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Replies to Perry, Falkenstein, and Garrett

I am grateful to the critics for their encouraging words and their incisive objections.

John Perry

In the book I was content just to argue that Hume presents a difficulty concerning identity that is distinct from Frege's Puzzle and that requires a different approach. In his foundational critique of my book, Perry argues that the approaches required are the same, at least for cases of uncertainty about the identity of perceived objects. To respond, I need to take the contrast between Hume and Fregeans deeper, by showing that their approaches differ in reflecting opposing intuitions concerning what Perry terms "the subject matter condition."

We often wonder whether two things are the same thing. This is the ordinary way of putting an ordinary situation. But how can it be? Two things are obviously not the same thing. The ordinary way of putting things requires a theoretical understanding. Perry, in line with a weighty and fruitful tradition, argues that, in certain situations, one is wondering (in essence, I contend) whether two perceptions represent the same thing. There are more things being wondered about than are ordinarily mentioned. Hume points toward an alternative. One is wondering, of the very things one regards as two, whether or not they are identical. There is more complexity to identity than commonly theorized, but no additional things wondered about.

The relevant cases are those in which one is thinking of things in virtue of being perceptually acquainted with them. Perry gives the example of an airplane seen to enter a cloud, then seen to exit. The visual evidence leaves open the possibility that one has seen a substitute plane exit, not the original. One then

wonders whether or not the plane seen entering and the plane seen exiting are the same plane. The visual evidence consists of two perceptions: the perception of the plane entering, and the perception of the plane exiting. Each perception is of the plane in virtue of the fact that the plane plays a certain complex role, part of which is being a cause of that perception. Perry says that the perceptions being of the plane makes one's wondering be about the plane. The contents of the thoughts of the alternatives in one's wondering, however, include just the two perceptions and then alternate ways in which they might be brought about--ways that do not involve the plane they are actually of, but which, rather, are modeled on other planes.

Given these contents, it seems to me that on Perry's account one wonders whether or not there is something that plays both the role of being the airplane represented by the first perception, and the role of being the airplane represented by the second perception. In other words, one wonders whether or not there is something the two perceptions both represent. It seems wrong to me to say that wondering with such contents is wondering about the plane. Suppose a sophisticate were *explicitly* to wonder about the two perceptions, whether or not they were of one plane. Even if the perceptions actually were of one plane, he would be wondering about the perceptions, not the plane. After all, the plane they are actually of plays no part in the considered alternatives, which explicitly concern the perceptions' possibly being of things that are not the same from one alternative to the next.

In my view, it is more accurate to say that what one is wondering about is what one keeps fixed when considering the alternatives. So Perry's case is a wondering about the perceptions. They are kept fixed in the alternatives, in which the plane they actually are of plays no part.

Perry says his approach is the only way to make sense of David Austin's "two tubes" case. Imagine yourself with each eye looking through a separate tube at what, unbeknownst to you, is the same blue circle. In order to have names to wonder with, you dub what you see with your left eye ' α ', and what you see with your right eye ' β '. Now it cannot be that, in the sentence 'You wonder whether or not α is β ,' the terms

' α ' and ' β ' contribute their common referent to the sentence's content, for you certainly are not wondering whether something is itself. So, instead, ' α ' and ' β ' must each contribute the different role something must play in order to be the object of the perception had by the left eye, and the object had by the right eye, respectively. So what you are wondering (in my tendentious formulation) is whether or not there is one object that plays both roles, i.e. whether or not there is one object that both perceptions represent. Making this move is what Perry calls giving up the "subject matter condition on the representation of thought content," i.e., giving up the assumption that the relevant truth conditions are conditions on the subject matter--in this case the blue circle. Instead, the relevant truth conditions are conditions on perceptions.

The pressure to make this move seems almost irresistible. Still, let's resist. It is α and β that you wonder about--that is, the blue circle--and no more. It is α and β that you keep fixed when considering the alternatives. For confirmation, just look and wonder.

It is the same with the airplane. Dub the airplane as it enters the cloud ' α ', and the airplane as it leaves the cloud ' β '. Your wondering whether or not α and β are identical concerns only α and β . It is they that you keep fixed. You know this, as author of your wondering, the way you can know it as author of a story. You can tell a story about characters α and β , in which they are perhaps identical and perhaps distinct. You need not choose to add additional perception characters in order to make the story comprehensible. We should not give up the subject matter condition.

But what is the alternative? To wonder whether or not identical α and β are identical, we would have to be able to think of them as perhaps identical and perhaps distinct, and be thinking of the same them, and only them, either way. But, given the subject matter condition, this means we have to be able to make sense of wondering whether α is α .

And this is precisely the point of Hume's Difficulty. Since identity is not something that can be known *a priori*, identity must have a structure that makes it

possible to wonder whether or not two things, that are in fact one and the same thing, are identical. One must be able to reproduce the alternatives in the wondering, even when one knows that the things are identical, to understand what there could have been to wonder about.

A view like Perry's has the wondering concern more unitariness than identity. The question is whether or not there is one thing that distinct perceptions are of. Accordingly, as Perry notes, the question cannot arise when there is patently one thing, as in the case of a steadfast object steadily observed to be such. But *even in this case*, for Hume, the observer who is convinced of the identity must be able to represent what there is to wonder about, in order for it to be *identity* that he is convinced of. *Especially* in this case, in fact, since it is the one that gives rise to the idea of identity in all its Humean complexity.

How then can we wonder whether α is α ? We have to find a way in which α differs from itself. Change is the most obvious way in which something differs from itself, and change in time is what is common to any change. So Hume has us distinguish α insofar as it exists at one time, from α insofar as it exists at another, and wonder whether or not they are identical. That is, we wonder whether they are really one steadfast object despite being able to be viewed as distinct, successive perishing objects, or, alternatively, are really successive and distinct despite being able to be viewed as one. Since we can discern the differing, we can reproduce the wondering even when we know from steady observation that the object is really steadfast.

The structure that Hume finds in identity can be generalized, so that the concern is with α insofar as it is one way and α insofar as it is another. For instance, you, the experimental subject, can wonder of the blue circle insofar as it is seen by the right eye (and not the left), and the blue circle insofar as it is seen by the left eye (and not the right), whether or not they are identical. If there is self-differing of the kind Hume thinks is needed for there to be identity, then qualifying phrases such as "insofar as" help capture it.

This need for difference is the reason the problem is not about wondering whether or not the sentence ' α is α ' is true. Hume finds such identity sentences odd

and uncharacteristic, because the sameness of type in the 'α's suggests that there is no way in which α differs from itself. Further, the wondering is about α, not about a sentence, anyway.

The above structure of identity, where the things in question are one single thing viewed one way and two distinct things viewed another, is the one Hume discerns, even though he himself thinks the idea of identity is a fiction. However, in the book, I show that his explanation how we acquire the fiction implicitly involves there really being identity with the structure he gives it. Hume interpretation aside, if we want to keep the subject matter condition we have to pursue the direction Hume indicates.

So much the worse for the subject matter condition, one could be forgiven for thinking. However, my work on the Discernibility of Identicals, and Many-One Identity suggest that there is more promise to Hume's path than initially appears.¹ A fully worked out theory would solve Hume's Difficulty: how we can represent there as being things perhaps identical and perhaps distinct.

So, Perry is correct that for Hume cases in which two things are identical involve what Perry calls "an identity structure." There is one single thing intimately related to two distinct things. But for Perry the single thing is distinct from each of the two things, and the intimate relation is coexistence, or later on, is representation. For Hume the single thing and the distinct things are the same things viewable alternately as one and as many. The intimate relation between the one and the two is identity.

I worry that my distinction between intentional objects and intended objects obscures Hume's commitment to the subject matter condition. Take the case of something, α, that one is multiply acquainted with. The distinction is meant to capture the distinction between (i) α both as present to mind and as it is according to the mind (in other words, as intentional object), from (ii) α as present to mind but

¹ "Many-One Identity," *Philosophical Papers* 17 (1988), 193-216; "Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense," *Mind* 97 (1988), pp. 575-582; "The Discernibility of Identicals," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 24 (1999), pp. 37-55.

as it really is (in other words, as intended object). The intentional object is the concern of Hume's Difficulty. The point of the distinction is to allow that a thought of α and a subsequent thought of α can both contribute α to the content of thought, while *not* contributing to the content the *identity* of α insofar as it is thought of the first time with α insofar as it is thought of the second time. Thus Hume can meet the subject matter condition while making sense of wondering whether α is α .

The approaches of Hume and Frege are, therefore, very different. Fregeans reject the subject matter condition; Hume embraces it.

So Perry finds in Hume a Fregean proliferation of entities in order to address the possibility of uncertainty about identity. I find a view of identity as a many-one mongrel, instead. Hume's concern is how to make sense of the mongrel, in order to address Hume's Difficulty. That would allow him to explain uncertainty about identity without giving up Perry's subject matter condition. Hume himself was only able to approximate a solution, however. More work is needed.

Lorne Falkenstein

Falkenstein argues that Hume's Difficulty arises only if the identity questions we actually wonder about are misconceived. He argues further that the context of Hume's discussion shows that the difficulty was not Hume's concern, anyway. These are serious charges for which he makes strong cases.

Falkenstein's first objection begins with a slight misreading. He interprets me as saying that when you wonder whether someone and someone are identical, you are wondering whether your intentional objects--what you represent there as being--are one thing or two. Actually I take it that you are wondering about someone and someone, and not about intentional objects. A theorist like Hume then wonders how many intentional objects you have when you wonder about an identity--one, two, both, neither? However the essence of Falkenstein's objection remains.

I argue that in wondering about an identity we represent there as being someone and someone who are perhaps distinct and perhaps identical, which apparently leads to representing there as being an absurdity. Falkenstein says that,

therefore, what you wonder about--what you keep fixed during your wondering--cannot be the someones who may or may not be identical. What you wonder about must be *other* things. So what do you represent there as being? The answer depends on the situation. When you wonder about an identity, you are really wondering about either (i) distinct temporal parts of a thing and their connection through time, or (ii) distinct spatial parts of a thing, and their connection in space, or (iii) distinct names and whether they are connected to the same referent. To generalize, when wondering about an identity you represent there as being distinct things and wonder about their connection.

In other words, Falkenstein applies the time-honored stratagem to Hume's Difficulty that has been used for identity in general. Traditionally, when we say that two things are the same thing we are said to distinguish what are two--parts, names, etc.--from what is one--the object in question. At a stroke the paradoxical way we pose questions of identity is defanged. Likewise when we represent there as being things that may or may not be identical, apply a similar solution: represent there as being definitely two things that may or may not be connected.

It seems to me that the time-honored stratagem gets things wrong. Wondering about an identity is literally wondering whether something and something are identical, not whether two things help compose something or whether two things co-refer. And it seems to me that this is introspectively clear. We should not back off from this clear point because our conceptual resources are inadequate to solving Hume's Difficulty. Rather we should focus on the difficulty and either develop new conceptual resources, or accept that the world we represent there as being is just a world of appearance rife with contradiction. The latter approach is the approach of F.H. Bradley and the British Idealists, whose account of identity-in-difference I take to be a natural next step after Hume's discussion of identity. The former approach is my own, in my attempt to develop a systematic, consistent theory of Many-One Identity. Either way, we should address the problem head on instead of trying to finesse it, because, as I will show, we cannot finesse it in the way of the tradition employed by Falkenstein.

Not all cases of wondering about identity through time are cases of wondering whether distinct momentary stages are appropriately spatio-temporally connected. When Tibetan monks ask whether or not this baby is the reincarnation of the last Dalai Llama, they do not represent there as being distinct person-stages and alternately represent them as being spatio-temporally connected or not. Reincarnation is not supposed to be a matter of spatio-temporal connection.

Not all cases of wondering about identity of things viewed from different standpoints are cases of wondering whether distinct faces or surfaces of something are appropriately spatially connected. A newly sighted man might wonder if the surface he is focusing on and the surface he is touching are the same thing, as he learns to coordinate vision and touch. He does not represent there as being definitely distinct surfaces, one seen and one touched, and wonder if they are spatially connected. He wonders precisely whether or not they are distinct.²

Not all cases of wondering about identity when using different names are cases of wondering about the reference of the names. You can wonder whether Superman is Clark Kent while knowing that neither name refers to anything.

Suppose you wake from a blow to the head and realize that you are having trouble focusing your eyes. There is a clear glass marble in front of you that you are seeing double. You might wonder whether what you are seeing is the same thing or different things. They are simultaneous. Because you can see through the marble, any surface seen by one eye is seen by the other; neither eye is restricted to a partial view. The marble has no name. Still you can represent there as being a marble and a marble that are perhaps identical and perhaps distinct. Falkenstein's response to questions of identity cannot capture what you are wondering about.

Identity must be distinguished from any relation that simply holds between distinct things.

The next question is whether Hume was concerned with what I call Hume's Difficulty. Falkenstein gives two reasons to doubt it.

² See John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), book II, chapter ix, section 8.

First, he argues that I have not fully appreciated the consequences of my observation that, for Hume, claims like ‘*a* is identical with *a*’ give degenerate, not paradigm, cases of identity. The lesson Falkenstein draws is that since for Hume identity is not a relation between something and itself, it must clearly be a relation between distinct things. In particular, for Hume it is a relation between distinct things that exist at different times. Such a relation is not one for which Hume’s Difficulty arises. Therefore Hume was not concerned with Hume’s Difficulty.

However the lesson to be drawn from the degeneracy of a case expressed by ‘*a* is *a*’ is not that identity, for Hume, is paradigmatically a relation between distinct things, but just that identity, for Hume, is paradigmatically a relation that one can be unsure about. Falkenstein takes Hume’s Difficulty to be a *reductio* of the assumption that we can be unsure about genuine numerical identity. I take the difficulty, rather, to be an apparent contradiction, resolvable but not yet resolved.

Falkenstein’s second reason for taking Hume’s Difficulty to be misattributed involves a complex and suggestive counterproposal concerning what Hume was up to in discussing identity. The counterproposal goes like this: If Hume were concerned with Hume’s Difficulty, he would have been concerned with identity for its own sake. If he had been concerned with identity for its own sake, he would have developed a theory of identity though time that parallels his theory of causation. But he gave only hints of such a theory. Therefore he had another concern to which any talk of identity is subordinated: explaining the genesis of our idea of continued existence unperceived.

However, it seems to me that concerns with Hume’s Difficulty, with identity for its own sake, and with explaining the genesis of our idea of continued existence, are not detachable for Hume. He states clearly that the principle of identity is “nothing but the *invariableness* and *uninterruptedness* of any object, thro’ a suppos’d variation of time” (1.4.2.30). He gives this essence to identity in trying to “remove this difficulty”--i.e., Hume’s Difficulty (1.4.2.29). The idea of such an object is meant to serve as the “medium betwixt unity and number” that Hume’s Difficulty requires. And this idea is a necessary part of the explanation of the idea of continued and distinct existence. The latter idea arises from the unavoidable natural tendency to

attribute identity--and therefore uninterruptedness--to exactly resembling but manifestly interrupted impressions. To relieve the resulting tension, the mind invents the fiction that the impressions are really one uninterrupted thing, interruptedly perceived.

There is another problem. Lorne is clear that an idea of identity through time for his Hume is an idea of a succession of distinct things closely related by resemblance. But this claim is flatly contradicted in Hume's text, where he explicitly says that the idea of "different objects existing in succession, and connected together by a close relation" is "a perfect notion of *diversity*" and is "perfectly distinct, and even contrary" to the idea of identity (1.4.6.6). Falkenstein's attempt to save Hume from Hume's Difficulty runs afoul of the text. The difficulty remains.

Don Garrett

In the book, I had allowed that distinct ideas might represent the same intended object, but had argued that distinct ideas represent distinct intentional objects, that is, they represent there as being distinct things. Given the textual evidence, I had not anticipated the objection that distinct ideas might be neutral about how many things they represent there as being. However, the objection enables an elegant reading of Hume on identity, as Garrett sketches. Nonetheless, the reading ultimately works neither as Hume interpretation, nor for resolving the difficulty with identity.

Garrett proposes that we might have two successive ideas, F-with-G then F-with-H, that leave open whether we are representing there as being one F or two "in the course of the succession."³ Given Hume's account that complex ideas consist of separable parts, the core of the proposal is that there can be distinct, successive ideas of an F and an F that are neutral about whether they represent there as being

³ *Pace* Garrett, both Leibniz and Hume hold that complexes are not true unities and so do not, strictly speaking, exist. See my "Corporeal Substances and True Unities," *Studia Leibnitiana* 27 (1995), pp. 157-184.

one F or two Fs. Garrett thinks such ideas provide the “medium betwixt unity and number” Hume seeks, because we can alternate between thinking that there is one steadfast F being thought of or two successive Fs being thought of.

However, note that letting such ideas be all there is to the medium, would make unnecessary Hume’s emphatic appeal to the fiction of a steadfast object with duration, when explaining the medium. All he would need is the neutral ideas, plus the idea of a steadfast F, on the one hand, and ideas of a succession of Fs, on the other, none of which are fictions individually or jointly.

Part of the problem is that Garrett’s interpretation does not take into account that the idea of identity is acquired by observation. Presumably, on Garrett’s view what would give you the idea of identity is observing an F, and later observing an F in such a way that it is unclear whether the first idea and the second are of the same F. There would have to be a lapse of attention. During that lapse a steadfast object might have soldiered on, or a new recruit might have joined a succession. However, Hume in fact says that what gives us the idea of identity is steadily observing a steadfast object with the preconceived notion that everything, including it, has duration. Crucially, there is no lapse of attention and, while the idea is being acquired, no uncertainty about whether one or more than one thing has been observed. The steadfast object is recognized to be a single thing. The difficulty for Hume is how, for that very thing, to take an alternate view of it as many distinct things. Or more accurately, the difficulty is how to be able to switch between views of *it* as one single thing and *it* as many distinct things. The goal is crucially how to represent there as being something that itself is a medium betwixt unity and number.

The key difference is that in Garrett’s case, alternating between the views is alternating between the view that there is one F and the view that there are two Fs. In Hume’s case, alternating between the views is alternating between the view that the observed object itself is really just one thing and the view that that very observed object is really two things in succession. Hume is not concerned simply to explain how we can fail to know that something and something are identical. He is further concerned to explain, for something we have observed and something we

have later observed, how we can see them to be just one thing, yet go on to imagine them (it) to be distinct.

Representing such a medium betwixt unity and number requires, Hume thinks, coming to have the idea of a steadfast object enduring a variation in time. This idea is a fiction, because in order to be real such a thing would have to be both a single thing and yet many things in succession. And that is why this idea is exactly suited to being something that can both be viewed as one and can be viewed as many. Garrett's account makes inessential the absolutely essential appeal to the fiction.

Garrett objects that if my appeal to the fiction were correct, the universal falsehood of identity claims should be a relation of ideas. It is, for Hume. He gives *a priori* arguments that there is no literal medium betwixt unity and number, and no literal steadfast object with duration. However, the falsehood is hidden from all but the most attentive by the alternating between views. Normally no-one tries to bring steadily to mind the contrary ideas composing the fiction. So the falsehood is knowable *a priori*, but rarely known. When the fiction is accepted as natural and inevitable, its application is based on whether or not something and something are invariable and uninterrupted through a suppos'd variation in time, and this is a matter of fact.

Garrett next discusses personal identity. On my account, when explaining how we come to believe in that fiction, Hume forgot that "consciousness never deceives" (EHU 7.13). He finally remembered when he reviewed his explanation in the Appendix. As I see it, consciousness for Hume is apperception--perception of a perception as such. For Garrett, in contrast, consciousness is "the immediate awareness involved in *having* a perception, *not* some further idea *of* that perception." Garrett's charge is that my account requires that apperception be infallible, whereas only immediate awareness is. So my account fails.

We both agree that for Hume consciousness never deceives, so the dispute is which of the two possible awarenesses is what Hume means by "consciousness." I, naturally, am impressed by Hume's declaration that "consciousness is nothing but a

reflected thought or perception” (App.20). This claim is so explicit, that it should carry the day unless there is successful opposition.

Garrett appeals to 18th century standards of punctuation to suggest that the claim is in the scope of the phrase “Most philosophers seem inclin’d to think,” and so does not represent Hume’s own view. I find this ingenious ploy implausible. First, were it indeed in the scope of the phrase, it would be separated from its predecessor by a comma and begin with a “that,” as happens in a complex clause with similar structure earlier in the paragraph--one beginning with “I am sensible.” Second, Hume is surely appealing to authority to support his own view. If Hume’s own view of consciousness were different than that of most other philosophers, it would not make sense to say that their view gives his a promising aspect.

Garrett argues that Hume cannot think that apperception never deceives, because he thinks sometimes it does. However, the evidence is as difficult for his view to accommodate as it is for mine. Hume says that “all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness” yet he says elsewhere that some “often escape our strictest attention” (1.4.2.7; 1.3.15.11). If, as Garrett says, consciousness is the immediate awareness “involved in having perception” and the content of immediate awareness “simply is the content of the perception,” then nothing perceived can escape consciousness.

Perhaps Garrett could say that Hume uses “consciousness” equivocally. When Hume suggests that consciousness is spotty he means apperception, and when he says consciousness is full and accurate, he means immediate awareness. But then, Garrett would then have trouble with a passage such as, “When we reflect on our past sentiments and affections, our thought is a faithful mirror, and copies its objects truly” (EHU 2.2). Here is accurate apperception.

I think the tension should be resolved by interpreting Hume as saying that what consciousness (apperception) accurately reflects can be hard to attend to when theorizing about the mind. In our attempts to categorize and discern complicated causes and effects within the mind, we overlook or fumble with materials there to be discerned.

Thus Garrett's arguments do not succeed and Hume can be taken at his word: consciousness is apperception and is accurate.

I grant, though, that Hume is also committed to immediate awareness. It is, for him, "the action of the mind in the meditation, that certain *je-ne-scai-quoi*" (1.3.8.16).

Garrett argues that here Hume is talking about a quality unique to ideas, and so I am wrong to take it to characterize all perceptions including impressions. It seems to me, however, that to discern a perception's *je-ne-scai-quoi* is to consider it, in Hume's words, as "a real perception in the mind, of which we are intimately conscious" (1.3.8.15). Since impressions are perceptions, they can be regarded in this way as well. The burden of proof is on one who would deny it.

Garrett shoulders the burden with an intriguing argument that impressions lack this quality. If they had it, then Hume would not be able to explain the distinction between an idea of an idea and an idea of an impression. Since their differing vivacity cannot be reflected in ideas of them, some other difference must be reflected. All that is available is that ideas are accompanied by that *je-ne-scai-quoi*, and impressions are not.

The problem is interesting, but Garrett must be wrong about the solution. If Garrett were right then Hume could not have an idea of vivacity, nor ideas of degrees of vivacity. And Hume could not explain the distinction between an idea of a liar's initial faint conception of his untruth, and the idea of his later robust ersatz memory of the same untruth, enlivened by frequent repetition. But surely the difference is just the difference between an idea of an idea accompanied by one degree of vivacity and an idea of an idea accompanied by another degree. Perhaps ideas of degrees of vivacity are ideas of degrees of the power to affect thought and action. In any event, whatever resource Hume has would then work for distinguishing an idea of an impression from an idea of an idea. So we can take Hume at his word that immediate awareness, that *je-ne-scai-quoi*, accompanies all perceptions.

Last, Garrett discusses skepticism. Garrett argues forcefully that for Hume a number of beliefs have epistemic merit. To clarify my reasons for dissent, I developed in the précis some distinctions left too implicit in the book, concerning convincingness.

A Pyrrhonian-type skeptic, on balance, finds nothing convincing. As Garrett points out, Hume finds many things convincing. It seems to follow, then, that Hume is not that type of skeptic. My answer to this objection is that it depends on an equivocation. A skeptic finds nothing epistemologically convincing. Nor does Hume, though he finds many things causally and practically convincing. Hume is, therefore, still a skeptic, finding no beliefs to have epistemic merit.

Garrett, in contrast, takes the Title Principle to indicate that Hume thinks some beliefs have epistemic merit. They “deserve to be believed from the standpoint of truth as a value.” But this is true only for deflationary truth and non-epistemic value. Let me explain.

Garrett says, in essence, that to believe that something is true is to have a lively idea. Hume believes that he has lively ideas, and so he believes that some of his beliefs are true. But suppose someone has a lively idea that there are fairies but begins to suspect that is simply because of oft-repeated stories by his nanny and not because his belief is proportioned to any evidence. And suppose, epistemological weakling that he is, his suspicions are no match for his inherited childhood credulity. He continues to believe, simply because it would cost him too many pains to do otherwise, rather than because he think he has any right to. There is certainly a sense in which he believes it is true that there are fairies. But that means no more than that he believes there are fairies. And the value of this sort of truth in this case is just the value of belief. In this case, it is the value of reducing pains. On Garrett’s account, palpable falsehoods held for non-epistemic reasons can “deserve to be believed from the standpoint of truth as a value.” Likewise the Title Principle gives us non-epistemic reasons to believe things to be true, a.k.a. to believe things. But, as I have argued, this is in no way epistemological title to believe them.

Why then does Hume make so many explicit claims to “truth.” It is as Garrett explains. It is a way of declaring what one believes. Such claims should not mislead us into thinking that Hume regards his beliefs as epistemologically convincing, any

more than the ones that begin with “tis evident” or “tis certain” (1.4.7.15). As Hume says these are simply utterances extorted by the present view of the object. They are causally convincing claims, even while Hume recognizes that they are not epistemologically convincing. The considerations against them admit of no answer, but produce no conviction.

I have called our assent to merely causally convincing claims, “passive acquiescence” in contrast to assent to epistemologically convincing claims, which I have called “active endorsement.” Garrett rightly points out that for Hume active endorsement is not a genuine psychological state. However, his opponents believe it is and his audience believes it is. Like a good skeptic, he assumes the theory of his opponents in order to raise questions about it. In 1.4.1 he argues that to assume we are moved by considerations appropriate to whether to give active endorsement, is to grossly misrepresent our actual behavior. Were we so moved we would never assent. We do assent. Something else must move us: causal convincingness with its resultant passive acquiescence.

Garrett’s insightful appeal to a “probability sense” on the model of a moral sense fits nicely into my proposal. These are faculties we have as receptors of causal convincingness, not as judges of epistemological convincingness. Our probability sense enables us to find causally convincing even highly theoretical matters. Hume saw, as Sextus did not, that one can passively acquiesce in views about unclear matters beyond daily life, while seeing no way to answer the skeptical objections to such views or any views. A view with any content can be skeptically held, by being merely passively acquiesced in.

Hume finds many views causally and practically convincing, though all face objections to which he finds no epistemologically convincing answers. In this way he is a skeptic holding views without discerning any epistemic merit.