Judgments." In R. Eldridge and B. Rhie (eds.), *Stanley Cavell and Literary Studies: Consequences of Skepticism*, 30–46. New York: Continuum.

Bloor, D. (1983). *Wittgenstein: A Social Theory of Knowledge*. London: Macmillan.

Buckle, S. (1999). "British Sceptical Realism: A Fresh Look at the British Tradition," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7: 1–29.

Cassam, Q. (2008). "Foreword." In P. F. Strawson, *Scepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties*, vii–xvviii. London: Routledge.

Cavell, S. (1981a). *The Senses of Walden: An Expanded Edition*. San Francisco: North Point Press. (First published 1972.)

———. (1981b). *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

———. (1984). *Themes out of School: Effects and Causes*. San Francisco: North Point Press.

———. (1989). *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein*. Albuquerque: Living Batch Press.

40 I am grateful to my colleague Chiara Alfano at the University of Edinburgh's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) for her insightful comments and guidance in working my way through a number of the ideas central to this essay, especially separateness. My colleagues in our Cavell reading group, David Sorfa and James Loxley (both of the University of Edinburgh), have proven important in testing and reassessing my views, especially with regard to Cavell and film. I am grateful, too, for comments on earlier drafts by my teacher Richard Fleming, who first introduced me to the thought of Stanley Cavell, and whose interpretation of Cavell's work remains my touchstone. I am thankful to the IASH and its David Hume Fellowship for the time and resources to make sustained reading and writing on this topic possible. Thanks also to Diego Machuca for his careful and generous editing.

——. (1990). *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——. (1994). *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Romanticism and Skepticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——. (1999). *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (First published 1979.)

——. (2002). *Must We Mean What We Say?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (First published 1969.)

——. (2003a). *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

——. (2003b). *Disowing Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——. (2004). "Postscript to "The *Investigations'* Everyday Aesthetics of Itself." In M. De Caro & D. Macarthur (eds.), *Naturalism in Question*, 275–279. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

——. (2009). *A Pitch of Philosophy: Autobiographical Exercises*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

——. (2010). *Little Did I Know: Excerpts from Memory*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Cavell, S. & A. Sesonske. (1951). "Logical Empiricism and Pragmatism in Ethics," *Journal of Philosophy* 48: 5–17.

Deleuze, G. (1991). *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. C. V. Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press.

Derrida, J. (1997). *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. G. Collins. New York: Verso.

Eagleton, T. (1990). *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Emerson, R. W. (1987). "Experience." In A. R. Ferguson & J. Ferguson Carr (eds.), *The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 243–268. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (First published 1844.)

Fischer, M. (1989). *Stanley Cavell and Literary Skepticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fleming, R. (1993). *The State of Philosophy: An Invitation to a Reading in Three Parts of Stanley Cavell's* The Claim of Reason. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.

Fosl, P. (1994). "Doubt and Divinity: Cicero's Influence on Hume's Religious Skepticism," *Hume Studies* 20: 103–120.

——. (2010). "Skepticism and Naturalism in Hume." In J. Keim Campbell, M. O'Rourke, & H. S. Silverstein (eds.), *Skepticism and Knowledge*, 301–332. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

——. (2013). "Habit, Custom, History, and Hume's Critical Philosophy." In T. Sparrow & A. Hutcheson (eds.), *A History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, 133–151. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Friedlander, E. (2006). "On Examples, Representatives, Measures, Standards, and the Ideal." In A. Crary and S. Shieh (ed.), *Reading Cavell*, 204–217. London: Routledge.

Goodman, R. (2005). *Contending with Stanley Cavell*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gould, T. (1998). *Hearing Things: Voice and Method in the Writing of Stanley Cavell*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——. (2013). "Me, Myself, and Us: Autobiography and Method in the Writing of Stanley Cavell," *Conversations: The Journal of Cavell Studies* 1: 4–18.

Grimstad, P. (2011). "Emerson Discomposed: Skepticism, Naturalism, and the Search for Criteria in 'Experience'." In R. Eldridge and B. Rhie (eds.), *Stanley Cavell and Literary Studies: The Consequences of Skepticism*, 163–176. New York: Continuum.

Hammer, E. (2002). *Stanley Cavell: Skepticism, Subjectivity, and the Ordinary*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hume, D. (1985). "Of the Standard of Taste." In E. F. Miller (ed.), *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, 226–252. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics. (First published 1742.)

——. (1998). *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. T. L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (First published 1751.)

——. (2000). *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. T. L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. (First published 1748.)

——. (2007). *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. D. Fate Norton & M. J. Norton, 2 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2007. (First published 1739–1740.)

Husserl, E. (2001). *Logical Investigations*, volume 1, trans. J. N. Findlay. London: Routledge.

——. (2013). *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.

Kant, I. (1952). *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. Creed Meredith. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (First published 1790.)

Kripke, S. A. (1982). *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Laugier, S. (2009). "Transcendentalism and the Ordinary," *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 1: 53–69.

Malebranche, N. (1997). *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*, ed. N. Jolley & D. Scott. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (First published 1688.)

McDowell J. (1996). "Two Sorts of Naturalism." In R. Hursthouse, G. Lawrence, & W. Quinn (eds.), *Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory*, 149–179. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McGinn, M. (2013). "Wittgenstein and Naturalism." In M. De Caro & D. Macarthur (eds.), *Normativity and Naturalism*, 332–352. New York: Columbia University Press.

Milton, J. (2004). *Paradise Lost*, ed. S. Orgel & J. Goldberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (First published 1667.)

Mulhall, S. (1994). *Stanley Cavell: Philosophy's Recounting of the Ordinary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Neurath, O. (1983). "Protocol Statements." In R. S. Cohen & M. Neurath (eds.), *Philosophical Papers, 1931–46*, 91–99. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Quine, W. V. O. & J. S. Ullian (1970). *The Web of Belief*, 2nd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

Quine, W. V. O. (1964). *Word and Object*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

———. (1976). "Posits and Reality." In *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*, 246–254. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sartre, J.-P. (1983). *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press.

Schmidt, D. (forthcoming). *On the Unbidden: A History of the Idea of Nature*.

Smith, H. (2002a). *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640–1832*. College Park: Penn State University Press.

Smith, N. (ed.). (2002b). *Reading McDowell: On Mind and World*. London: Routledge.

Smith, J. and P. Sullivan (eds.). (2011). *Transcendental Philosophy and Naturalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stroud, B. (1968). "Transcendental Arguments," *Journal of Philosophy* 65: 241–256.

Viehues-Bailey, L. H. (2007). *Beyond the Philosopher's Fear: A Cavellian Reading of Gender, Origin, and Religion*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

———. (1972). *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright. New York: Harper Torchbook.

Wright, C. (2002a). "Postscript to Chapter 8." In N. Smith (2002), 160–173.

———. (2002b). "Human Nature?" In N. Smith (2002), 140–173.