A Treatise of Human Nature

DAVID HUME
1711–1776

A Treatise of Human Nature

The 1739–40 text

Rendered into modern English with AI (Claude) and edited



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A Treatise of Human Nature · David Hume (1711–1776)

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INTRODUCTION

David Hume was in his twenties when he wrote *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), an attempt to apply the "experimental method" of Newton to the human mind. It is now widely regarded as the greatest philosophical work in English — though Hume said it "fell dead-born from the press," and later recast its first and third books as the shorter *Enquiries*.

Book I argues that all our ideas copy earlier impressions; that causal reasoning rests on custom, not reason; and that the self is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions." Book II gives a theory of the passions and the famous claim that "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions." Book III grounds morality in feeling rather than reason, and traces justice and property to human convention.

The right-hand column is Hume in modern English: the same arguments, examples and wit, in sentences a reader today can move through easily. The left-hand column is Hume's own text.

Book I, Part 1: Of ideas, their origin, composition, connection, abstraction, etc.

Hume's Advertisement and Introduction, then his account of impressions and ideas, association, and abstract ideas.

ADVERTISEMENT

Adv.1 My purpose in this work is explained well enough in the Introduction. The reader should just note that not all the subjects I planned out for myself there are treated in these two volumes. The subjects of the understanding and the passions make a complete chain of reasoning by themselves, and I was glad to take advantage of this natural division in order to test the taste of the public. If I have the good fortune to succeed, I will go on to examine morals, politics, and criticism, which will complete this Treatise of Human Nature. I regard the approval of the public as the greatest reward for my labors, but I am determined to treat its judgment, whatever it may be, as my best instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Hume argues that every science depends on the science of man, which must rest on experience and observation.

Intro.1 Nothing is more common or more natural for those who claim to be revealing something new to the world in philosophy and the sciences than to slip in praise of their own systems by running down all the systems that came before. And indeed, if they were content with lamenting the ignorance we still labor under on the most important questions that can come before the

tribunal of human reason, few people acquainted with the sciences would not readily agree with them. It is easy for someone of judgment and learning to see how weak the foundations are even of those systems that have won the greatest credit and have made the loftiest claims to accurate and profound reasoning. Principles taken on trust, consequences clumsily deduced from them, a lack of coherence in the parts and of evidence in the whole—these are found everywhere in the systems of the most eminent philosophers, and they seem to have brought disgrace on philosophy itself.

Intro.2 Nor does it take any deep knowledge to discover how imperfect the sciences are at present. Even the rabble outside the doors can judge from the noise and clamor they hear that all is not well inside. There is nothing that is not the subject of debate, and on which learned men do not hold opposite opinions. The most trivial question does not escape our controversy, and on the most momentous we cannot reach any certain decision. Disputes multiply as if everything were uncertain, and they are conducted with the greatest heat as if everything were certain. Amid all this bustle, it is not reason that carries off the prize but eloquence, and no one with enough skill to paint the most extravagant hypothesis in favorable colors need ever despair of winning converts to it. The victory is won not by the men at arms who wield the pike and the sword, but by the army's trumpeters, drummers, and musicians.

Intro.3 This, in my opinion, is the source of the common prejudice against metaphysical reasoning of every kind, even among those who call themselves scholars and rightly value every other branch of learning. By "metaphysical reasoning" they do not mean reasoning about any particular branch of science, but every kind of argument that is at all abstruse and takes some attention to understand. We have so often wasted our effort on such inquiries that we usually reject them without hesitation, resolving that if we must forever fall prey to errors and delusions, they should at least be natural and entertaining. And indeed, nothing but the most determined skepticism, along with

a great deal of laziness, can justify this aversion to metaphysics. For if truth is within the reach of human capacity at all, it must certainly lie very deep and be very abstruse; and to hope that we will reach it without effort, when the greatest geniuses have failed despite the utmost effort, must surely be thought vain and presumptuous enough. I claim no such advantage for the philosophy I am about to unfold, and I would consider it a strong presumption against it if it were so very easy and obvious.

Intro.4 It is evident that all the sciences are related, more or less, to human nature, and that however far any of them may seem to stray from it, they still come back by one route or another. Even mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion depend to some extent on the science of *man*, since they fall within human knowledge and are judged by human powers and faculties. It is impossible to say what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences if we were thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of the human understanding, and could explain the nature of the ideas we use and of the operations we perform in our reasoning. And such improvements are all the more to be hoped for in natural religion, because it is not content to teach us about the nature of superior powers but extends its view further, to their disposition toward us and our duties toward them. As a result, we ourselves are not only the beings who reason but also one of the objects we reason about.

Intro.5 If, then, mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural religion depend so much on the knowledge of man, what may we expect in the other sciences, whose connection with human nature is closer and more intimate? The sole aim of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty and the nature of our ideas; morals and criticism concern our tastes and sentiments; and politics considers men as united in society and dependent on one another. These four sciences—logic, morals, criticism, and politics—take in almost everything

it can matter to us to know, or that can tend either to improve or to adorn the human mind.[1]

Intro.6 Here, then, is the only course from which we can hope for success in our philosophical inquiries: to abandon the tedious, lingering method we have followed so far, and instead of taking a castle or village on the frontier now and then, to march straight to the capital or center of these sciences—to human nature itself. Once we are masters of that, we can hope for an easy victory everywhere else. From this position we can extend our conquests over all the sciences that more closely concern human life, and can afterward proceed at leisure to discover more fully those that are objects of pure curiosity. There is no important question whose answer is not contained in the science of man, and none that can be settled with any certainty before we become acquainted with that science. In undertaking to explain the principles of human nature, therefore, we are in effect proposing a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new—and the only one on which they can stand securely.

Intro.7 And just as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation. It is not surprising that the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects should come more than a whole century after its application to natural ones, since we find that there was about the same interval between the origins of these sciences. Counting from *Thales* to *Socrates*, the span of time is nearly equal to that between Lord Bacon and some recent philo-

1 "Criticism" is Hume's term for the study of taste in literature and the arts—roughly, aesthetics.

sophers in England,[2] who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing and have caught the attention and aroused the curiosity of the public. So true is it that, however other nations may rival us in poetry and surpass us in some of the other pleasing arts, improvements in reason and philosophy can come only from a land of toleration and liberty.

Intro.8 Nor should we think that this later improvement in the science of man will bring less honor to our native country than the earlier one in natural philosophy. We should rather count it a greater glory, because that science is more important and stood in greater need of such a reform. For it seems evident to me that, since the essence of the mind is as unknown to us as that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities except from careful and exact experiments and from observing the particular effects that result from its different circumstances and situations. And though we must try to make all our principles as universal as possible, by pushing our experiments as far as they will go and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, it is still certain that we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis that claims to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature should be rejected at the outset as presumptuous and fanciful.

Intro.9 I do not think that a philosopher who devoted himself so earnestly to explaining the ultimate principles of the soul would show himself a great master of the very science of human nature he claims to explain, or very knowledgeable about what naturally satisfies the human mind. For nothing is more certain than that despair has almost the same effect on us as enjoyment, and that as soon as we learn that a desire cannot be satisfied, the

2 HUME'S NOTE. Mr. *Locke*, Lord *Shaftesbury*, Dr. *Mandeville*, Mr. *Hutcheson*, Dr. *Butler*, etc.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. John Locke (1632–1704), author of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), moralist; Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), author of *The Fable of the Bees*; Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), moral-sense philosopher, whose name Hume spells "Hutchinson"; Joseph Butler (1692–1752), bishop and moralist.

desire itself vanishes. When we see that we have reached the utmost limit of human reason, we sit down contented, even though we are, on the whole, perfectly convinced of our ignorance, and see that we can give no reason for our most general and most refined principles beyond our experience that they are real. That is the reason ordinary people give, and one that needed no study to discover in the first place, even for the most particular and extraordinary phenomenon. And just as this impossibility of making further progress is enough to satisfy the reader, so the writer may take a more delicate satisfaction in freely confessing his ignorance, and in his prudence in avoiding the error so many have fallen into, of passing off their conjectures and hypotheses on the world as the most certain principles. When master and pupil can reach this mutual contentment and satisfaction, I do not know what more we can ask of our philosophy.

Intro.10 But if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles should be thought a defect in the science of man, I will venture to say that it is a defect it shares with all the sciences and all the arts we can take up, whether they are cultivated in the schools of the philosophers or practiced in the workshops of the humblest artisans. None of them can go beyond experience or establish any principles not founded on that authority. Moral philosophy does have one peculiar disadvantage not found in natural philosophy: in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them on purpose, with forethought, and in such a way as to satisfy itself about every particular difficulty that may arise. When I do not know what effect one body will have on another in some situation, I need only put them in that situation and observe what happens. But if I tried to clear up a doubt in moral philosophy in the same way, by placing myself in the same situation as the one I am considering, it is evident that this reflection and forethought would so disturb the operation of my natural principles that it would be impossible to draw any sound conclusion from the phenomenon. In this science, therefore, we must glean our experiments from a careful observation of

human life, and take them as they appear in the ordinary course of the world, in people's behavior in company, in business, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to build on them a science that will be no less certain, and far more useful, than any other within human understanding.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS

Perceptions divide into impressions and ideas, and every simple idea is copied from a simple impression.

1.1.1.1 All the perceptions of the human mind fall into two distinct kinds, which I will call *impressions* and *ideas*. The difference between them lies in the degree of force and liveliness with which they strike the mind and make their way into our thought or consciousness. The perceptions that enter with the most force and violence we may call impressions, and under this name I include all our sensations, passions, and emotions as they first appear in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning—such as, for instance, all the perceptions aroused by the present discussion, except only those that come from sight and touch, and except the immediate pleasure or discomfort it may cause. I do not think many words will be needed to explain this distinction. Everyone will readily perceive for himself the difference between feeling and thinking. Their ordinary degrees are easily told apart, though it is not impossible that in particular cases they may come very close to each other. Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of the soul, our ideas may approach our impressions; and on the other hand it sometimes happens that our impressions are so faint and low that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But despite this close resemblance in a few cases, they are in general so very different that no one can hesit-

ate to class them under separate headings and give each its own name to mark the difference.[3]

1.1.1.2 There is another division of our perceptions that it will be useful to note, and that extends to both our impressions and our ideas. This is the division into *simple* and *complex*. Simple perceptions—simple impressions and ideas—are those that admit of no distinction or separation. Complex ones are the opposite, and can be distinguished into parts. Though a particular color, taste, and smell are qualities all united together in this apple, it is easy to see that they are not the same, but are at least distinguishable from one another.

1.1.1.3 Having given our objects an order and arrangement through these divisions, we can now set about considering their qualities and relations more precisely. The first thing that strikes my eye is the great resemblance between our impressions and ideas in every respect except their degree of force and vivacity. The one seem to be, in a way, the reflection of the other, so that all the perceptions of the mind are double, appearing both as impressions and as ideas. When I shut my eyes and think of my room, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt, and there is no feature of the one that is not found in the other. Running over my other perceptions, I still find the same resemblance and representation. Ideas and impressions seem always to correspond to each other. This seems to me remarkable, and holds my attention for a moment.

1.1.1.4 On a closer survey, I find that I have been carried too far by first appearances, and that I must use the distinction of perceptions into simple and complex to limit this general conclusion that all our ideas and impressions resemble each other. I observe that many of our complex ideas never had impressions

3 HUME'S NOTE. I use these terms, *impression and idea,* in a sense different from the usual one, and I hope I will be allowed this liberty. Perhaps I am rather restoring the word "idea" to its original sense, from which Mr. Locke had perverted it by making it stand for all our perceptions. By the term "impression" I do not mean to express the way in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves—for which there is no particular name in *English* or in any other language I know of.

corresponding to them, and that many of our complex impressions are never exactly copied in ideas. I can imagine a city like the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold and whose walls are rubies, though I have never seen any such thing. I have seen Paris; but shall I claim that I can form an idea of that city that perfectly represents all its streets and houses in their real and exact proportions?

1.1.1.5 I see, therefore, that although there is in general a great resemblance between our complex impressions and ideas, the rule that they are exact copies of each other is not universally true. We may next consider how things stand with our simple perceptions. After the most careful examination I am capable of, I venture to affirm that here the rule holds without exception: every simple idea has a simple impression that resembles it, and every simple impression a corresponding idea. The idea of red that we form in the dark and the impression that strikes our eyes in sunshine differ only in degree, not in nature. That the same holds for all our simple impressions and ideas cannot be proved by listing them one by one. Everyone can satisfy himself on this point by running over as many as he likes. But if anyone should deny this universal resemblance, I know no way to convince him except to ask him to show a simple impression that has no corresponding idea, or a simple idea that has no corresponding impression. If he does not answer this challenge—and it is certain he cannot—we may establish our conclusion from his silence and our own observation.

1.1.1.6 Thus we find that all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and since the complex ones are formed from them, we may affirm in general that these two kinds of perception correspond exactly. Having discovered this relation, which needs no further examination, I am curious to find some of their other qualities. Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes and which are effects.

1.1.1.7 The full examination of this question is the subject of the present treatise, so here we will content ourselves with estab-

lishing one general proposition: *that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions, which correspond to them and which they exactly represent*.

1.1.1.8 In looking for phenomena to prove this proposition, I find only two kinds; but in each kind the phenomena are obvious, numerous, and conclusive. First, by reviewing again what I have already asserted, I make certain that every simple impression is accompanied by a corresponding idea, and every simple idea by a corresponding impression. From this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions I immediately conclude that there is a strong connection between our corresponding impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence on that of the other. Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise from chance; it clearly proves that either the impressions depend on the ideas or the ideas on the impressions. To find out which way this dependence runs, I consider the order in which they first appear, and I find by constant experience that the simple impressions always come before their corresponding ideas and never appear in the reverse order. To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present the objects—in other words, I convey these impressions to him. I do not proceed so absurdly as to try to produce the impressions by arousing the ideas. When our ideas appear, they do not produce their corresponding impressions, nor do we see any color or feel any sensation merely by thinking of them. On the other hand, we find that any impression, whether of the mind or of the body, is constantly followed by an idea that resembles it and differs only in degree of force and liveliness. The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions is convincing proof that the one are the causes of the other; and this priority of the impressions is equal proof that our impressions are the causes of our ideas, not our ideas of our impressions.

1.1.1.9 To confirm this, I consider another plain and convincing phenomenon: whenever by some accident the faculties that give rise to certain impressions are obstructed in their operation, as

when someone is born blind or deaf, not only are the impressions lost but also their corresponding ideas, so that not the least trace of either ever appears in the mind. And this is true not only where the organs of sensation are entirely destroyed, but also where they have never been put to work to produce a particular impression. We cannot form an accurate idea of the taste of a pineapple without actually having tasted one.

THE MISSING SHADE OF BLUE

Hume grants one exception: a person might imagine a shade of blue he has never seen.

1.1.1.10 There is, however, one contrary phenomenon, which may prove that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to come before their corresponding impressions. I think it will readily be granted that the various distinct ideas of colors that enter through the eyes, or of sounds conveyed by hearing, really are different from one another, though they also resemble one another. Now if this is true of different colors, it must be no less true of the different shades of the same color: each of them produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest. For if this is denied, then by the continuous gradation of shades a color can be run imperceptibly into the one most remote from it; and if you will not allow any of the intermediate shades to be different, you cannot without absurdity deny that the extremes are the same. Suppose, then, that a person has had his sight for thirty years and has become perfectly well acquainted with colors of all kinds, except for one particular shade of blue, say, which he has never happened to come across. Let all the different shades of that color except that single one be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest. It is plain that he will perceive a blank where that shade is missing, and will notice that at that place the distance between the neighboring colors is greater than anywhere else. Now I ask: is it possible for him, from his own imagination, to fill in this gap and call up for himself the idea of that particular shade, even though it has

never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe few will doubt that he can; and this may serve as proof that simple ideas are not always derived from their corresponding impressions. But the instance is so particular and singular that it is hardly worth noticing, and does not warrant our altering our general maxim for its sake alone.

1.1.1.11 Besides this exception, it may not be amiss to remark on this point that the principle that impressions come before ideas must be understood with one further limitation: just as our ideas are images of our impressions, so we can form secondary ideas that are images of the primary ones, as this very reasoning about them shows. This is not, strictly speaking, an exception to the rule so much as an explanation of it. Ideas produce images of themselves in new ideas; but since the first ideas are supposed to be derived from impressions, it still remains true that all our simple ideas come, either indirectly or directly, from their corresponding impressions.

1.1.1.12 This, then, is the first principle I establish in the science of human nature, and we should not look down on it because it looks so simple. For it is remarkable that the present question—whether our impressions or our ideas come first—is the same one that has made so much noise in other terms, when it has been disputed whether there are any *innate ideas*, or whether all ideas are derived from sensation and reflection. We may note that to prove the ideas of extension and color are not innate, philosophers do nothing but show that they are conveyed by our senses. To prove that the ideas of passion and desire are not innate, they point out that we have a prior experience of these emotions in ourselves. Now if we examine these arguments carefully, we will find that they prove nothing except that ideas are preceded by other, more lively perceptions, from which they are derived and which they represent. I hope this clear statement of the question will put an end to all disputes about it, and will make this principle more useful in our reasoning than it seems to have been so far.

DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

Impressions of sensation are distinguished from impressions of reflection, and ideas are taken first.

1.1.2.1 Since it appears that our simple impressions come before their corresponding ideas, and that the exceptions are very rare, method seems to require that we examine our impressions before considering our ideas. Impressions may be divided into two kinds: those of *sensation* and those of *reflection*. The first kind arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived largely from our ideas, and in the following order. An impression first strikes the senses and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of one kind or another. The mind takes a copy of this impression, which remains after the impression ceases, and this we call an idea. When this idea of pleasure or pain returns to the soul, it produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflection, because they are derived from it. These in turn are copied by the memory and imagination and become ideas, which may themselves give rise to further impressions and ideas. So the impressions of reflection come before their corresponding ideas, but after those of sensation, and are derived from them. The examination of our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral philosophers, and so will not be taken up at present. And since the impressions of reflection—namely, passions, desires, and emotions—which chiefly deserve our attention, arise mostly from ideas, it will be necessary to reverse the method that at first sight seems most natural, and, in order to explain the nature and principles of the human mind, to give a detailed account of ideas before proceeding to impressions. For this reason I have chosen to begin here with ideas.

MEMORY AND IMAGINATION

Memory keeps the force and order of its impressions; imagination is fainter and free to rearrange.

1.1.3.1 We find by experience that when an impression has been present to the mind, it reappears there as an idea, and it can do this in two different ways: either it keeps, in its new appearance, a considerable degree of its original vivacity and is something between an impression and an idea; or it loses that vivacity entirely and is a perfect idea. The faculty by which we repeat our impressions in the first way is called the *memory*, and the other the *imagination*. It is evident at first glance that the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination, and that the former faculty paints its objects in more distinct colors than any the latter uses. When we remember a past event, the idea of it flows into the mind forcefully; whereas in the imagination the perception is faint and languid, and the mind has difficulty keeping it steady and uniform for any length of time. Here, then, is a perceptible difference between one kind of idea and another. But more on this later.[4]

1.1.3.2 There is another difference between these two kinds of ideas that is no less evident. Although neither the ideas of the memory nor those of the imagination—neither the lively ideas nor the faint ones—can appear in the mind unless their corresponding impressions have gone before to prepare the way for them, the imagination is not restricted to the same order and form as the original impressions, while the memory is, in a way, tied down in that respect, with no power to vary it.

1.1.3.3 It is evident that the memory preserves the original form in which its objects were presented, and that whenever we depart from it in recollecting anything, this comes from some defect or imperfection in that faculty. A historian may, perhaps, for the sake of carrying on his narrative more conveniently, relate one event before another even though it actually

4 HUME'S NOTE. Part III, Section 5.

happened later; but then, if he is careful, he notes this departure from order, and in that way puts the idea back in its proper position. The same holds for our recollection of places and people we used to know. The chief work of the memory is to preserve not the simple ideas but their order and position. In short, this principle is supported by so many common, everyday phenomena that we can spare ourselves the trouble of pressing it any further.

1.1.3.4 The same evidence accompanies our second principle, *the liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas*. The fables we meet with in poems and romances put this beyond question. There nature is thrown into complete confusion, and nothing is mentioned but winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants. Nor will this liberty of the fancy seem strange when we consider that all our ideas are copied from our impressions, and that no two impressions are perfectly inseparable. Not to mention that this is an obvious consequence of the division of ideas into simple and complex. Wherever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily separate them.

THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

Resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect gently lead the mind from one idea to another.

1.1.4.1 Since all simple ideas can be separated by the imagination and reunited in whatever form it pleases, nothing would be more inexplicable than the operations of that faculty if it were not guided by some universal principles that make it, to some extent, consistent with itself at all times and places. If ideas were entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone would join them; and it is impossible that the same simple ideas should fall regularly into complex ones (as they commonly do) without some bond of union among them, some associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another. This uniting principle among ideas is not to be thought of as an inseparable con-

nection, for that has already been excluded from the imagination. Nor are we to conclude that without it the mind cannot join two ideas, for nothing is freer than that faculty. We are only to regard it as a gentle force that usually prevails, and that is the reason, among other things, why languages correspond so closely to one another—nature, in a way, pointing out to everyone the simple ideas most fit to be united into a complex one. The qualities from which this association arises, and by which the mind is carried in this way from one idea to another, are three: *resemblance, contiguity* in time or place, and *cause* and *effect*.

1.1.4.2 I do not think it will be very necessary to prove that these qualities produce an association among ideas, and that when one idea appears they naturally introduce another. It is plain that in the course of our thinking and in the constant turnover of our ideas, our imagination runs easily from one idea to any other that resembles it, and that this quality alone is a sufficient bond and association for the fancy. It is likewise evident that, since the senses, in shifting from object to object, must do so in an orderly way and take them as they lie *contiguous* to one another, the imagination must acquire by long custom the same way of thinking, and run along the parts of space and time in conceiving its objects. As for the connection made by the relation of cause and effect, we will have occasion later to examine it thoroughly, and so will not dwell on it now. It is enough to note that no relation produces a stronger connection in the fancy, and makes one idea more readily recall another, than the relation of cause and effect between their objects.

1.1.4.3 To understand the full extent of these relations, we must consider that two objects are connected in the imagination not only when one immediately resembles, is contiguous to, or is the cause of the other, but also when a third object stands between them that bears any of these relations to both. This can be carried a long way, though we may also observe that each step removed considerably weakens the relation. Fourth cousins are connected by causation, if I may be allowed to use that term,

but not as closely as brothers, much less as child and parent. In general we may observe that all blood relationships depend on cause and effect, and are considered near or remote according to the number of connecting causes that come between the persons.

1.1.4.4 Of the three relations just mentioned, causation is the most extensive. Two objects may be considered to stand in this relation both when one is the cause of some action or motion of the other and when the first is the cause of the existence of the second. For since that action or motion is nothing but the object itself considered in a certain light, and since the object remains the same in all its different situations, it is easy to imagine how such an influence of objects on one another may connect them in the imagination.

1.1.4.5 We can take this further and note that two objects are connected by the relation of cause and effect not only when one produces a motion or some action in the other, but also when it has the power to produce it. And this, we may observe, is the source of all the relations of interest and duty by which people influence one another in society and are bound by the ties of government and subordination. A master is someone who, by his position—arising either from force or from agreement—has the power to direct in certain respects the actions of another, whom we call a servant. A judge is someone who, in all disputed cases, can settle by his opinion the possession or property of anything between members of the society. When a person has a power, nothing more is needed to turn it into action than the exertion of the will; and in every case this is regarded as possible, and in many as probable—especially in the case of authority, where the obedience of the subject is a pleasure and an advantage to the superior.

1.1.4.6 These, then, are the principles of union or cohesion among our simple ideas, which in the imagination take the place of the inseparable connection by which they are united in our memory. Here is a kind of *attraction* that will be found to have as extraordinary effects in the mental world as in the natural one,

and to show itself in as many and as varied forms. Its effects are conspicuous everywhere; but its causes are mostly unknown, and must be traced back to original qualities of human nature, which I do not claim to explain. Nothing is more necessary for a true philosopher than to restrain the immoderate desire to search into causes, and, having established a doctrine on a sufficient number of experiments, to rest content with that when he sees that further examination would lead him into obscure and uncertain speculations. In that case his inquiry would be much better spent examining the effects of his principle than its causes.

1.1.4.7 Among the effects of this union or association of ideas, none are more remarkable than the complex ideas that are the usual subjects of our thought and reasoning, and that generally arise from some principle of union among our simple ideas. These complex ideas may be divided into relations, modes, and substances. We will briefly examine each of these in turn, and will add some considerations about our general and particular ideas before leaving the present subject, which may be regarded as the elements of this philosophy.

OF RELATIONS

Hume lists seven kinds of philosophical relation, from resemblance to cause and effect.

1.1.5.1 The word *relation* is commonly used in two quite different senses. It means either the quality by which two ideas are connected in the imagination, so that one naturally introduces the other, in the way explained above; or the particular respect in which, even when two ideas are joined arbitrarily in the fancy, we may see fit to compare them. In ordinary language the word "relation" is always used in the first sense; it is only in philosophy that we extend it to mean any particular point of comparison, without a connecting principle. Thus philosophers will grant that distance is a true relation, because we acquire an idea of it by comparing objects. But in the ordinary way we say *that*

nothing can be more distant than such and such things from each other, nothing can have less relation—as if distance and relation were incompatible.

1.1.5.2 It may perhaps be thought an endless task to list all the qualities that make objects admit of comparison, and by which the ideas of philosophical relation are produced. But if we consider them carefully, we will find that they can easily be brought under seven general headings, which may be regarded as the sources of all philosophical relation. (1)[5]

1.1.5.3 The first is *resemblance*. This is a relation without which no philosophical relation can exist, since no objects admit of comparison unless they have some degree of resemblance. But though resemblance is necessary to all philosophical relation, it does not follow that it always produces a connection or association of ideas. When a quality becomes very general and is shared by a great many individuals, it does not lead the mind directly to any one of them; by offering too great a choice at once, it keeps the imagination from fixing on any single object. (2)

1.1.5.4 *Identity* may be considered a second kind of relation. I consider this relation here as applied in its strictest sense to constant and unchanging objects, without examining the nature and foundation of personal identity, which will be dealt with later. Of all relations, identity is the most universal, being common to every being whose existence has any duration. (3)

1.1.5.5 After identity, the most universal and comprehensive relations are those of *space* and *time*, which are the sources of an infinite number of comparisons, such as distant, contiguous, above, below, before, after, and so on. (4)

1.1.5.6 All objects that admit of *quantity* or *number* can be compared in that respect, which is another very fertile source of relation. (5)

1.1.5.7 When two objects share the same *quality*, the *degrees* in which they have it form a fifth kind of relation. Thus of two

5 Each number, (1) through (7), introduces the relation discussed in the paragraph that follows it.

objects that are both heavy, one may be either heavier or lighter than the other. Two colors of the same kind may still be of different shades, and in that respect admit of comparison. (6)

1.1.5.8 The relation of *contrariety* may at first sight be regarded as an exception to the rule *that no relation of any kind can exist without some degree of resemblance*. But let us consider that no two ideas are contrary in themselves except those of existence and non-existence, and these plainly resemble each other, since both imply an idea of the object—though the latter excludes the object from all the times and places in which it is supposed not to exist. (7)

1.1.5.9 All other objects, such as fire and water, heat and cold, are found to be contrary only from experience, and from the contrariety of their causes or effects. This relation of cause and effect is a seventh philosophical relation, as well as a natural one. The resemblance implied in this relation will be explained later.

1.1.5.10 It might naturally be expected that I would add *difference* to the other relations. But I regard it rather as a negation of relation than as anything real or positive. Difference is of two kinds, as it is opposed either to identity or to resemblance. The first is called a difference of number; the other, of *kind*.

MODES AND SUBSTANCES

The idea of substance is only a collection of simple ideas united by the imagination.

1.1.6.1 I would like to ask those philosophers who base so much of their reasoning on the distinction between substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of substance is derived from impressions of sensation or of reflection. If it is conveyed to us by our senses, I ask: by which of them, and in what way? If it is perceived by the eyes, it must be a color; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste; and so on for the other senses. But I do not think anyone will claim that substance is a color, or a sound, or a taste. The idea of substance

must therefore be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exists. But the impressions of reflection come down to our passions and emotions, none of which can possibly represent a substance. We therefore have no idea of substance distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor do we mean anything else when we talk or reason about it.

1.1.6.2 The idea of a substance, like that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination and have been given a particular name, which lets us recall that collection, either to ourselves or to others. But these ideas differ in this way: the particular qualities that make up a substance are commonly referred to an unknown something in which they are supposed to inhere. Or, if this fiction does not come into play, they are at least supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation. The effect of this is that whenever we discover a new simple quality that has the same connection with the rest, we immediately include it among them, even though it was not part of our first conception of the substance. Thus our idea of gold may at first be a yellow color, weight, malleability, and fusibility. But when we discover that it dissolves in aqua regia, we join that to the other qualities and suppose it belongs to the substance just as much as if its idea had been part of the compound one from the beginning. Since the principle of union is regarded as the chief part of the complex idea, it admits whatever quality turns up later, and that quality is included by it just as much as the others that first presented themselves.

1.1.6.3 That this cannot happen with modes is evident from their nature. The simple ideas from which modes are formed either represent qualities that are not united by contiguity and causation but are scattered across different subjects, or, if they are all united together, the uniting principle is not regarded as the foundation of the complex idea. The idea of a dance is an example of the first kind of mode, and that of beauty an example of the second. It is obvious why such complex ideas cannot take

in any new idea without changing the name that distinguishes the mode.

ABSTRACT IDEAS

Following Berkeley, Hume argues that general ideas are particular ideas attached to a general term.

1.1.7.1 A very important question has been raised about *abstract* or *general* ideas: *whether they are general or particular in the mind's conception of them*. A great philosopher[6] has challenged the accepted opinion on this point. He has asserted that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones attached to a certain term, which gives them a wider signification and makes them call to mind, when the occasion arises, other individuals that are similar to them. I regard this as one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries made in recent years in the republic of letters, so I will try here to confirm it with some arguments that I hope will put it beyond all doubt and controversy.

1.1.7.2 It is evident that in forming most of our general ideas, if not all of them, we abstract from every particular degree of quantity and quality. An object does not cease to belong to a particular species because of every small change in its extension, duration, and other properties. So it may be thought that we have here a plain dilemma that settles the nature of those abstract ideas which have given philosophers so much to speculate about. The abstract idea of a man represents men of all sizes and all qualities. The conclusion drawn is that it can do this only by representing all possible sizes and all possible qualities at once, or by representing no particular one at all. Now since it has been thought absurd to defend the first alternative, because it implies an infinite capacity in the mind, the usual inference has been in favor of the second, and our abstract ideas have

6 HUME'S NOTE. Dr. Berkeley.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. George Berkeley (1685–1753), Irish philosopher and bishop, who attacked abstract general ideas in the introduction to his *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710).

been supposed to represent no particular degree of either quantity or quality. But I will try to show that this inference is mistaken. First, I will prove that it is utterly impossible to conceive any quantity or quality without forming a precise notion of its degrees. Second, I will show that, although the capacity of the mind is not infinite, we can nevertheless form a notion of all possible degrees of quantity and quality at once. We can do this at least in a way that, however imperfect, may serve all the purposes of reflection and conversation.

1.1.7.3 To begin with the first proposition, *that the mind cannot form any notion of quantity or quality without forming a precise notion of the degrees of each*, we can prove this by the following three arguments. First, we have observed that whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by thought and imagination. And we may add here that these propositions are equally true in reverse: whatever objects are separable are also distinguishable, and whatever objects are distinguishable are also different. For how could we possibly separate what is not distinguishable, or distinguish what is not different? So to know whether abstraction implies separation, we need only consider it from this angle. We examine whether all the circumstances we abstract from in our general ideas are distinguishable from, and different from, those we retain as essential parts of them. But it is evident at first sight that the precise length of a line is neither different from nor distinguishable from the line itself, and that the precise degree of any quality is not different from the quality. These ideas, therefore, admit of separation no more than they admit of distinction and difference. Consequently they are joined with each other in the conception. Despite all our abstractions and refinements, the general idea of a line, as it appears in the mind, has a precise degree of quantity and quality, however much it may be made to represent other lines that have different degrees of both.

1.1.7.4 Second, it is admitted that no object can appear to the senses without being determined in its degrees of both quantity

and quality. In other words, no impression can become present to the mind without being so determined. The confusion in which impressions are sometimes wrapped comes only from their faintness and unsteadiness. It does not come from any capacity in the mind to receive an impression that in its real existence has no particular degree or proportion. That is a contradiction in terms, and it even implies the flattest of all contradictions, namely, that it is possible for the same thing both to be and not to be.

1.1.7.5 Now since all ideas are derived from impressions and are nothing but copies and representations of them, whatever is true of the one must be acknowledged of the other. Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. The conclusion just reached does not rest on any particular degree of vivacity, so it cannot be affected by any variation in that respect. An idea is a weaker impression. Since a strong impression must necessarily have a determinate quantity and quality, the same must hold for its copy or representative.

1.1.7.6 Third, it is a principle generally accepted in philosophy that everything in nature is individual. It is utterly absurd to suppose that a triangle really exists which has no precise proportion of sides and angles. So if this is absurd in fact and reality, it must also be absurd in idea, since nothing of which we can form a clear and distinct idea is absurd and impossible. But to form the idea of an object and simply to form an idea are the same thing. The reference of the idea to an object is an external designation, and the idea in itself bears no mark or sign of it. Now it is impossible to form an idea of an object that has quantity and quality and yet has no precise degree of either. It follows that it is equally impossible to form an idea that is not limited and fixed in both these respects. Abstract ideas are therefore individual in themselves, however general they may become in what they represent. The image in the mind is only that of a particular object, although we apply it in our reasoning just as if it were universal.

1.1.7.7 We apply ideas beyond their nature in this way because we gather all their possible degrees of quantity and quality in an imperfect manner that is good enough for the purposes of life. This is the second proposition I set out to explain. When we have found a resemblance[7] among several objects that often come before us, we apply the same name to all of them. We do so whatever differences we may notice in the degrees of their quantity and quality, and whatever other differences may appear among them. Once we have acquired a custom of this kind, hearing that name revives the idea of one of these objects and makes the imagination conceive it with all its particular circumstances and proportions. But the same word is supposed to have been often applied to other individuals that differ in many respects from the idea immediately present to the mind. Since the word cannot revive the idea of all these individuals, it only touches the soul, if I may put it that way, and revives the custom we have acquired by surveying them. They are not really and in fact present to the mind, but only potentially. We do not draw them all out distinctly in the imagination, but keep ourselves ready to survey any of them, as some present purpose or need may prompt us. The word raises up an individual idea, along with a certain custom, and that custom produces any other individual idea we may need. But since producing all the ideas to which the name may be applied is in most cases impossible, we shorten that work by considering things more partially. We find

7 HUME'S NOTE. It is evident that even different simple ideas may have a similarity or resemblance to each other. Nor is it necessary that the point or circumstance of resemblance should be distinct or separable from the one in which they differ. *Blue* and *green* are different simple ideas, but they resemble each other more than *blue* and *scarlet* do, even though their perfect simplicity rules out any possibility of separation or distinction. The same holds for particular sounds, tastes, and smells. In their general appearance and when compared, these admit of endless resemblances without having any circumstance in common that is the same. And we can be certain of this even from the very abstract term *simple idea*. It includes all simple ideas under it, and these resemble each other in their simplicity. And yet, because of their very nature, which excludes all composition, this circumstance in which they resemble each other is neither distinguishable nor separable from the rest. The same holds for all the degrees of any quality. They all resemble one another, and yet the quality, in any individual, is not distinct from the degree.

that few inconveniences arise in our reasoning from that shortcut.

1.1.7.8 For this is one of the most extraordinary features of the present matter. After the mind has produced an individual idea on which we reason, the accompanying custom, revived by the general or abstract term, readily suggests some other individual if we happen to form a piece of reasoning that does not agree with it. Thus suppose we mention the word "triangle" and form the idea of a particular equilateral one to correspond to it, and then go on to assert that the three angles of a triangle are equal to each other. The other individuals, the scalene and isosceles triangles we overlooked at first, immediately crowd in on us and make us see that this proposition is false, although it is true of the idea we had formed. If the mind does not always suggest these ideas when the occasion calls for them, that comes from some imperfection in its faculties. Such an imperfection is often the source of false reasoning and sophistry. But this happens mainly with ideas that are abstruse and compound. On other occasions the custom is more complete, and we seldom fall into such errors.

1.1.7.9 Indeed, the custom is so complete that the very same idea may be attached to several different words and used in different reasonings without any danger of error. Thus the idea of an equilateral triangle one inch high may serve us when we talk of a figure, of a rectilinear figure, of a regular figure, of a triangle, and of an equilateral triangle. In this case, then, all these terms are accompanied by the same idea. But since they are usually applied over a wider or narrower range, each excites its own particular habits. In this way they keep the mind ready to make sure that no conclusion is drawn that is contrary to any of the ideas usually included under them.

1.1.7.10 Before those habits have become entirely perfect, the mind may perhaps not be content with forming the idea of just one individual. It may run over several, in order to understand its own meaning and the range of the collection it means to express by the general term. To fix the meaning of the word "fig-

ure," we may turn over in our minds the ideas of circles, squares, parallelograms, and triangles of different sizes and proportions, and not rest on any one image or idea. However this may be, certain things are clear. We form the idea of individuals whenever we use a general term. We can seldom or never exhaust these individuals. And those that remain are represented only by means of the habit by which we recall them whenever some present occasion requires it. This, then, is the nature of our abstract ideas and general terms, and this is how we account for the paradox mentioned above, *that some ideas are particular in their nature, but general in their representation*. A particular idea becomes general by being attached to a general term. That is, it is attached to a term that, through a customary conjunction, is related to many other particular ideas and readily calls them up in the imagination.

1.1.7.11 The only difficulty that can remain on this subject must concern the custom that so readily recalls every particular idea we may need, and that is set off by any word or sound to which we commonly attach it. In my view, the best way to give a satisfactory explanation of this act of the mind is to produce other instances that are analogous to it, and other principles that make its operation easier. To explain the ultimate causes of our mental actions is impossible. It is enough if we can give a satisfactory account of them from experience and analogy.

1.1.7.12 First, then, I observe that when we mention some large number, such as a thousand, the mind generally has no adequate idea of it. It has only a power of producing such an idea through its adequate idea of the decimals under which the number is included. This imperfection in our ideas, however, is never felt in our reasoning, which seems to be an instance parallel to the present one of universal ideas.

1.1.7.13 Second, we have several instances of habits that can be revived by one single word. Think of a person who has learned by rote some passages of a speech, or a number of verses. When he cannot manage to recollect the whole, the single word or expression it begins with will remind him of it.

1.1.7.14 Third, I believe everyone who examines the state of his mind in reasoning will agree with me that we do not attach distinct and complete ideas to every term we use. In talking of government, church, negotiation, or conquest, we seldom spread out in our minds all the simple ideas of which these complex ones are composed. It is worth noting, however, that despite this imperfection we can avoid talking nonsense on these subjects. We can perceive any inconsistency among the ideas just as well as if we had a full grasp of them. Thus suppose that, instead of saying that in war the weaker side always resorts to negotiation, we were to say that it always resorts to conquest. The custom we have acquired of attributing certain relations to ideas still follows the words and makes us see the absurdity of that proposition immediately. It works in the same way that one particular idea may serve us in reasoning about other ideas, however different from it in several respects.

1.1.7.15 Fourth, the individuals are gathered together and placed under a general term because of the resemblance they bear to each other. So this relation must make it easier for them to enter the imagination and must make them come to mind more readily when needed. And indeed, if we consider the ordinary course of thought, whether in reflection or in conversation, we will find good reason to be satisfied on this point. Nothing is more admirable than the readiness with which the imagination suggests its ideas and presents them at the very instant they become necessary or useful. The fancy runs from one end of the universe to the other in gathering the ideas that belong to any subject. One would think the whole intellectual world of ideas was laid open to our view at once, and that all we did was pick out the ones best suited to our purpose. Yet there may be no ideas present except the very ones that are gathered in this way by a kind of magical faculty in the soul. This faculty is always most perfect in the greatest geniuses, and is properly what we call a genius. Yet it cannot be explained, even by the utmost efforts of human understanding.

1.1.7.16 Perhaps these four reflections may help remove all the difficulties facing the hypothesis I have proposed about abstract ideas, which is so contrary to the one that has prevailed in philosophy until now. But to tell the truth, I place my chief confidence in what I have already proved about the impossibility of general ideas as they are usually explained. We must certainly look for some new system on this point, and there is plainly no other than the one I have proposed. If ideas are particular in their nature and at the same time finite in number, it is only by custom that they can become general in their representation and contain an infinite number of other ideas under them.

1.1.7.17 Before I leave this subject, I will use the same principles to explain the distinction of reason that is so much talked about, and so little understood, in the Schools. Of this kind is the distinction between figure and the body figured, or between motion and the body moved. The difficulty of explaining this distinction arises from the principle explained above, that all ideas that are different are separable. For it follows that if the figure is different from the body, their ideas must be separable as well as distinguishable. If they are not different, their ideas can be neither separable nor distinguishable. What, then, is meant by a distinction of reason, since it implies neither a difference nor a separation?

1.1.7.18 To remove this difficulty we must turn to the explanation of abstract ideas given above. In reality a figure and the body figured are neither distinguishable, nor different, nor separable. It is certain, then, that the mind would never have dreamed of distinguishing them if it had not observed that even within this simplicity there might be many different resemblances and relations. Thus when a globe of white marble is presented to us, we receive only the impression of a white color arranged in a certain form, and we are unable to separate and distinguish the color from the form. But later we observe a globe of black marble and a cube of white, and compare them with our former object. We then find two separate resemblances in what formerly seemed, and really is, perfectly inseparable. After

a little more practice of this kind, we begin to distinguish the figure from the color by a distinction of reason. That is, we consider the figure and color together, since they are in effect the same and indistinguishable, but still view them in different aspects, according to the resemblances they are capable of. When we want to consider only the figure of the globe of white marble, we in reality form an idea of both the figure and the color, but tacitly turn our eye to its resemblance to the globe of black marble. In the same way, when we want to consider only its color, we turn our view to its resemblance to the cube of white marble. By this means we accompany our ideas with a kind of reflection that custom makes us largely unaware of. Someone who asks us to consider the figure of a globe of white marble without thinking of its color is asking for something impossible. What he means is that we should consider the figure and color together, while still keeping in view the resemblance to the globe of black marble, or to any other globe of whatever color or substance.

Book I, Part 2: Of the ideas of space and time

Hume argues that space and time are not infinitely divisible, and asks where the idea of existence comes from.

SECT. I. OF THE INFINITE DIVISIBILITY OF OUR IDEAS OF SPACE AND TIME

1.2.1.1 Whatever has the air of a paradox and runs contrary to the first and most unprejudiced notions of mankind is often eagerly embraced by philosophers. They take it to show the superiority of their science, which could discover opinions so remote from ordinary conception. On the other hand, anything put before us that causes surprise and wonder gives the mind such satisfaction that it indulges itself in those pleasant emotions. It will never be persuaded that its pleasure is entirely without foundation. From these dispositions in philosophers and their disciples arises the mutual accommodation between them: the former supply such a plenty of strange and unaccountable opinions, and the latter so readily believe them. I cannot give a clearer instance of this mutual accommodation than the doctrine of infinite divisibility. I will begin this subject of the ideas of space and time by examining it.

1.2.1.2 It is universally agreed that the capacity of the mind is limited and can never reach a full and adequate conception of infinity. Even if this were not agreed, it would be evident enough from the plainest observation and experience. It is also obvious that whatever can be divided to infinity must consist of an infinite number of parts. It is impossible to set any limit to the num-

ber of parts without at the same time setting a limit to the division. It takes hardly any inference to conclude from this that the idea we form of any finite quality is not infinitely divisible. By proper distinctions and separations we can trace this idea back to lesser ones that will be perfectly simple and indivisible. In rejecting an infinite capacity in the mind, we suppose that it can come to an end in dividing its ideas, and there is no possible way to evade the evidence of this conclusion.

1.2.1.3 It is certain, therefore, that the imagination reaches a minimum. It can call up in itself an idea of which it cannot conceive any subdivision, and which cannot be diminished without being totally annihilated. When you tell me about the thousandth and the ten-thousandth part of a grain of sand, I have a distinct idea of these numbers and of their different proportions. But the images I form in my mind to represent the things themselves are no different from each other. Nor are they smaller than the image by which I represent the grain of sand itself, which is supposed to be so vastly larger than they are. What consists of parts is distinguishable into them, and what is distinguishable is separable. But whatever we may imagine about the thing, the idea of a grain of sand is not distinguishable or separable into twenty different ideas, much less into a thousand, ten thousand, or an infinite number of them.

1.2.1.4 The case is the same with the impressions of the senses as with the ideas of the imagination. Put a spot of ink on paper, fix your eye on that spot, and back away until at last you lose sight of it. It is plain that the moment before it vanished, the image or impression was perfectly indivisible. The tiny parts of distant bodies produce no sensible impression, but not because no rays of light strike our eyes. It is because they are removed beyond the distance at which their impressions were reduced to a minimum and could not be diminished any further. A microscope or telescope that makes them visible does not produce any new rays of light. It only spreads out those that were always flowing from them. In this way it both gives parts to impressions that appear simple and uncompounded to the naked eye,

and brings up to a minimum what was previously imperceptible.

1.2.1.5 From this we can see the error of the common opinion that the capacity of the mind is limited in both directions. That opinion holds that the imagination cannot form an adequate idea of what goes beyond a certain degree of smallness, as well as of greatness. But nothing can be smaller than some of the ideas we form in the fancy and the images that appear to the senses, since there are ideas and images that are perfectly simple and indivisible. The only defect of our senses is that they give us out-of-proportion images of things. They represent as tiny and uncompounded what is really large and composed of a vast number of parts. We are not aware of this mistake. We take the impressions of the tiny objects that appear to the senses to be equal or nearly equal to the objects. Then, finding by reason that there are other objects vastly smaller, we too hastily conclude that these are smaller than any idea of our imagination or impression of our senses. This much, however, is certain: we can form ideas that are no larger than the smallest atom of the animal spirits of an insect a thousand times smaller than a mite. We ought rather to conclude that the difficulty lies in enlarging our conceptions enough to form an accurate notion of a mite, or even of an insect a thousand times smaller than a mite. For in order to form an accurate notion of these animals, we must have a distinct idea representing every part of them. On the system of infinite divisibility, this is utterly impossible. On the system of indivisible parts or atoms, it is extremely difficult because of the vast number and multiplicity of those parts.[1]

INFINITE DIVISIBILITY OF SPACE AND TIME

Since our ideas of extension are not infinitely divisible, neither are space and time themselves.

1.2.2.1 Wherever ideas are adequate representations of objects, the relations, contradictions, and agreements of the ideas all apply

to the objects. We can observe in general that this is the foundation of all human knowledge. But our ideas are adequate representations of the smallest parts of extension. However many divisions and subdivisions we suppose these parts to have reached, they can never become smaller than some of the ideas we form. The plain consequence is that whatever appears impossible and contradictory when we compare these ideas must really be impossible and contradictory, with no further excuse or evasion.

1.2.2.2 Everything capable of being infinitely divided contains an infinite number of parts. Otherwise the division would be cut short by the indivisible parts we would immediately arrive at. So if any finite extension is infinitely divisible, it can be no contradiction to suppose that a finite extension contains an infinite number of parts. Conversely, if it is a contradiction to suppose that a finite extension contains an infinite number of parts, no finite extension can be infinitely divisible. But I easily convince myself that this latter supposition is absurd by considering my clear ideas. I first take the smallest idea I can form of a part of extension. Being certain that there is nothing smaller than this idea, I conclude that whatever I discover by means of it must be a real quality of extension. I then repeat this idea once, twice, three times, and so on. I find that the compound idea of extension arising from this repetition keeps growing, becoming double, triple, quadruple, and so on. At last it swells to a considerable size, larger or smaller in proportion as I repeat the same idea more or fewer times. When I stop adding parts, the idea of extension stops growing. If I were to carry on the addition to infinity, I clearly see that the idea of extension would also have to become infinite. On the whole, I conclude that the idea of an infinite number of parts is individually the same idea as that of an infinite extension. No finite extension is capable of contain-

1 "Animal spirits" were the fine fluid that early modern physiology supposed to flow through the nerves and brain.

ing an infinite number of parts, and consequently no finite extension is infinitely divisible.[2]

1.2.2.3 I may add another argument, put forward by a well-known author,[3] which seems to me very strong and beautiful. It is evident that existence in itself belongs only to unity. It never applies to number except on account of the units of which the number is composed. Twenty men may be said to exist, but only because one, two, three, four, and so on exist. If you deny the existence of the latter, that of the former naturally falls with it. It is therefore utterly absurd to suppose that any number exists and yet deny the existence of units. According to the common view of metaphysicians, extension is always a number and never resolves itself into any unit or indivisible quantity. It follows that extension can never exist at all. It is useless to reply that any determinate quantity of extension is a unit, but one that admits of an infinite number of fractions and is inexhaustible in its subdivisions. For by the same rule these twenty men may be considered as a unit. The whole globe of the earth, indeed the whole universe, may be considered as a unit. That term unity is merely a fictitious label that the mind may apply to any quantity of objects it gathers together. Such a unity can no more exist alone than number can, since it is in reality a true number. But the unity that can exist alone, and whose existence is necessary to that of all number, is of another kind. It must be perfectly indivisible and incapable of being resolved into any smaller unity.

1.2.2.4 All this reasoning applies to time as well, along with an additional argument worth noting. It is a property inseparable

2 HUME'S NOTE. It has been objected to me that infinite divisibility supposes only an infinite number of *proportional* parts, not of *aliquot* parts, and that an infinite number of proportional parts does not make up an infinite extension. But this distinction is entirely frivolous. Whether these parts are called *aliquot* or *proportional*, they cannot be smaller than the tiny parts we conceive. Therefore they cannot form a smaller extension when joined together.

3 HUME'S NOTE. Monsieur *Malezieu*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Nicolas de Malézieu (1650–1727), French scholar, author of *Elements of Geometry* (1705).

from time, and one that in a way constitutes its essence, that each of its parts follows another and that none of them, however contiguous, can ever coexist. The year 1737 cannot coincide with the present year 1738, and for the same reason every moment must be distinct from another and either later or earlier than it. It is certain, then, that time, as it exists, must be composed of indivisible moments. For suppose that in time we could never come to an end of division, and that each moment, as it follows another, were not perfectly single and indivisible. Then there would be an infinite number of coexistent moments, or parts of time, which I believe everyone will admit is an outright contradiction.

1.2.2.5 The infinite divisibility of space implies that of time, as is evident from the nature of motion. So if the latter is impossible, the former must be equally so.

1.2.2.6 I have no doubt that even the most stubborn defender of the doctrine of infinite divisibility will readily admit that these arguments are difficulties, and that it is impossible to answer them in a way that is perfectly clear and satisfactory. But here we may note that nothing could be more absurd than the practice of calling something a difficulty when it claims to be a demonstration, and trying in that way to evade its force and evidence. With probabilities, difficulties can arise, and one argument can counterbalance another and diminish its authority. It is not so with demonstrations. A demonstration, if it is sound, admits of no opposing difficulty. If it is not sound, it is a mere sophism and so can never be a difficulty. It is either irresistible or has no force at all. In a question like this, then, talk of objections and replies, and of weighing arguments against each other, amounts to a confession. It confesses either that human reason is nothing but a play of words, or that the person who talks this way lacks the capacity for such subjects. Demonstrations may be hard to understand because of the abstractness of the subject. But once they are understood, they can never have difficulties of a kind that will weaken their authority.

1.2.2.7 It is true that mathematicians like to say that there are equally strong arguments on the other side of the question here, and that the doctrine of indivisible points is also open to unanswerable objections. Before I examine these arguments and objections in detail, I will take them here as a whole. I will try, by a short and decisive reason, to prove at once that they cannot possibly have any sound foundation.

1.2.2.8 It is an established maxim in metaphysics that whatever the mind clearly conceives includes the idea of possible existence. In other words, nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible. We can form the idea of a golden mountain, and from that conclude that such a mountain may actually exist. We can form no idea of a mountain without a valley, and therefore we regard it as impossible.

1.2.2.9 Now it is certain that we have an idea of extension; otherwise why would we talk and reason about it? It is likewise certain that this idea, as conceived by the imagination, though divisible into parts or lesser ideas, is not infinitely divisible and does not consist of an infinite number of parts, for that exceeds the grasp of our limited capacities. Here, then, is an idea of extension that consists of parts or lesser ideas that are perfectly indivisible. Consequently this idea implies no contradiction. Consequently it is possible for extension really to exist in conformity with it. And consequently all the arguments used against the possibility of mathematical points are mere scholastic quibbles, unworthy of our attention.

1.2.2.10 We can carry these consequences one step further and conclude that all the supposed demonstrations of the infinite divisibility of extension are equally sophistical. For it is certain that these demonstrations cannot be sound without proving the impossibility of mathematical points, and to claim to prove that is an evident absurdity.

OTHER QUALITIES OF SPACE AND TIME

The idea of space copies colored or tangible points; the idea of time copies a succession of perceptions.

1.2.3.1 No discovery could have come more fortunately for settling all controversies about ideas than the one mentioned above. That discovery is that impressions always come before ideas, and that every idea the imagination is furnished with first makes its appearance in a corresponding impression. These latter perceptions are all so clear and evident that they admit of no controversy. Many of our ideas, by contrast, are so obscure that it is almost impossible even for the mind that forms them to say exactly what their nature and composition are. Let us apply this principle in order to discover more about the nature of our ideas of space and time.

1.2.3.2 When I open my eyes and turn them to the objects around me, I perceive many visible bodies. When I shut them again and consider the distance between these bodies, I acquire the idea of extension. Every idea is derived from some impression that is exactly similar to it. So the impressions similar to this idea of extension must be either sensations derived from sight or internal impressions arising from these sensations.

1.2.3.3 Our internal impressions are our passions, emotions, desires, and aversions. None of these, I believe, will ever be claimed to be the model from which the idea of space is derived. So nothing remains but the senses to convey this original impression to us. Now what impression do our senses convey to us here? This is the main question, and it decides the nature of the idea beyond appeal.

1.2.3.4 The table in front of me is enough on its own, just by being seen, to give me the idea of extension. This idea, then, is borrowed from, and represents, some impression that appears to the senses at this moment. But my senses convey to me only the impressions of colored points arranged in a certain way. If the eye is aware of anything more, I ask that it be pointed out to

me. But if it is impossible to show anything more, we can conclude with certainty that the idea of extension is nothing but a copy of these colored points and of the manner of their appearance.

1.2.3.5 Suppose that the points were purple in the extended object, or composition of colored points, from which we first received the idea of extension. It follows that every time we repeated that idea, we would not only place the points in the same order relative to each other. We would also give them that precise color, the only one we are acquainted with. But later we experience the other colors, such as violet, green, red, white, and black, along with all their different combinations. We find a resemblance in the arrangement of the colored points they are composed of. So we leave out the peculiarities of color as far as possible and base an abstract idea solely on that arrangement of points, or manner of appearance, in which they agree. The resemblance may even extend beyond the objects of one sense, and the impressions of touch may be found similar to those of sight in the arrangement of their parts. Even then, the abstract idea can still represent both, because of their resemblance. All abstract ideas are really nothing but particular ones considered in a certain light. But because they are attached to general terms, they are able to represent a vast variety. They can include objects that are alike in some respects and yet in others very far apart.

1.2.3.6 The idea of time is derived from the succession of our perceptions of every kind: ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensation. It will therefore give us an example of an abstract idea that includes a still greater variety than the idea of space does. And yet it is represented in the fancy by some particular individual idea of a determinate quantity and quality.

1.2.3.7 Just as we receive the idea of space from the arrangement of visible and tangible objects, so we form the idea of time from the succession of ideas and impressions. It is impossible for time alone ever to make its appearance or be noticed by the

mind. A man sound asleep, or deeply absorbed in one thought, is unaware of time. The same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination according to how quickly or slowly his perceptions follow each other. It has been remarked by a[4] great philosopher that our perceptions have certain limits in this respect. These are fixed by the original nature and constitution of the mind, and beyond them no influence of external objects on the senses can ever speed up or slow down our thought. If you whirl a burning coal around rapidly, it will present to the senses the image of a circle of fire. There will seem to be no interval of time between its revolutions, simply because our perceptions cannot follow each other as rapidly as motion can be imparted to external objects. Wherever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even if there is a real succession in the objects. From these phenomena, as well as from many others, we may conclude that time cannot appear to the mind either alone or accompanied by a steady, unchanging object. It is always discovered through some *perceivable* succession of changeable objects.

1.2.3.8 To confirm this we may add the following argument, which seems to me perfectly decisive and convincing. It is evident that time or duration consists of different parts; otherwise we could not conceive a longer or shorter duration. It is also evident that these parts do not coexist, since having coexisting parts belongs to extension and is what distinguishes it from duration. Now time is composed of parts that do not coexist. An unchanging object produces only coexistent impressions, so it produces none that can give us the idea of time. Consequently that idea must be derived from a succession of changeable objects, and time in its first appearance can never be separated from such a succession.

1.2.3.9 We have found, then, that time in its first appearance to the mind is always joined with a succession of changeable objects, and that otherwise it can never come to our notice. We must now examine whether it can be conceived without our

4 HUME'S NOTE. Mr. *Locke*.

conceiving any succession of objects, and whether it can form a distinct idea in the imagination all by itself.

1.2.3.10 To know whether objects that are joined in an impression are inseparable in idea, we need only consider whether they are different from each other. If they are, they can plainly be conceived apart. Everything that is different is distinguishable, and everything that is distinguishable can be separated, according to the maxims explained above. If, on the contrary, they are not different, they are not distinguishable; and if they are not distinguishable, they cannot be separated. But this is exactly the case with time, compared with our successive perceptions. The idea of time is not derived from a particular impression mixed in with others and plainly distinguishable from them. It arises entirely from the manner in which impressions appear to the mind, without being one of them. Five notes played on a flute give us the impression and idea of time, though time is not a sixth impression presented to the hearing or to any other sense. Nor is it a sixth impression that the mind finds in itself by reflection. These five sounds, appearing in this particular manner, arouse no emotion in the mind and produce no feeling of any kind which, once observed, could give rise to a new idea. For that is what is needed to produce a new idea of reflection. The mind could go over all its ideas of sensation a thousand times and never extract from them any new original idea, unless nature has so framed its faculties that it feels some new original impression arise from that contemplation. But here the mind only notices the manner in which the different sounds appear. It can afterward consider that manner without considering these particular sounds, and can join it to any other objects. It certainly must have ideas of some objects; without them it could never arrive at any conception of time. For time, since it does not appear as any primary, distinct impression, can plainly be nothing but different ideas, or impressions, or objects arranged in a certain manner—that is, following one another.

1.2.3.11 I know some people claim that the idea of duration applies, in the proper sense, to objects that are perfectly

unchangeable, and I take this to be the common opinion of philosophers and ordinary people alike. But to be convinced that it is false, we need only reflect on the conclusion just reached: the idea of duration is always derived from a succession of changeable objects, and can never be conveyed to the mind by anything steadfast and unchangeable. For it inevitably follows that, since the idea of duration cannot be derived from such an object, it can never properly or exactly be applied to it, and nothing unchangeable can ever be said to have duration. Ideas always represent the objects or impressions from which they are derived, and can never represent or be applied to anything else without a fiction. By what fiction we apply the idea of time even to what is unchangeable, and suppose, as people commonly do, that duration is a measure of rest as well as of motion, we will consider later.[5]

1.2.3.12 There is another very decisive argument that establishes the present doctrine about our ideas of space and time. It rests only on the simple principle that our ideas of them are compounded of indivisible parts. This argument may be worth examining.

1.2.3.13 Since every idea that is distinguishable is also separable, let us take one of the simple, indivisible ideas that make up the complex idea of extension. Let us separate it from all the others, consider it by itself, and form a judgment about its nature and qualities.

1.2.3.14 It is plainly not the idea of extension. The idea of extension consists of parts, and this idea, by hypothesis, is perfectly simple and indivisible. Is it, then, nothing? That is absolutely impossible. The complex idea of extension, which is real, is composed of such ideas. If they were so many nonentities, there would be a real existence composed of nonentities, which is absurd. So here I must ask: what is our idea of a simple and indivisible point? It is no wonder if my answer seems somewhat new, since the question itself has hardly ever been thought of.

5 HUME'S NOTE. Section 5.

We are used to arguing about the nature of mathematical points, but seldom about the nature of their ideas.

1.2.3.15 The idea of space is conveyed to the mind by two senses, sight and touch. Nothing ever appears extended that is not either visible or tangible. The complex impression that represents extension consists of several smaller impressions that are indivisible to the eye or to touch. These may be called impressions of atoms or corpuscles endowed with color and solidity. But this is not all. These atoms must not only be colored or tangible in order to reveal themselves to our senses. We must also retain the idea of their color or tangibility in order to grasp them with our imagination. Only the idea of their color or tangibility can make them conceivable by the mind. Remove the ideas of these sensible qualities, and they are utterly annihilated for thought or imagination.

1.2.3.16 Now, as the parts are, so is the whole. If a point is not considered as colored or tangible, it can convey no idea to us. Consequently the idea of extension, which is composed of the ideas of these points, could never possibly exist. But if the idea of extension really can exist, as we are conscious it does, its parts must also exist. To do so, they must be considered as colored or tangible. We therefore have no idea of space or extension except when we regard it as an object of either sight or touch.

1.2.3.17 The same reasoning will prove that the indivisible moments of time must be filled with some real object or existence. The succession of these forms the duration and makes it conceivable by the mind.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Hume defends indivisible points against objections from the schools and from geometry.

1.2.4.1 Our system concerning space and time has two parts, which are closely connected. The first depends on this chain of reasoning. The capacity of the mind is not infinite. So no idea of exten-

sion or duration consists of an infinite number of parts or smaller ideas. It consists of a finite number, and these are simple and indivisible. It is therefore possible for space and time to exist in conformity with this idea. And if it is possible, it is certain that they actually do exist in conformity with it, since their infinite divisibility is utterly impossible and contradictory.

1.2.4.2 The other part of our system follows from this. The parts into which the ideas of space and time resolve themselves eventually become indivisible. These indivisible parts, being nothing in themselves, are inconceivable unless they are filled with something real and existent. So the ideas of space and time are not separate or distinct ideas. They are merely ideas of the manner or order in which objects exist. In other words, it is impossible to conceive either a vacuum and extension without matter, or a time when there was no succession or change in any real existence. Because these parts of our system are so closely connected, we will examine together the objections that have been raised against both of them. We begin with those against the finite divisibility of extension.

1.2.4.3 I. The first of these objections that I will take up is better suited to proving this connection and dependence of one part on the other than to destroying either of them. It has often been maintained in the Schools that extension must be divisible to infinity, because the system of mathematical points is absurd. That system is absurd, they say, because a mathematical point is a nonentity, and so can never form a real existence by being joined with others. This would be perfectly decisive if there were no middle ground between the infinite divisibility of matter and the nonentity of mathematical points. But there evidently is a middle ground, namely, giving these points a color or solidity. The absurdity of both extremes demonstrates the truth and reality of this middle position. The system of physical points, which is another middle position, is too absurd to need refuting. A real extension, which is what a physical point is supposed to be, can never exist without parts that are different from

each other. And wherever objects are different, they are distinguishable and separable by the imagination.

1.2.4.4 II. The second objection comes from the *penetration* that would be necessary if extension consisted of mathematical points. A simple, indivisible atom that touches another must necessarily penetrate it. It cannot touch it by its external parts, given the very assumption of its perfect simplicity, which rules out all parts. So it must touch it intimately and in its whole essence, *secundum se, tota, et totaliter*—which is the very definition of penetration. But penetration is impossible, and so mathematical points are equally impossible.[6]

1.2.4.5 I answer this objection by putting a more accurate idea of penetration in its place. Suppose two bodies with no empty space inside their boundaries approach each other and unite in such a way that the resulting body is no more extended than either of them. That is what we must mean when we talk of penetration. But clearly this penetration is nothing but the annihilation of one of these bodies and the preservation of the other, without our being able to tell which one is preserved and which annihilated. Before they approach, we have the idea of two bodies. Afterward, we have the idea of only one. The mind cannot retain any notion of difference between two bodies of the same nature existing in the same place at the same time.

1.2.4.6 Taking penetration in this sense, then—as the annihilation of one body when it approaches another—I ask anyone whether he sees any necessity for a colored or tangible point to be annihilated when another colored or tangible point approaches it. On the contrary, does not he clearly perceive that the union of these points produces an object that is compound and divisible? It can be distinguished into two parts, each of which keeps its existence distinct and separate even though it is contiguous to the other. Let him help his imagination along by conceiving these points as being of different colors, the better to keep them from merging and blurring together. A blue point and a red point can surely lie next to each other without any

6 The Latin scholastic formula means "in itself, wholly, and totally."

penetration or annihilation. For if they cannot, what could possibly become of them? Is the red or the blue to be annihilated? Or if these colors unite into one, what new color will their union produce?

1.2.4.7 What chiefly gives rise to these objections, and at the same time makes them so hard to answer satisfactorily, is the natural weakness and unsteadiness of both our imagination and our senses when they deal with such tiny objects. Put a spot of ink on paper and back away until the spot becomes completely invisible. As you come closer again, you will find that the spot first becomes visible at short intervals, and then becomes visible all the time. After that it only gains new strength in its color without growing in size. Later, when it has grown enough to be really extended, the imagination still finds it hard to break it into its component parts, because of the difficulty it has in conceiving so tiny an object as a single point. This weakness affects most of our reasoning on the present subject. It makes it almost impossible to answer intelligibly, and in fitting terms, many questions that may arise about it.

1.2.4.8 III. Many objections have been drawn from mathematics against the indivisibility of the parts of extension. Yet at first sight that science seems rather to favor the present doctrine: if it is opposed to it in its *demonstrations*, it agrees with it perfectly in its definitions. My task now, then, must be to defend the definitions and refute the demonstrations.

1.2.4.9 A surface is defined as length and breadth without depth; a line as length without breadth or depth; a point as what has neither length, breadth, nor depth. Clearly all this is perfectly unintelligible on any assumption except that extension is composed of indivisible points or atoms. How else could anything exist without length, without breadth, or without depth?

1.2.4.10 I find that two different answers have been given to this argument, and in my opinion neither is satisfactory. The first is that the objects of geometry—the surfaces, lines, and points whose proportions and positions it examines—are mere ideas in the mind. Not only did they never exist in nature, but they never

can. They never did exist, because no one will claim to draw a line or make a surface that fully fits the definition. They never can exist, because we can produce demonstrations from these very ideas to prove that they are impossible.

1.2.4.11 But can anything more absurd and contradictory than this reasoning be imagined? Whatever can be conceived by a clear and distinct idea necessarily implies the possibility of existence. Anyone who claims to prove that its existence is impossible, by an argument drawn from the clear idea, is in fact saying that we have no clear idea of it because we have a clear idea. It is pointless to look for a contradiction in anything the mind distinctly conceives. If it implied a contradiction, it could never be conceived.

1.2.4.12 There is therefore no middle ground between granting at least the possibility of indivisible points and denying that we have any idea of them. The second answer to the preceding argument is based on this latter principle. It has been claimed[7] that although it is impossible to conceive a length without any breadth, we can, by an abstraction without a separation, consider the one without attending to the other. In the same way, we can think of the length of the road between two towns and overlook its breadth. The length is inseparable from the breadth both in nature and in our minds. But this does not rule out a partial consideration and a distinction of reason, in the way explained above.

1.2.4.13 In refuting this answer I will not dwell on the argument I have already explained sufficiently: that if the mind cannot reach a minimum in its ideas, its capacity must be infinite, so as to take in the infinite number of parts that would make up its idea of any extension. Here I will try to find some new absurdities in this reasoning.

1.2.4.14 A surface bounds a solid; a line bounds a surface; a point bounds a line. But I claim that if the ideas of a point, line, or surface were not indivisible, we could never conceive these bound-

7 HUME'S NOTE. *L'Art de penser*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. That is, Arnauld and Nicole's *Port-Royal Logic* (1662).

aries. Suppose these ideas are infinitely divisible, and then let the imagination try to fix itself on the idea of the last surface, line, or point. It immediately finds this idea breaking into parts. When it seizes the last of these parts, it loses its hold through a new division, and so on to infinity, with no possibility of reaching a final idea. The number of fractions brings it no nearer the last division than the first idea it formed. Every particle slips from our grasp by a new fraction, like quicksilver when we try to seize it. But in fact there must be something that bounds the idea of every finite quantity. And this bounding idea cannot itself consist of parts or smaller ideas; otherwise it would be the last of its parts that finished the idea, and so on. This clearly proves that the ideas of surfaces, lines, and points do not admit of any division: those of surfaces in depth, those of lines in breadth and depth, and those of points in any dimension.

1.2.4.15 The Schoolmen were so aware of the force of this argument that some of them maintained that nature has mixed a number of mathematical points in among the particles of matter that are divisible to infinity, in order to give bodies a boundary. Others evaded the force of this reasoning with a heap of unintelligible quibbles and distinctions. Both of these opponents equally concede the victory. A man who hides admits his enemy's superiority as plainly as one who honestly surrenders his weapons.

1.2.4.16 So it appears that the definitions of mathematics destroy the supposed demonstrations. If we have the idea of indivisible points, lines, and surfaces conforming to the definition, their existence is certainly possible. But if we have no such idea, we can never conceive the boundary of any figure—and without that conception there can be no geometrical demonstration.

1.2.4.17 But I go further. I maintain that none of these demonstrations can carry enough weight to establish such a principle as infinite divisibility. The reason is that, when it comes to such tiny objects, they are not properly demonstrations at all, since they are built on ideas that are not exact and maxims that are not precisely true. When geometry decides anything about the

proportions of quantity, we should not look for the utmost precision and exactness. None of its proofs reach that far. It takes the dimensions and proportions of figures correctly, but roughly and with some freedom. Its errors are never significant, and it would not err at all if it did not aspire to such absolute perfection.

1.2.4.18 First I ask mathematicians what they mean when they say that one line or surface is *equal* to, or *greater* or *less* than, another. Let any of them answer, whatever sect he belongs to, and whether he holds that extension is composed of indivisible points or of quantities divisible to infinity. This question will embarrass both.

1.2.4.19 Few if any mathematicians defend the hypothesis of indivisible points, and yet these have the readiest and most accurate answer to the present question. They need only reply that lines or surfaces are equal when the numbers of points in each are equal, and that as the proportion of the numbers varies, the proportion of the lines and surfaces varies too. But although this answer is accurate as well as obvious, I can affirm that this standard of equality is entirely useless. We never decide that objects are equal or unequal to each other by any such comparison. The points that make up any line or surface, whether perceived by sight or touch, are so tiny and so blended together that it is utterly impossible for the mind to count them. So such a count will never give us a standard by which to judge proportions. No one will ever be able to establish by exact counting that an inch has fewer points than a foot, or a foot fewer than an ell or any larger measure. That is why we seldom or never treat this as the standard of equality or inequality.[8]

1.2.4.20 As for those who imagine that extension is divisible to infinity, they cannot possibly use this answer, or fix the equality of any line or surface by counting its component parts. On their hypothesis, the smallest figures as well as the largest contain an infinite number of parts. And infinite numbers, strictly speaking, can be neither equal nor unequal to each other. So the

8 An ell was an old measure of length, in England 45 inches.

equality or inequality of any portions of space can never depend on any proportion in the number of their parts. True, it may be said that the inequality of an ell and a yard consists in the different numbers of feet they are composed of, and the inequality of a foot and a yard in the number of inches. But the quantity we call an inch in the one is assumed to be equal to what we call an inch in the other. And the mind cannot possibly find this equality by going on to infinity with these references to smaller quantities. So clearly we must in the end fix on some standard of equality other than counting the parts.

1.2.4.21 Some people[9] claim that equality is best defined by congruence: any two figures are equal when, if one is placed on the other, all their parts correspond to and touch each other. To judge this definition, let us consider that equality is a relation. So it is not, strictly speaking, a property of the figures themselves, but arises merely from the comparison the mind makes between them. If, then, it consists in this imagined application and mutual contact of parts, we must at least have a distinct notion of these parts and must conceive their contact. Now clearly, in this conception we would push these parts down to the greatest smallness that can possibly be conceived, since the contact of large parts would never make the figures equal. But the smallest parts we can conceive are mathematical points. So this standard of equality is the same as the one taken from the equality of the number of points, which we have already found to be accurate but useless. We must therefore look elsewhere for a solution to the present difficulty.

1.2.4.22 Many philosophers refuse to assign any standard of equality. They assert that it is enough to present two objects that are equal to give us a correct notion of this proportion. All definitions, they say, are fruitless without the perception of such objects; and where we perceive such objects, we no longer need any definition. I entirely agree with this reasoning. I assert that

9 HUME'S NOTE. See Dr. Barrow's *Mathematical Lectures*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Isaac Barrow (1630–77), English mathematician and Newton's teacher at Cambridge.

the only useful notion of equality or inequality comes from the whole united appearance of particular objects and the comparison of them. Clearly the eye—or rather the mind—is often able at a single glance to determine the proportions of bodies and pronounce them equal to, or greater or less than, each other, without examining or comparing the number of their tiny parts. Such judgments are not only common but in many cases certain and infallible. When a yard measure and a foot measure are presented, the mind can no more question that the first is longer than the second than it can doubt the clearest and most self-evident principles.

1.2.4.23 There are, then, three proportions that the mind distinguishes in the general appearance of its objects, and it calls them greater, less, and equal. But although its decisions about these proportions are sometimes infallible, they are not always so. Our judgments of this kind are no more free from doubt and error than those on any other subject. We often correct our first opinion on review and reflection. We pronounce objects equal that we at first thought unequal, and regard an object as smaller that earlier seemed larger than another. Nor is this the only correction these judgments of our senses undergo. We often discover our error by placing the objects side by side. Where that is impractical, we use some common and invariable measure which, applied to each in turn, tells us their different proportions. And even this correction can itself be corrected. It admits of different degrees of exactness, depending on the nature of the instrument with which we measure the bodies and the care we take in comparing them.

1.2.4.24 So the mind becomes accustomed to these judgments and their corrections. It finds that the same proportion that gives two figures the appearance to the eye that we call equality also makes them correspond to each other and to any common measure they are compared with. We then form a mixed notion of equality, derived from both the looser and the stricter methods of comparison. But we are not content with this. Sound reason convinces us that there are bodies vastly smaller than

those that appear to the senses, and a false reason would persuade us that there are bodies infinitely smaller. So we clearly see that we possess no instrument or technique of measurement that can secure us from all error and uncertainty. We are aware that adding or removing one of these tiny parts cannot be detected either in appearance or by measurement. And we imagine that two figures that were equal before cannot be equal after this removal or addition. So we suppose some imaginary standard of equality, by which appearances and measurements are exactly corrected and the figures brought entirely to that proportion. This standard is plainly imaginary. For since the very idea of equality is the idea of a particular appearance corrected by juxtaposition or a common measure, the notion of any correction beyond what we have the instruments and skill to make is a mere fiction of the mind, and as useless as it is incomprehensible. But although this standard is only imaginary, the fiction is still very natural. Nothing is more usual than for the mind to go on in this way with any action, even after the reason that first led it to begin has ceased. This appears very plainly with regard to time. We clearly have no exact method of determining the proportions of its parts—not even one as exact as we have for extension. Yet the various corrections of our measures, and their different degrees of exactness, have given us an obscure and implicit notion of a perfect and complete equality. The case is the same in many other subjects. A musician finds his ear growing more refined every day, and corrects himself by reflection and attention. He carries on the same act of the mind even when the subject gives out, and entertains the notion of a complete *third* or *octave* without being able to say where he gets his standard. A painter forms the same fiction with regard to colors, and an engineer with regard to motion. The one imagines light and shade, the other fast and slow, to be capable of exact comparison and equality beyond the judgments of the senses.[10]

1.2.4.25 We can apply the same reasoning to *curved* and *straight* lines. Nothing is more evident to the senses than the difference

10 Hume's *tierce* is the musical interval of a third.

between a curved line and a straight one, and there are no ideas we form more easily than these. But however easily we form them, it is impossible to give any definition of them that will fix the precise boundary between them. When we draw lines on paper or any continuous surface, there is a certain order in which the lines run from one point to another so as to produce the overall impression of a curved or straight line. But this order is entirely unknown, and nothing is observed but the united appearance.[11] Thus even on the system of indivisible points we can form only a distant notion of some unknown standard for these objects. On the system of infinite divisibility we cannot go even that far. We are reduced merely to the general appearance as the rule by which we judge lines to be curved or straight. But although we can give no perfect definition of these lines, nor produce any very exact method of distinguishing one from the other, this does not stop us from correcting the first appearance. We do so by a more careful consideration, and by comparison with some rule whose straightness we are more confident of from repeated trials. And it is from these corrections, and by carrying on the same action of the mind even when its reason fails us, that we form the loose idea of a perfect standard for these figures, without being able to explain or understand it.

1.2.4.26 It is true that mathematicians claim to give an exact definition of a straight line when they say it is the shortest path between two points. But in the first place, I observe that this is more properly the discovery of one of the properties of a straight line than an accurate definition of it. For I ask anyone whether, when a straight line is mentioned, he does not immediately think of a particular appearance, and whether it is not only by accident that he considers this property. A straight line can be understood by itself. But this definition is unintelligible without comparison with other lines, which we conceive to be longer. In common life it is established as a maxim that the straightest way is always the shortest. That would be as absurd

11 Hume's "right line" is rendered "straight line" throughout, and his "plain surface" as "plane surface."

as saying the shortest way is always the shortest, if our idea of a straight line were not different from our idea of the shortest way between two points.

1.2.4.27 Second, I repeat what I have already established: we have no more precise an idea of equality and inequality, shorter and longer, than of a straight line or a curve. Consequently the one can never give us a perfect standard for the other. An exact idea can never be built on ideas that are loose and indeterminate.

1.2.4.28 The idea of a plane surface is no more capable of a precise standard than the idea of a straight line, and we have no other means of distinguishing such a surface than its general appearance. It is useless for mathematicians to represent a plane surface as produced by the flowing of a straight line. It will immediately be objected that our idea of a surface is as independent of this way of forming a surface as our idea of an ellipse is of the idea of a cone. The idea of a straight line is no more precise than that of a plane surface. A straight line may flow irregularly and so form a figure quite different from a plane. So we must suppose it to flow along two straight lines that are parallel to each other and in the same plane—which is a description that explains a thing by itself and goes around in a circle.

1.2.4.29 It appears, then, that the ideas most essential to geometry—namely, those of equality and inequality, of a straight line and a plane surface—are far from exact and determinate, as we commonly conceive them. If the case is at all doubtful, we are unable to tell when particular figures are equal, when a line is straight, and when a surface is plane. More than that, we can form no idea of that proportion, or of these figures, that is firm and invariable. We still appeal to the weak and fallible judgment we make from the appearance of objects and correct with a compass or common measure. And if we add the supposition of any further correction, it is one that is either useless or imaginary. It would be pointless to resort to the usual move and invoke the supposition of a deity whose omnipotence might enable him to

form a perfect geometrical figure and draw a straight line without any curve or bend. The ultimate standard of these figures comes from nothing but the senses and imagination. So it is absurd to talk of any perfection beyond what these faculties can judge of, since the true perfection of anything consists in its conformity to its standard.

1.2.4.30 Now, since these ideas are so loose and uncertain, I would like to ask any mathematician what infallible assurance he has—not only of the more intricate and obscure propositions of his science, but of its most common and obvious principles. How can he prove to me, for instance, that two straight lines cannot have a common segment? Or that it is impossible to draw more than one straight line between any two points? If he tells me that these opinions are obviously absurd and contrary to our clear ideas, I would answer this. I do not deny that where two straight lines incline toward each other at a perceptible angle, it is absurd to imagine them having a common segment. But suppose these two lines approach each other at the rate of an inch in twenty leagues. Then I see no absurdity in asserting that when they meet they become one. For by what rule or standard, I ask you, do you judge when you assert that the line in which I have supposed them to coincide cannot make the same straight line with the two lines that form so small an angle between them? You must surely have some idea of a straight line that this line does not fit. Do you mean, then, that it does not take its points in the same order and by the same rule that is peculiar and essential to a straight line? If so, I must point out that, by judging this way, you grant that extension is composed of indivisible points (which is perhaps more than you intend). Besides this, I say, I must point out that this is not the standard from which we form the idea of a straight line. And even if it were, our senses and imagination are not firm enough to determine when such an order is violated or preserved. The original standard of a straight line is really nothing but a certain general appearance. And clearly straight lines can be made to coincide

with each other and still correspond to this standard, even when it is corrected by every means either practicable or imaginable.

1.2.4.31 Whichever way mathematicians turn, this dilemma still confronts them. Suppose they judge equality, or any other proportion, by the accurate and exact standard—namely, counting the tiny indivisible parts. Then they both use a standard that is useless in practice and actually establish the indivisibility of extension, which they are trying to explode. Or suppose they use, as they usually do, the inaccurate standard derived from comparing objects by their general appearance, corrected by measuring and juxtaposition. Then their first principles, though certain and infallible, are too coarse to support such subtle inferences as they commonly draw from them. The first principles are founded on the imagination and senses. The conclusion, therefore, can never go beyond these faculties, much less contradict them.

1.2.4.32 This may open our eyes a little. It may let us see that no geometrical demonstration of the infinite divisibility of extension can have as much force as we naturally attribute to any argument backed by such magnificent claims. At the same time we may learn why geometry falls short in evidence on this single point, while all its other reasoning commands our fullest assent and approval. And indeed it seems more necessary to give the reason for this exception than to show that we really must make it, and regard all the mathematical arguments for infinite divisibility as utterly sophistical. For since no idea of quantity is infinitely divisible, no more glaring absurdity can be imagined than trying to prove that quantity itself admits of such division—and to prove it by means of ideas that are directly opposed to it on that very point. And as this absurdity is very glaring in itself, so every argument founded on it brings a new absurdity with it and involves an evident contradiction.

1.2.4.33 As examples I might give those arguments for infinite divisibility that are drawn from the point of contact. I know that every mathematician will refuse to be judged by the diagrams he draws on paper. These, he will tell us, are rough sketches that

serve only to convey more easily certain ideas, which are the true foundation of all our reasoning. I am satisfied with this, and willing to rest the controversy on these ideas alone. So I ask our mathematician to form the ideas of a circle and a straight line as accurately as possible. Then I ask whether, in conceiving their contact, he can conceive them as touching at a mathematical point, or whether he must necessarily imagine them coinciding for some stretch. Whichever side he chooses, he lands himself in equal difficulties. If he affirms that in tracing these figures in his imagination he can imagine them touching only at a point, he grants the possibility of that idea, and consequently of the thing. If he says that in conceiving the contact of these lines he must make them coincide, he thereby admits that geometrical demonstrations are fallacious when carried beyond a certain degree of smallness. For he certainly has such demonstrations against the coincidence of a circle and a straight line. In other words, he can prove an idea—namely, coincidence—to be *incompatible* with two other ideas, those of a circle and a straight line, even though at the same time he admits that these ideas are inseparable.

THE IDEA OF A VACUUM

Hume argues that we have no idea of empty space and explains why we think we do.

1.2.5.1 Suppose the second part of my system is true: the idea of space or extension is nothing but the idea of visible or tangible points distributed in a certain order. It follows that we can form no idea of a vacuum, that is, of space where there is nothing visible or tangible. This gives rise to three objections. I will examine them together, because the answer I give to one follows from the one I will use for the others.

1.2.5.2 First, it may be said that people have argued for many ages about a vacuum and a plenum without being able to settle the matter. Even today philosophers feel free to take either side as their fancy leads them. But whatever basis there may be for a

controversy about the things themselves, it may be claimed that the very dispute settles the question about the idea. People could not possibly have reasoned so long about a vacuum, refuting or defending it, without having a notion of what they refuted or defended.[12]

1.2.5.3 Second, if this argument is disputed, the reality, or at least the possibility, of the idea of a vacuum may be proved by the following reasoning. Every idea is possible that is a necessary and infallible consequence of ideas that are possible. Now, even if we grant that the world is at present a plenum, we can easily conceive it deprived of motion, and this idea will certainly be granted to be possible. It must also be granted possible to conceive any part of matter annihilated by the omnipotence of the deity while the other parts remain at rest. For every idea that is distinguishable is separable by the imagination, and every idea that is separable by the imagination can be conceived as existing separately. So clearly the existence of one particle of matter no more implies the existence of another than a square shape in one body implies a square shape in every body. Granting this, I now ask what results from combining these two possible ideas of rest and annihilation. What must we conceive to follow when all the air and subtle matter in a room is annihilated, supposing the walls stay the same, without any motion or alteration? Some metaphysicians answer that since matter and extension are the same, the annihilation of the one necessarily implies the annihilation of the other. Since there is now no distance between the walls of the room, they touch each other, just as my hand touches the paper directly in front of me. But although this answer is very common, I challenge these metaphysicians to conceive the matter according to their hypothesis —to imagine the floor and ceiling, along with all the opposite sides of the room, touching each other while they remain at rest and keep the same position. For how can the two walls that run from south to north touch each other while they touch the opposite ends of the two walls that run from east to west? And

12 A plenum is space completely filled with matter.

how can the floor and ceiling ever meet while they are separated by the four walls that stand across them? If you change their position, you suppose a motion. If you conceive anything between them, you suppose a new creation. But if we keep strictly to the two ideas of rest and annihilation, clearly the idea that results from them is not that of a contact of parts, but something else—which is concluded to be the idea of a vacuum.

1.2.5.4 The third objection pushes the matter still further. It asserts that the idea of a vacuum is not only real and possible but necessary and unavoidable. This assertion is based on the motion we observe in bodies. Such motion, it is maintained, would be impossible and inconceivable without a vacuum into which one body must move in order to make room for another. I will not expand on this objection, since it belongs mainly to natural philosophy, which lies outside our present sphere.

1.2.5.5 To answer these objections, we must dig fairly deep and consider the nature and origin of several ideas, so as not to argue without fully understanding the subject of the controversy. Clearly the idea of darkness is not a positive idea. It is merely the negation of light—or, more properly, of colored and visible objects. When a man who has his sight turns his eyes in every direction while entirely deprived of light, he receives no perception other than one he shares with a person born blind. And such a person certainly has no idea of either light or darkness. The consequence is that it is not from the mere removal of visible objects that we receive the impression of extension without matter, and that the idea of utter darkness can never be the same as the idea of a vacuum.

1.2.5.6 Suppose, again, that a man is held up in the air and gently carried along by some invisible power. Clearly he senses nothing, and this unvarying motion never gives him the idea of extension, or indeed any idea at all. Even if we suppose he moves his limbs back and forth, this cannot give him that idea. In that case he feels a certain sensation or impression whose parts follow one another in succession, and which may give him

the idea of time. But those parts are certainly not arranged in the way needed to convey the idea of space or extension.

1.2.5.7 Since, then, it appears that darkness and motion, with everything visible and tangible entirely removed, can never give us the idea of extension without matter, or of a vacuum, the next question is whether they can convey this idea when mixed with something visible and tangible.

1.2.5.8 Philosophers commonly grant that all bodies that show themselves to the eye appear as if painted on a flat surface, and that we discover their different degrees of distance from us more by reason than by the senses. When I hold up my hand in front of me and spread my fingers, they are separated as completely by the blue color of the sky as they could be by any visible object I could place between them. So to find out whether sight can convey the impression and idea of a vacuum, we must suppose that, in complete darkness, luminous bodies are presented to us whose light reveals only those bodies themselves, without giving us any impression of the objects around them.

1.2.5.9 We must make a parallel supposition about the objects of touch. It will not do to suppose that all tangible objects are completely removed. We must allow that something is perceived by touch; that after an interval, and a motion of the hand or other sense organ, another object of touch is met with; that on leaving that one, we meet another; and so on, as often as we like. The question is whether these intervals give us the idea of extension without body.

1.2.5.10 To begin with the first case: clearly, when only two luminous bodies appear to the eye, we can perceive whether they are joined or separate, and whether they are separated by a large or a small distance. If this distance varies, we can perceive it increase or decrease as the bodies move. But since in this case the distance is not anything colored or visible, it may be thought that here is a vacuum or pure extension, not only intelligible to the mind but plain to the senses themselves.

1.2.5.11 This is our natural and most familiar way of thinking, but a little reflection will teach us to correct it. We may observe that when two bodies appear where before there was complete darkness, the only detectable change is in the appearance of these two objects. Everything else remains as before, a complete negation of light and of every colored or visible object. This is true not only of what may be called remote from these bodies, but also of the very distance between them. That distance is nothing but darkness, or the negation of light—without parts, without composition, unvarying and indivisible. Now since this distance causes no perception different from what a blind man receives from his eyes, or what reaches us in the darkest night, it must share the same properties. And since blindness and darkness give us no ideas of extension, the dark and indistinguishable distance between two bodies cannot possibly produce that idea.

1.2.5.12 The only difference between absolute darkness and the appearance of two or more visible luminous objects lies, as I said, in the objects themselves and in the way they affect our senses. Three things produce the only perceptions from which we can judge the distance: the angles that the rays of light flowing from the objects form with each other; the motion the eye has to make in passing from one to the other; and the different parts of the organs that are affected by them. But since each of these perceptions is simple and indivisible, they can never give us the idea of extension.

1.2.5.13 We may illustrate this by considering the sense of touch, and the imaginary distance or interval set between tangible or solid objects. I suppose two cases. In the first, a man is held up in the air and moves his limbs back and forth without meeting anything tangible. In the second, a man feels something tangible, leaves it, and, after a motion he is aware of, perceives another tangible object. I then ask: what does the difference between these two cases consist in? No one will hesitate to say that it consists merely in perceiving those objects, and that the sensation arising from the motion is the same in both cases.

That sensation cannot convey an idea of extension to us when it is unaccompanied by some other perception. So it can no more give us that idea when mixed with the impressions of tangible objects, since that mixture makes no change in it.

1.2.5.14 Motion and darkness, whether alone or accompanied by tangible and visible objects, convey no idea of a vacuum or of extension without matter. Yet they are the causes of our false belief that we can form such an idea. For there is a close relation between that motion and darkness and a real extension, or composition of visible and tangible objects.

1.2.5.15 First, we may observe that two visible objects appearing in the midst of utter darkness affect the senses in the same way as if the distance between them were filled with visible objects that give us a true idea of extension. They form the same angle by the rays that flow from them and meet in the eye. The sensation of motion is likewise the same when nothing tangible lies between two bodies as when we feel a compound body whose different parts are placed one beyond another.

1.2.5.16 Second, we find by experience how two bodies behave when they are placed so as to affect the senses in the same way as two other bodies that have a certain extent of visible objects between them. Such bodies can receive that same extent between them without any perceptible impulse or penetration, and without any change in the angle under which they appear to the senses. Similarly, there are cases where we cannot feel one object after another without an interval, and without perceiving the sensation we call motion in our hand or sense organ. Experience shows us that the same object may then be felt with the same sensation of motion, together with the impression of solid and tangible objects coming in between and accompanying that sensation. In other words, an invisible and intangible distance may be converted into a visible and tangible one, without any change in the distant objects.

1.2.5.17 Third, we may observe, as another relation between these two kinds of distance, that they have nearly the same effects on every natural phenomenon. All qualities, such as

heat, cold, light, attraction, and so on, diminish in proportion to the distance. And little difference is observed whether this distance is marked out by compound and perceptible objects, or is known only by the way the distant objects affect the senses.

1.2.5.18 Here, then, are three relations between the distance that conveys the idea of extension and the other kind, which is not filled with any colored or solid object. The distant objects affect the senses in the same way whether separated by the one distance or the other; the second kind of distance is found capable of receiving the first; and they both diminish the force of every quality equally.

1.2.5.19 These relations between the two kinds of distance readily explain why the one has so often been taken for the other, and why we imagine we have an idea of extension without the idea of any object of sight or touch. For we may lay it down as a general maxim in this science of human nature that wherever there is a close relation between two ideas, the mind is very apt to mistake them, and to use the one for the other in all its discourse and reasoning. This phenomenon occurs on so many occasions, and matters so much, that I cannot resist stopping a moment to examine its causes. I will only say in advance that we must distinguish carefully between the phenomenon itself and the causes I shall assign to it. We must not imagine that because the causes are uncertain, the phenomenon is uncertain too. The phenomenon may be real even if my explanation is fanciful. The falsehood of the one does not follow from the falsehood of the other—though we may observe that it is very natural for us to draw that inference, which is itself a clear instance of the very principle I am trying to explain.

1.2.5.20 When I accepted the relations of resemblance, contiguity, and causation as principles of union among ideas without examining their causes, it was more in pursuit of my first maxim—that in the end we must rest content with experience—than for lack of something attractive and plausible I might have displayed on the subject. It would have been easy to perform an imaginary dissection of the brain and show why, when we con-

ceive any idea, the animal spirits run into all the neighboring traces and rouse up the other ideas related to it. I passed up whatever advantage I might have drawn from this topic in explaining the relations of ideas. But I am afraid I must resort to it here to account for the mistakes that arise from these relations. The mind is endowed with a power of calling up any idea it pleases. Whenever it sends the spirits into the region of the brain where the idea is located, these spirits always call up the idea, provided they run precisely into the proper traces and rummage through the cell that belongs to that idea. But their motion is seldom direct, and naturally swerves a little to one side or the other. So the animal spirits fall into the neighboring traces and present other, related ideas instead of the one the mind first wanted to survey. We are not always aware of this change. Continuing the same train of thought, we make use of the related idea that is presented to us and employ it in our reasoning as if it were the one we asked for. This is the cause of many mistakes and sophistries in philosophy, as one would naturally suppose and as it would be easy to show, if there were need.

1.2.5.21 Of the three relations mentioned above, resemblance is the most fertile source of error; indeed, there are few mistakes in reasoning that do not borrow heavily from it. Resembling ideas are not only related to each other; the actions of the mind we use in considering them differ so little that we cannot tell them apart. This last circumstance is of great importance. We may observe in general that wherever the actions of the mind in forming any two ideas are the same or resembling, we are very apt to confuse these ideas and take the one for the other. We shall see many instances of this as this treatise proceeds. Resemblance is the relation that most readily produces a mistake in ideas, but the other two, causation and contiguity, may also contribute to the same effect. We could cite the figures of speech of poets and orators as sufficient proof of this, if it were as usual as it is reasonable to draw our arguments from that quarter in metaphysical subjects. But metaphysicians might

think this beneath their dignity. So I shall borrow a proof from an observation that can be made about most of their own discourses: it is common for people to use words in place of ideas, and to talk instead of think in their reasoning. We use words in place of ideas because the two are usually so closely connected that the mind easily mistakes them. This is also why we substitute the idea of a distance that is considered neither visible nor tangible for extension, which is nothing but a composition of visible or tangible points arranged in a certain order. Both causation and resemblance contribute to this mistake. The first kind of distance is found to be convertible into the second, so in this respect it is a kind of cause. And the similarity in the way the two kinds affect the senses and diminish every quality forms the relation of resemblance.

1.2.5.22 After this chain of reasoning and explanation of my principles, I am now ready to answer all the objections that have been raised, whether drawn from metaphysics or mechanics. The frequent disputes about a vacuum, or extension without matter, do not prove the reality of the idea on which the dispute turns. Nothing is more common than to see people deceive themselves on this point, especially when some close relation presents them with another idea that may occasion their mistake.

1.2.5.23 We may give almost the same answer to the second objection, drawn from combining the ideas of rest and annihilation. When everything in the room is annihilated and the walls remain unmoved, the room must be conceived much as it is now, when the air that fills it is not an object of the senses. To the eye, this annihilation leaves that fictitious distance which is revealed by the different parts of the organ that are affected and by the degrees of light and shade. To touch, it leaves the distance that consists in a sensation of motion in the hand or some other part of the body. It would be pointless to look any further. Whichever way we turn this subject, we shall find that these are the only impressions such an object can produce after the sup-

posed annihilation. And it has already been noted that impressions can give rise only to ideas that resemble them.

1.2.5.24 A body lying between two others may be supposed annihilated without producing any change in the bodies on either side of it. So it is easy to conceive how it might be created anew and yet produce just as little alteration. Now the motion of a body has much the same effect as its creation: the distant bodies are no more affected in the one case than in the other. This is enough to satisfy the imagination, and proves there is no contradiction in such a motion. Then experience comes into play to persuade us that two bodies situated in the way described above really do have such a capacity for receiving body between them, and that nothing prevents the invisible and intangible distance from being converted into one that is visible and tangible. However natural that conversion may seem, we cannot be sure it is possible until we have had experience of it.

1.2.5.25 So I seem to have answered the three objections mentioned above. I am aware, though, that few will be satisfied with these answers, and that people will immediately propose new objections and difficulties. It will probably be said that my reasoning is beside the point, and that I explain only the way objects affect the senses, without trying to account for their real nature and operations. Although nothing visible or tangible lies between two bodies, we find *by experience* that the bodies may be placed in the same way with regard to the eye, and require the same motion of the hand in passing from one to the other, as if they were divided by something visible and tangible. This invisible and intangible distance is also found by experience to contain a capacity for receiving body, or for becoming visible and tangible. That is the whole of my system. In no part of it have I tried to explain the cause that separates bodies in this way and gives them a capacity for receiving others between them without any impulse or penetration.

1.2.5.26 I answer this objection by pleading guilty. I confess that my intention was never to penetrate into the nature of bodies or explain the secret causes of their operations. Besides the fact

that this is no part of my present purpose, I fear such an enterprise is beyond the reach of human understanding. We can never claim to know body except by those external properties that reveal themselves to the senses. As for those who attempt anything more, I cannot approve of their ambition until I see, in at least one instance, that they have succeeded. For now, I am content to know perfectly the way objects affect my senses, and their connections with one another, as far as experience informs me of them. This is enough for the conduct of life. It is also enough for my philosophy, which claims only to explain the nature and causes of our perceptions, that is, our impressions and ideas.[13]

1.2.5.27 I shall conclude this subject of extension with a paradox, which is easily explained by the foregoing reasoning. The paradox is this. Suppose you choose to give the name of a vacuum to

13 HUME'S NOTE. As long as we confine our speculations to the appearances of objects to our senses, without inquiring into their real nature and operations, we are safe from all difficulties and can never be troubled by any question. Suppose someone asks whether the invisible and intangible distance lying between two objects is something or nothing. It is easy to answer that it is *something*, namely, a property of the objects, which affect the *senses* in this particular way. Suppose someone asks whether two objects with such a distance between them touch or not. We may answer that this depends on the definition of the word *touch*. If objects are said to touch when there is nothing *perceptible* between them, then these objects touch. If objects are said to touch when their *images* strike neighboring parts of the eye, and when the hand *feels* both objects one after the other without any intervening motion, then these objects do not touch. The appearances of objects to our senses are all consistent. No difficulties can ever arise except from the obscurity of the terms we use.

If we carry our inquiry beyond the appearances of objects to the senses, I fear most of our conclusions will be full of skepticism and uncertainty. Suppose someone asks whether the invisible and intangible distance is always full of body, or of something that might become visible or tangible if our organs were improved. I must admit that I find no very decisive arguments on either side, though I lean toward the opposite view, as being more in keeping with common and popular notions. If *the Newtonian* philosophy is rightly understood, it will be found to mean no more than this. A vacuum is asserted: that is, bodies are said to be placed in such a way as to receive bodies between them without impulse or penetration. The real nature of this position of bodies is unknown. We know only its effects on the senses and its power of receiving body. Nothing suits that philosophy better than a modest skepticism, to a certain degree, and a frank admission of ignorance on subjects that exceed all human capacity.

the invisible and intangible distance—or in other words, to the capacity for becoming a visible and tangible distance. Then extension and matter are the same, and yet there is a vacuum. If you will not give it that name, then motion is possible in a plenum without an endless series of impulses, without returning in a circle, and without penetration. But however we express ourselves, we must always admit that we have no idea of any real extension without filling it with perceptible objects and conceiving its parts as visible or tangible.

1.2.5.28 Consider the doctrine that time is nothing but the manner in which some real objects exist. We may observe that it is open to the same objections as the similar doctrine concerning extension. Suppose the fact that we dispute and reason about a vacuum is enough to prove that we have the idea of one. Then for the same reason we must have the idea of time without any changing existence, since no subject of dispute is more frequent and common. But it is certain that we really have no such idea. For where would it come from? Does it arise from an impression of sensation or of reflection? Point it out to us clearly, so that we may know its nature and qualities. But if you cannot point out any such impression, you may be certain you are mistaken when you imagine you have such an idea.

1.2.5.29 It is impossible to show the impression from which the idea of time without a changing existence is derived. But we can easily point out the appearances that make us fancy we have that idea. There is a continual succession of perceptions in our mind, so the idea of time is always present with us. When we consider an unchanging object at five o'clock and look at the same object at six, we are apt to apply that idea to it just as if every moment were marked by a different position or an alteration of the object. The first and second appearances of the object, when compared with the succession of our perceptions, seem as far apart as if the object had really changed. To this we may add two things experience shows us. The object was capable of undergoing that many changes between these appearances. And the unchanging, or rather fictitious, duration has the

same effect on every quality, increasing or diminishing it, as the succession that is obvious to the senses. Because of these three relations we are apt to confuse our ideas and imagine we can form the idea of a time and duration without any change or succession.

EXISTENCE AND EXTERNAL EXISTENCE

The idea of existence adds nothing to the idea of an object, and we cannot conceive anything beyond perceptions.

1.2.6.1 Before we leave this subject, it may be worthwhile to explain the ideas of existence and of external existence, which have their difficulties just as the ideas of space and time do. Once we understand perfectly all the particular ideas that may enter into our reasoning, we shall be better prepared for the examination of knowledge and probability.

1.2.6.2 There is no impression or idea of any kind, of which we are conscious or have any memory, that is not conceived as existing. Clearly, the most perfect idea and assurance of being is derived from this consciousness. From this we may form a dilemma, the clearest and most conclusive imaginable. We never remember any idea or impression without attributing existence to it. So the idea of existence must either be derived from a distinct impression joined to every perception or object of our thought, or must be the very same as the idea of the perception or object.

1.2.6.3 This dilemma follows plainly from the principle that every idea arises from a similar impression, and our choice between its two alternatives is just as clear. Far from there being any distinct impression accompanying every impression and every idea, I do not think there are any two distinct impressions that are inseparably joined. Certain sensations may be united at one time, but we soon find that they can be separated and presented apart. And so, although every impression and idea we remember is considered as existing, the idea of existence is not derived from any particular impression.

1.2.6.4 The idea of existence, then, is the very same as the idea of whatever we conceive to exist. To reflect on anything simply and to reflect on it as existing are no different from each other. That idea, when joined to the idea of any object, adds nothing to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive as existing. Any idea we choose to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we choose to form.

1.2.6.5 Whoever denies this must point out the distinct impression from which the idea of entity is derived, and must prove that this impression is inseparable from every perception we believe to exist. We may conclude without hesitation that this is impossible.

1.2.6.6 Our earlier reasoning[14] about distinguishing ideas without any real difference between them will be of no help here. That kind of distinction is based on the different resemblances that the same simple idea may have to several different ideas. But no object can be presented that resembles some object in respect of its existence and differs from others in that same respect, since every object that is presented must necessarily exist.

1.2.6.7 A similar reasoning will account for the idea of external existence. Philosophers universally agree, and it is also fairly obvious in itself, that nothing is ever really present to the mind except its perceptions, that is, impressions and ideas. External objects become known to us only through the perceptions they occasion. To hate, to love, to think, to feel, to see—all this is nothing but to perceive.

1.2.6.8 Now nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and all ideas are derived from something previously present to the mind. It follows that we cannot so much as conceive or form an idea of anything specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us fix our attention outside ourselves as much as we can; let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the farthest limits of the universe. We never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can we conceive any kind of existence

14 HUME'S NOTE. Part I, Section 7.

except those perceptions that have appeared within that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, and we have no idea except what is produced there.

1.2.6.9 Suppose external objects are *specifically* different from our perceptions. Then the furthest we can go toward conceiving them is to form a relative idea of them, without claiming to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking, we do not suppose them specifically different. We only attribute to them different relations, connections, and durations. But more on this later.[15]

15 HUME'S NOTE. Part IV, Section 2.

Book I, Part 3: Of knowledge and probability

Hume analyzes causal inference, belief, probability and necessary connection, and the reasoning of animals.

SECT. I. OF KNOWLEDGE

1.3.1.1 There are seven[1] different kinds of philosophical relation: *resemblance, identity, relations of time and place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quality, contrariety*, and *causation*. These relations may be divided into two classes: those that depend entirely on the ideas we compare, and those that may change without any change in the ideas. It is from the idea of a triangle that we discover the relation of equality that its three angles bear to two right angles. And this relation does not vary as long as our idea stays the same. By contrast, the relations of contiguity and distance between two objects may be changed merely by a change in their location, without any change in the objects themselves or in their ideas. And location depends on a hundred different accidents that the mind cannot foresee. The same holds for identity and causation. Two objects may be numerically different even if they perfectly resemble each other and appear in the same place at different times. And the power by which one object produces another can never be discovered merely from their idea. So cause and effect are clearly relations we learn about from experience, not from any abstract reasoning or reflection. There is not a single phenomenon, even the

1 HUME'S NOTE. Part I, Section 5.

simplest, that can be accounted for from the qualities of the objects as they appear to us, or that we could foresee without the help of our memory and experience.

1.3.1.2 It appears, then, that of these seven philosophical relations, only four depend solely on ideas and can therefore be objects of knowledge and certainty. These four are *resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality*, and *proportions in quantity or number*. Three of these relations are discoverable at first sight and belong more properly to the province of intuition than of demonstration. When objects resemble each other, the resemblance strikes the eye, or rather the mind, at once, and seldom needs a second look. The same is true of contrariety and of the degrees of any quality. No one can doubt for a moment that existence and non-existence destroy each other and are perfectly incompatible and contrary. It is impossible to judge exactly between degrees of a quality such as color, taste, heat, or cold when the difference between them is very small. Yet it is easy to decide that one is greater or less than another when the difference is considerable. And we always make this decision at first sight, without any inquiry or reasoning.

1.3.1.3 We might proceed in the same way in fixing proportions of quantity or number. We might observe at a glance that one number or figure is greater or less than another, especially where the difference is very great and striking. Equality or any exact proportion is different: a single look lets us only guess at it. The exceptions are very small numbers, or very limited portions of extension, which are grasped in an instant and where we see that we cannot possibly fall into any considerable error. In all other cases we must settle the proportions somewhat loosely, or proceed in a more artificial way.

1.3.1.4 I have already observed that geometry, the art by which we fix the proportions of figures, never achieves perfect precision and exactness, even though it far surpasses the loose judgments of the senses and imagination in both universality and exactness. Its first principles are still drawn from the general appearance of objects. And that appearance can never give us

any security when we consider the prodigious minuteness nature is capable of. Our ideas seem to give us perfect assurance that no two straight lines can have a common segment. But if we examine these ideas, we shall find that they always presuppose a perceptible inclination of the two lines. Where the angle they form is extremely small, we have no standard of a straight line precise enough to assure us of the truth of this proposition. The same holds for most of the primary decisions of mathematics.

1.3.1.5 That leaves algebra and arithmetic as the only sciences in which we can carry a chain of reasoning to any degree of intricacy and still preserve perfect exactness and certainty. We possess a precise standard by which we can judge the equality and proportion of numbers. By whether or not they correspond to that standard, we determine their relations without any possibility of error. When two numbers are so combined that one always has a unit answering to every unit of the other, we pronounce them equal. It is for lack of such a standard of equality in extension that geometry can hardly be considered a perfect and infallible science.

1.3.1.6 But here it may be well to head off a difficulty. I have claimed that geometry falls short of the perfect precision and certainty peculiar to arithmetic and algebra, and yet surpasses the imperfect judgments of our senses and imagination. The reason I attribute any defect to geometry is that its original and fundamental principles are derived merely from appearances. Someone may think that this defect must always cling to it, and keep it from ever achieving greater exactness in comparing objects or ideas than our eye or imagination alone can attain. I grant that this defect clings to it to the extent of keeping it from ever aspiring to full certainty. But these fundamental principles depend on the simplest and least deceptive appearances. So they give their consequences a degree of exactness that those consequences could not have on their own. The eye cannot possibly determine that the angles of a chiliagon equal 1996 right angles, or make any guess that comes close to this proportion. But when it determines that straight lines cannot coincide, or that we can-

not draw more than one straight line between two given points, its mistakes can never be of any consequence.[2] And this is the nature and use of geometry: to carry us back to appearances so simple that they cannot lead us into any considerable error.

1.3.1.7 I shall take this occasion to offer a second observation about our demonstrative reasonings, suggested by the same subject of mathematics. Mathematicians commonly claim that the ideas which are their objects are of so refined and spiritual a nature that the fancy cannot conceive them. Such ideas, they say, must be grasped by a pure and intellectual view, of which only the superior faculties of the soul are capable. The same notion runs through most parts of philosophy. It is chiefly used to explain our abstract ideas. It is meant to show how we can form an idea of a triangle, for instance, that is neither isosceles nor scalene, nor limited to any particular length and proportion of sides. It is easy to see why philosophers are so fond of this notion of certain spiritual and refined perceptions. By means of it they cover up many of their absurdities, and can refuse to submit to the verdict of clear ideas by appealing to ideas that are obscure and uncertain. But to destroy this trick, we need only reflect on the principle so often insisted on, that all our ideas are copied from our impressions. From this we may immediately conclude that since all impressions are clear and precise, the ideas copied from them must be of the same nature. They can never, except through our own fault, contain anything so dark and intricate. An idea is by its very nature weaker and fainter than an impression. But since it is the same in every other respect, it cannot involve any very great mystery. If its weakness makes it obscure, it is our job to remedy that defect as far as possible by keeping the idea steady and precise. Until we have done so, it is useless to lay claim to reasoning and philosophy.

2 A chiliagon is a thousand-sided figure; its interior angles do sum to 1996 right angles.

PROBABILITY AND THE IDEA OF CAUSE

Only causation takes us beyond the senses, so Hume looks for the impression behind its idea.

1.3.2.1 This is all I think it necessary to observe about the four relations that are the foundation of science. The other three do not depend on the idea, and may be absent or present even while the idea stays the same. It will be proper to explain them in more detail. These three relations are identity, situations in time and place, and causation.

1.3.2.2 All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but a comparison, and a discovery of the relations, either constant or inconstant, that two or more objects bear to each other. We may make this comparison when both objects are present to the senses, when neither is present, or when only one is. When both objects are present to the senses along with the relation, we call this perception rather than reasoning. In this case there is no exercise of thought, or any action properly speaking, but a merely passive admission of the impressions through the organs of sensation. On this way of thinking, we ought not to count as reasoning any of the observations we may make concerning identity and the relations of time and place. In none of them can the mind go beyond what is immediately present to the senses, either to discover the real existence or the relations of objects. Only causation produces a connection that assures us, from the existence or action of one object, that it was followed or preceded by some other existence or action. Nor can the other two relations ever be used in reasoning, except insofar as they either affect or are affected by it. There is nothing in any objects to persuade us that they are either always remote or always contiguous. When we discover from experience and observation that their relation in this respect is invariable, we always conclude there is some secret cause that separates or unites them. The same reasoning extends to identity. We readily suppose that an object may remain individually the same, though it is several

times absent from and present to the senses. We ascribe identity to it, despite the interruption of the perception, whenever we conclude that it would have conveyed an unvarying and uninterrupted perception if we had kept our eye or hand on it constantly. But this conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connection of cause and effect. Otherwise we can have no security that the object has not been changed on us, however much the new object may resemble the one formerly present to the senses. Whenever we discover such a perfect resemblance, we consider whether it is common in that kind of object, and whether any cause could possibly or probably operate to produce the change and the resemblance. Then we form our judgment about the identity of the object according to what we determine about these causes and effects.

1.3.2.3 Here, then, it appears that three relations do not depend on the mere ideas. Of these, causation is the only one that can be traced beyond our senses and inform us of existences and objects we do not see or feel. This relation, therefore, we shall try to explain fully before we leave the subject of the understanding.

1.3.2.4 To begin in an orderly way, we must consider the idea of causation and see from what origin it is derived. It is impossible to reason soundly without fully understanding the idea we are reasoning about. And it is impossible to fully understand any idea without tracing it back to its origin and examining the primary impression from which it arises. Examining the impression gives clarity to the idea; and examining the idea gives a like clarity to all our reasoning.

1.3.2.5 So let us look at any two objects we call cause and effect, and turn them every which way, in order to find the impression that produces an idea of such enormous consequence. At first sight I see that I must not look for it in any of the particular qualities of the objects. Whichever of these qualities I settle on, I find some object that does not possess it and yet falls under the name of cause or effect. And indeed there is nothing existing,

either externally or internally, that is not to be considered either a cause or an effect. Yet it is plain that there is no one quality that belongs to all beings universally and entitles them to that name.

1.3.2.6 The idea of causation, then, must be derived from some relation among objects, and that relation we must now try to discover. I find, in the first place, that whatever objects are considered as causes or effects are contiguous. Nothing can operate at a time or place even slightly removed from the time and place of its own existence. Distant objects may sometimes seem to produce one another. But on examination they are usually found to be linked by a chain of causes that are contiguous among themselves and to the distant objects. And when in some particular instance we cannot discover this connection, we still presume that it exists. We may therefore regard the relation of *contiguity* as essential to that of causation. At least we may suppose it so, in line with the general opinion, until we find a more[3] suitable occasion to clear up this matter by examining which objects are and are not capable of juxtaposition and conjunction.

1.3.2.7 The second relation I shall note as essential to causes and effects is not so universally acknowledged; it is open to some controversy. It is the relation of *priority* in time of the cause before the effect. Some claim that a cause need not absolutely precede its effect. On their view, any object or action, in the very first moment of its existence, may exert its productive quality and give rise to another object or action perfectly simultaneous with itself. But besides the fact that experience seems in most cases to contradict this opinion, we can establish the relation of priority by a kind of inference or reasoning. It is an established maxim in both natural and moral philosophy that an object which exists for any length of time in its full perfection without producing another is not its sole cause. It is assisted by some other principle, which pushes it out of its state of inactivity and makes it exert the energy it secretly possessed. Now if any cause

3 HUME'S NOTE. Part IV, Section 5.

can be perfectly simultaneous with its effect, then by this maxim they must all be so. Any cause that delays its operation for a single moment fails to act at the very time at which it could have acted, and so is not properly a cause. The consequence would be nothing less than the destruction of the succession of causes we observe in the world—indeed, the utter annihilation of time. For if one cause were simultaneous with its effect, and this effect with its effect, and so on, there would plainly be no such thing as succession, and all objects would have to coexist.

1.3.2.8 If this argument seems satisfactory, well and good. If not, I ask the reader to allow me the same liberty I took in the preceding case, of supposing it to be so. For he will find that the matter is of no great importance.

1.3.2.9 I have now discovered, or supposed, that the two relations of contiguity and succession are essential to causes and effects. Here I find myself brought up short, and I can go no further in considering any single instance of cause and effect. When one body strikes another, the motion of the first is regarded as the cause of motion in the second. When we consider these objects with the closest attention, we find only that the one body approaches the other, and that its motion precedes the other's, but without any perceptible interval. It is useless to torment ourselves with further thought and reflection on this subject. We can go no further in considering this particular instance.

1.3.2.10 Suppose someone leaves this instance aside and claims to define a cause by saying it is something that produces something else. He would obviously be saying nothing. For what does he mean by production? Can he give any definition of it that will not be the same as the definition of causation? If he can, I ask that it be produced. If he cannot, he is going in a circle, and offering a synonym instead of a definition.

1.3.2.11 Shall we, then, rest content with these two relations of contiguity and succession, as giving a complete idea of causation? By no means. An object may be contiguous and prior to another without being considered its cause. There is a *necessary*

connection to be taken into account, and that relation is far more important than either of the other two mentioned above.

1.3.2.12 Here again I turn the object around on all sides. I want to discover the nature of this necessary connection and find the impression or impressions from which its idea may be derived. When I look at the known qualities of objects, I immediately find that the relation of cause and effect does not depend on them in the least. When I consider their relations, I can find none but contiguity and succession, which I have already judged imperfect and unsatisfactory. Shall despair of success make me assert that here I possess an idea that is not preceded by any similar impression? That would be too strong a proof of fickleness and inconstancy, since the opposite principle has already been so firmly established as to admit of no further doubt—at least until we have examined the present difficulty more fully.

1.3.2.13 We must therefore do what people do when they are searching for something hidden from them and do not find it where they expected. They beat about all the neighboring fields without any definite aim or plan, hoping that good luck will at last lead them to what they are looking for. We must stop examining directly the nature of the necessary connection that enters into our idea of cause and effect. Instead we must try to find some other questions whose examination may perhaps give us a hint that will help clear up the present difficulty. Two such questions come to mind, which I shall now examine:

1.3.2.14 First, for what reason do we declare it necessary that everything whose existence has a beginning should also have a cause?

1.3.2.15 Second, why do we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects? And what is the nature of the inference we draw from the one to the other, and of the belief we place in it?

1.3.2.16 Before going further, I will only note one thing. The ideas of cause and effect are derived from impressions of reflection as well as from impressions of sensation. For brevity's sake

I usually mention only the latter as the origin of these ideas, but I want whatever I say of them to extend to the former as well. Passions are connected with their objects and with one another, no less than external bodies are connected together. The same relation of cause and effect that belongs to one, then, must be common to all of them.

WHY A CAUSE IS ALWAYS NECESSARY

The maxim that whatever begins to exist must have a cause is neither intuitive nor demonstrable.

1.3.3.1 To begin with the first question, about the necessity of a cause: it is a general maxim in philosophy that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of its existence. This is commonly taken for granted in all reasoning, without any proof being given or demanded. It is supposed to be founded on intuition, and to be one of those maxims that people may deny with their lips but cannot really doubt in their hearts. But if we test this maxim by the idea of knowledge explained above, we will find in it no mark of any such intuitive certainty. On the contrary, we will find that it is of a nature quite foreign to that kind of conviction.

1.3.3.2 All certainty arises from the comparison of ideas, and from the discovery of relations that cannot change as long as the ideas remain the same. These relations are *resemblance, proportions in quantity and number, degrees of any quality*, and *contrariety*. None of them is implied in the proposition "Whatever has a beginning also has a cause of existence." That proposition, therefore, is not intuitively certain. At least, anyone who claims it is intuitively certain must deny that these are the only infallible relations, and must find some other relation of that kind implied in it. It will be time enough to examine that relation when he does.

1.3.3.3 But here is an argument that proves at once that the proposition above is neither intuitively nor demonstratively certain. We can never demonstrate that every new existence, or

new modification of existence, must have a cause, without at the same time showing that it is impossible for anything ever to begin to exist without some productive principle. And where the latter proposition cannot be proved, we must give up hope of ever proving the former. Now, we can satisfy ourselves that the latter proposition is utterly incapable of demonstrative proof. All distinct ideas are separable from each other, and the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct. So it will be easy for us to conceive an object as nonexistent at this moment and existent the next, without joining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle. The imagination, therefore, can plainly separate the idea of a cause from the idea of a beginning of existence. Consequently, the actual separation of these objects is possible to this extent: it implies no contradiction or absurdity. So it cannot be refuted by any reasoning from mere ideas—and without such reasoning it is impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause.

1.3.3.4 Accordingly, we will find on examination that every demonstration that has been offered for the necessity of a cause is fallacious and sophistical. Some philosophers[4] say that all the points of time and place at which we can suppose an object to begin to exist are in themselves equal. Unless some cause is peculiar to one time and one place, and thereby determines and fixes the existence, the existence must remain forever in suspense. The object can then never begin to be, for lack of something to fix its beginning. But I ask: is it any harder to suppose that the time and place are fixed without a cause than to suppose that the existence is determined in that way? The first question that arises on this subject is always whether the object shall exist or not; the next, when and where it shall begin to exist. If removing a cause is intuitively absurd in the one case, it must be so in the other. And if that absurdity is not clear without proof in the one case, it will equally require proof in the other. The

4 HUME'S NOTE. Mr. Hobbes.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), English philosopher, author of *Leviathan* (1651).

absurdity of the one supposition, then, can never prove the absurdity of the other, since they stand on the same footing and must stand or fall by the same reasoning.

1.3.3.5 The second argument[5] I find used on this point suffers from the same difficulty. Everything, it is said, must have a cause. For if anything lacked a cause, it would produce *itself*—that is, exist before it existed, which is impossible. But this reasoning is plainly inconclusive. It supposes that in denying a cause we still grant what we expressly deny, namely that there must be a cause. This cause is therefore taken to be the object itself, and that, no doubt, is an evident contradiction. But to say that something is produced—or, to put it more properly, comes into existence—without a cause is not to claim that it is its own cause. On the contrary, excluding all external causes excludes a fortiori the created thing itself. An object that exists absolutely without any cause is certainly not its own cause. And when you assert that the one follows from the other, you assume the very point in question. You take it for granted that it is utterly impossible for anything ever to begin to exist without a cause—that when one productive principle is excluded, we must still resort to another.

1.3.3.6 The case is exactly the same with the third argument[6] that has been used to demonstrate the necessity of a cause. Whatever is produced without any cause is produced by nothing—in other words, has nothing for its cause. But nothing can never be a cause, any more than it can be something, or equal to two right angles. We perceive by intuition that nothing is not equal to two right angles, or is not something. By the same intuition we perceive that it can never be a cause, and so we must perceive that every object has a real cause of its existence.

1.3.3.7 After what I have said about the preceding arguments, I do not think many words will be needed to show the weakness

5 HUME'S NOTE. Dr. Clarke and others.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), English philosopher and theologian.

6 HUME'S NOTE. Mr. Locke.

of this one. They are all founded on the same fallacy and come from the same turn of thought. It is enough to note that when we exclude all causes we really do exclude them. We suppose neither nothing nor the object itself to be the cause of the existence. Consequently, we can draw no argument from the absurdity of these suppositions to prove the absurdity of that exclusion. If everything must have a cause, it follows that when other causes are excluded we must accept either the object itself or nothing as the cause. But whether everything must have a cause or not is the very point in question; and so, by all sound reasoning, it should never be taken for granted.

1.3.3.8 Still more frivolous are those who say that every effect must have a cause because this is implied in the very idea of an effect. Every effect necessarily presupposes a cause, since effect is a relative term and cause is its correlative. But this does not prove that every being must be preceded by a cause. It no more follows than it follows that every man must be married because every husband must have a wife. The real question is whether every object that begins to exist must owe its existence to a cause. I assert that this is neither intuitively nor demonstratively certain, and I hope the arguments above have proved it sufficiently.

1.3.3.9 We do not get our opinion that every new production needs a cause from knowledge or any scientific reasoning. So that opinion must necessarily arise from observation and experience. The next question, then, would naturally be: how does experience give rise to such a principle? But I find it more convenient to fold this question into the following one: why do we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects, and why do we form an inference from one to the other? We shall make that the subject of our further inquiry. It may turn out in the end that the same answer will serve for both questions.

THE PARTS OF CAUSAL REASONING

Every causal inference must rest in the end on an impression of the memory or the senses.

1.3.4.1 In its reasonings from causes or effects, the mind carries its view beyond the objects it sees or remembers. But it must never lose sight of them entirely, or reason merely on its own ideas, without some mixture of impressions—or at least of ideas of the memory, which are equivalent to impressions. When we infer effects from causes, we must establish the existence of those causes. We have only two ways of doing this: either by an immediate perception of our memory or senses, or by an inference from other causes. We must establish those causes in turn in the same way, either by a present impression or by an inference from their causes, and so on, until we arrive at some object that we see or remember. We cannot carry on our inferences to infinity. The only thing that can stop them is an impression of the memory or senses, beyond which there is no room for doubt or inquiry.

1.3.4.2 To give an example, we may choose any point of history and consider why we either believe or reject it. Thus we believe that Caesar was killed in the senate house on the Ides of March. We believe it because this fact is established by the unanimous testimony of historians, who agree in assigning this precise time and place to that event. Here certain characters and letters are present either to our memory or to our senses. We also remember that these characters have been used as the signs of certain ideas. Some of these ideas were in the minds of those who were immediately present at the action and received the ideas directly from its existence. Others were derived from the testimony of others, and that again from other testimony, by a visible gradation, until we arrive at those who were eyewitnesses and spectators of the event. Obviously this whole chain of argument, or connection of causes and effects, is founded in the first place on those characters or letters that are seen or remembered.

Without the authority of either memory or the senses, our whole reasoning would be fanciful and without foundation. In that case every link of the chain would hang on another, but nothing would be fixed to one end of it capable of supporting the whole. Consequently there would be neither belief nor evidence. And this is in fact the case with all hypothetical arguments, or reasonings on a supposition: in them there is neither any present impression nor belief in a real existence.

1.3.4.3 Someone might object that we can reason on our past conclusions or principles without going back to the impressions from which they first arose. I hardly need to point out that this is no fair objection to the present doctrine. For even supposing these impressions were entirely erased from memory, the conviction they produced may still remain. And it is still true that all reasonings about causes and effects are originally derived from some impression. In the same way, the assurance of a demonstration always comes from a comparison of ideas, though it may last after the comparison is forgotten.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SENSES AND MEMORY

Memory differs from imagination only by the greater force and vivacity of its ideas.

1.3.5.1 In this kind of reasoning from causation, then, we use materials that are mixed and heterogeneous in nature, and which, however connected, are still essentially different from each other. All our arguments about causes and effects consist of two things: an impression of the memory or senses, and the idea of the existence that produces the object of the impression, or is produced by it. Here, then, we have three things to explain: first, the original impression; second, the transition to the idea of the connected cause or effect; third, the nature and qualities of that idea.

1.3.5.2 As for impressions that arise from the senses, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, completely inexplicable by human reason. It will always be impossible to decide with certainty

whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or come from the author of our being. Nor does such a question matter in any way for our present purpose. We can draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions whether they are true or false—whether they represent nature accurately or are mere illusions of the senses.

1.3.5.3 When we look for the characteristic that distinguishes the memory from the imagination, we must immediately see that it cannot lie in the simple ideas it presents to us. Both faculties borrow their simple ideas from impressions and can never go beyond these original perceptions. Nor are these faculties any more distinguished from each other by the arrangement of their complex ideas. It is a special property of the memory to preserve the original order and position of its ideas, while the imagination transposes and changes them as it pleases. But this difference is not enough to distinguish them in their operation, or to let us tell one from the other. It is impossible to recall past impressions in order to compare them with our present ideas and see whether their arrangement is exactly similar. The memory, then, is known neither by the order of its complex ideas nor by the nature of its simple ones. It follows that the difference between it and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity. A person may indulge his fancy in making up any past scene of adventures. There would be no way of distinguishing this from a memory of a similar kind if the ideas of the imagination were not fainter and more obscure.

1.3.5.4 It often happens that two people have been involved in some scene of action, and one remembers it much better than the other. He then has all the difficulty in the world making his companion recall it. He runs through several circumstances in vain. He mentions the time, the place, the company, what was said, what was done on all sides, until at last he hits on some lucky circumstance that revives the whole and gives his friend a perfect memory of everything. Here the person who forgets at

first receives all the ideas from the other's account, with the same circumstances of time and place, though he regards them as mere fictions of the imagination. But as soon as the circumstance that touches the memory is mentioned, the very same ideas now appear in a new light, and have, in a way, a different feeling from the one they had before. Without any other change besides the change in feeling, they immediately become ideas of the memory and are assented to.

1.3.5.5 The imagination, then, can represent all the same objects that the memory can offer us, and these faculties are distinguished only by the different feeling of the ideas they present. So it may be worth considering what the nature of that feeling is. And here I believe everyone will readily agree with me that the ideas of the memory are stronger and livelier than those of the fancy. A painter who meant to depict a passion or emotion of any kind would try to get a look at someone moved by a similar emotion. That would enliven his ideas and give them a force and vivacity greater than that of ideas which are mere fictions of the imagination. The more recent this memory is, the clearer the idea. When he tries to return to contemplating his object after a long interval, he always finds its idea much decayed, if not wholly erased. We are often in doubt about ideas of the memory as they become very weak and feeble. When an image is not drawn in the lively colors that mark the memory, we are at a loss to decide whether it comes from the fancy or from the memory. "I think I remember such an event," someone says, "but I am not sure. A long stretch of time has almost worn it out of my memory, and leaves me uncertain whether or not it is simply the offspring of my fancy."

1.3.5.6 An idea of the memory, by losing its force and vivacity, may degenerate so far as to be taken for an idea of the imagination. In the same way, an idea of the imagination may acquire such force and vivacity as to pass for an idea of the memory and counterfeit its effects on belief and judgment. We see this in the case of liars, who by frequently repeating their lies come at last to believe and remember them as realities. In this case, as in

many others, custom and habit have the same influence on the mind as nature, and fix the idea in it with equal force and vigor.

1.3.5.7 It appears, then, that the belief or assent that always accompanies the memory and senses is nothing but the vivacity of the perceptions they present, and that this alone distinguishes them from the imagination. To believe, in this case, is to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory. It is merely the force and liveliness of the perception that constitutes the first act of judgment. This lays the foundation of the reasoning we build on it when we trace the relation of cause and effect.

FROM IMPRESSION TO IDEA

Causal inference rests on constant conjunction, and no reasoning shows that the future will resemble the past.

1.3.6.1 It is easy to see that, in tracing this relation, the inference we draw from cause to effect is not derived merely from a survey of these particular objects. Nor does it come from any insight into their essences that might reveal the dependence of one on the other. No object implies the existence of any other if we consider these objects in themselves and never look beyond the ideas we form of them. Such an inference would amount to knowledge. It would imply that conceiving anything different is an absolute contradiction, and impossible. But since all distinct ideas are separable, there obviously can be no impossibility of that kind. When we pass from a present impression to the idea of some object, we could have separated the idea from the impression and put some other idea in its place.

1.3.6.2 It is therefore by *experience* alone that we can infer the existence of one object from that of another. The nature of experience is this. We remember having had frequent instances of the existence of one kind of object. We also remember that individuals of another kind of object have always accompanied them, in a regular order of contiguity and succession. Thus we remember having seen the kind of object we call flame, and hav-

ing felt the kind of sensation we call heat. We likewise recall their constant conjunction in all past instances. Without any further ceremony, we call the one cause and the other effect, and infer the existence of the one from that of the other. In all the instances from which we learn the conjunction of particular causes and effects, both the causes and the effects have been perceived by the senses and are remembered. But in every case in which we reason about them, only one is perceived or remembered, and the other is supplied in conformity with our past experience.

1.3.6.3 So as we have gone along we have, without noticing it, discovered a new relation between cause and effect. It came when we least expected it and were wholly occupied with another subject. This relation is their *constant conjunction*. Contiguity and succession are not enough to make us declare any two objects to be cause and effect, unless we perceive that these two relations are preserved in several instances. We can now see the advantage of leaving off the direct survey of this relation in order to discover the nature of the necessary connection that makes up so essential a part of it. There is hope that by this means we may at last reach the goal we set ourselves. To tell the truth, though, this newly discovered relation of constant conjunction seems to advance us very little on our way. It implies no more than this: that like objects have always been placed in like relations of contiguity and succession. And it seems evident, at least at first sight, that by this means we can never discover any new idea. We can only multiply the objects of our mind, not enlarge them. It may be thought that what we do not learn from one object we can never learn from a hundred that are all of the same kind and perfectly alike in every circumstance. In one instance our senses show us two bodies, or motions, or qualities in certain relations of succession and contiguity. In the same way, our memory presents us only with a multitude of instances in which we always find like bodies, motions, or qualities in like relations. From the mere repetition of a past impression, even to infinity, no new original idea—such

as that of necessary connection—will ever arise. The number of impressions has no more effect here than if we confined ourselves to a single one. This reasoning seems sound and obvious. But it would be foolish to despair too soon, so we shall continue the thread of our discussion. We have found that after discovering the constant conjunction of any objects we always draw an inference from one object to another. We shall now examine the nature of that inference, and of the transition from the impression to the idea. Perhaps it will turn out in the end that the necessary connection depends on the inference, instead of the inference depending on the necessary connection.

REASON OR IMAGINATION?

Neither demonstration nor probability can justify the step from past instances to unobserved ones.

1.3.6.4 It appears that we pass from an impression present to the memory or senses to the idea of an object we call cause or effect. This transition is founded on past experience, and on our memory of their constant conjunction. The next question, then, is whether experience produces the idea by means of the understanding or of the imagination. Are we determined by reason to make the transition, or by a certain association and relation of perceptions? If reason determined us, it would proceed on the principle that instances of which we have had no experience must resemble those of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature always continues uniformly the same. To clear up this matter, then, let us consider all the arguments on which such a proposition might be supposed to be founded. These must come either from knowledge or from probability. So let us look at each of these degrees of evidence and see whether they yield any sound conclusion of this kind.

1.3.6.5 Our earlier method of reasoning will easily convince us that there can be no demonstrative arguments to prove that the instances of which we have had no experience resemble those of which we have had experience. We can at least conceive a

change in the course of nature, which is enough to prove that such a change is not absolutely impossible. To form a clear idea of anything is an undeniable argument for its possibility. By itself it refutes any alleged demonstration against it.

1.3.6.6 Probability reveals not the relations of ideas considered as such but only the relations of objects. So it must be founded in some respects on the impressions of our memory and senses and in some respects on our ideas. If there were no admixture of impressions in our probable reasonings, the conclusion would be entirely fanciful. If there were no admixture of ideas, the action of the mind in observing the relation would, strictly speaking, be sensation, not reasoning. So in all probable reasoning there must be something present to the mind, either seen or remembered. From this we must infer something connected with it that is neither seen nor remembered.

1.3.6.7 The only connection or relation of objects that can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses is cause and effect. It is the only one on which we can base a sound inference from one object to another. The idea of cause and effect is derived from experience, which tells us that such particular objects have been constantly conjoined with each other in all past instances. And when an object similar to one of these is supposed to be immediately present in its impression, we presume from this that an object similar to its usual companion exists. I think this account of things is unquestionable at every point. According to it, probability is founded on the presumption of a resemblance between the objects of which we have had experience and those of which we have had none. So this presumption cannot possibly arise from probability. The same principle cannot be both the cause and the effect of another. This is perhaps the only proposition about that relation that is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.

1.3.6.8 Suppose someone thinks to evade this argument. Without deciding whether our reasoning on this subject comes from demonstration or from probability, he claims that all conclusions from causes and effects are built on solid reasoning. I can

only ask that this reasoning be produced, so that we can examine it. It may perhaps be said that after experiencing the constant conjunction of certain objects, we reason as follows. Such an object is always found to produce another. It could not have this effect if it were not endowed with a power of production. The power necessarily implies the effect. So there is a sound basis for drawing a conclusion from the existence of one object to that of its usual companion. The past production implies a power; the power implies a new production; and the new production is what we infer from the power and the past production.

1.3.6.9 It would be easy for me to show the weakness of this reasoning if I were willing to use observations I have already made. I have shown that the idea of production is the same as the idea of causation, and that no existence certainly and demonstratively implies a power in any other object. I could also anticipate what I will say later about the idea we form of power and efficacy, if that were proper. But such a procedure might seem to weaken my system by resting one part of it on another, or to create confusion in my reasoning. So I shall try to maintain my present claim without any such help.

1.3.6.10 Let it be granted for a moment, then, that the production of one object by another in any one instance implies a power, and that this power is connected with its effect. But it has already been proved that the power does not lie in the sensible qualities of the cause, and nothing but the sensible qualities is present to us. So I ask: why, in other instances, do you presume that the same power still exists, merely because these qualities appear? Your appeal to past experience decides nothing in the present case. At most it can only prove that the very object that produced another was, at that very instant, endowed with such a power. It can never prove that the same power must continue in the same object or collection of sensible qualities. Much less can it prove that a like power is always conjoined with like sensible qualities. Should it be said that we have experience that the same power continues united with the same object, and that like

objects are endowed with like powers, I would renew my question. Why do we draw from this experience any conclusion beyond the past instances we have experienced? If you answer this question in the same way as the previous one, your answer gives rise to yet another question of the same kind, and so on to infinity. This clearly proves that the reasoning above had no sound foundation.

1.3.6.11 So our reason fails us in discovering the ultimate connection of causes and effects. And even after experience has informed us of their constant conjunction, reason cannot satisfy us why we should extend that experience beyond the particular instances that have come under our observation. We suppose, but can never prove, that there must be a resemblance between the objects we have experienced and those that lie beyond the reach of our discovery.

1.3.6.12 We have already noticed certain relations that make us pass from one object to another even when there is no reason to determine us to that transition. We may lay this down as a general rule: wherever the mind constantly and uniformly makes a transition without any reason, it is influenced by these relations. Now this is exactly the present case. Reason can never show us the connection of one object with another. It cannot do so even with the help of experience and the observation of their constant conjunction in all past instances. So when the mind passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determined by reason. It is determined by certain principles that associate the ideas of these objects together and unite them in the imagination. If ideas had no more union in the fancy than objects seem to have to the understanding, we could never draw any inference from causes to effects, or place belief in any matter of fact. The inference, therefore, depends solely on the union of ideas.

1.3.6.13 I have reduced the principles of union among ideas to three general ones. I have asserted that the idea or impression of any object naturally brings in the idea of any other object that resembles it, is contiguous to it, or is connected with it. I grant

that these principles are neither the infallible nor the only causes of union among ideas. They are not infallible causes, for a person may fix his attention on a single object for some time without looking further. They are not the only causes, for thought evidently moves very irregularly as it runs over its objects. It may leap from the heavens to the earth, from one end of creation to the other, without any fixed method or order. I grant this weakness in these three relations, and this irregularity in the imagination. Even so, I assert that the only general principles that associate ideas are resemblance, contiguity, and causation.

1.3.6.14 There is, indeed, a principle of union among ideas that may at first sight seem different from any of these. At bottom, though, it will turn out to have the same origin. Suppose experience shows every individual of one kind of object to be constantly united with an individual of another kind. Then the appearance of any new individual of either kind naturally carries the thought to its usual companion. Thus, because a particular idea is commonly attached to a particular word, hearing that word is all it takes to produce the corresponding idea. The mind will scarcely be able, with its utmost efforts, to prevent that transition. In this case, when we hear a particular sound, we need not reflect on any past experience and consider what idea has usually been connected with the sound. The imagination by itself takes the place of this reflection. It is so used to passing from the word to the idea that it does not allow a moment's delay between hearing the one and conceiving the other.

1.3.6.15 I acknowledge this to be a genuine principle of association among ideas. But I assert that it is the very same as the one between the ideas of cause and effect, and an essential part of all our reasonings from that relation. Our only notion of cause and effect is of certain objects that have always been conjoined together, and that in all past instances have been found inseparable. We cannot penetrate into the reason for the conjunction. We only observe the thing itself, and always find that the con-

stant conjunction gives the objects a union in the imagination. When the impression of one becomes present to us, we immediately form an idea of its usual companion. Consequently, we may lay this down as one part of the definition of an opinion or belief: that it is an idea related to or associated with a present impression.

1.3.6.16 Causation is a philosophical relation, insofar as it implies contiguity, succession, and constant conjunction. But only insofar as it is a natural relation, and produces a union among our ideas, are we able to reason on it or draw any inference from it.

THE NATURE OF BELIEF

Belief adds no new idea to a conception; it is a lively idea related to a present impression.

1.3.7.1 The idea of an object is an essential part of the belief in it, but not the whole. We conceive many things that we do not believe. To discover more fully the nature of belief, then—the qualities of the ideas we assent to—let us weigh the following considerations.

1.3.7.2 It is evident that all reasonings from causes or effects end in conclusions about matters of fact—that is, about the existence of objects or of their qualities. It is also evident that the idea of existence is nothing different from the idea of any object. When we first simply conceive something and then want to conceive it as existent, we in fact make no addition to or change in our first idea. Thus when we affirm that God exists, we simply form the idea of such a being as he is represented to us. We do not conceive the existence we attribute to him by a particular idea, one that we join to the idea of his other qualities and can separate and distinguish from them again. But I go further. The conception of an object's existence is no addition to the simple conception of it, and I am not content to assert only that. I also maintain that belief in its existence joins no new ideas to those that make up the idea of the object. When I think of God, when I

think of him as existent, and when I believe him to exist, my idea of him neither increases nor diminishes. But there is certainly a great difference between the simple conception of an object's existence and belief in it. This difference does not lie in the parts or composition of the idea we conceive. It follows that it must lie in the manner in which we conceive it.

1.3.7.3 Suppose someone with me puts forward propositions I do not assent to: that Caesar died in his bed, that silver melts more easily than lead, or that mercury is heavier than gold. Despite my disbelief, I evidently understand his meaning clearly and form all the same ideas he forms. My imagination has the same powers as his. He cannot conceive any idea that I cannot conceive, or join any that I cannot join. I therefore ask: what does the difference between believing and disbelieving a proposition consist in? The answer is easy for propositions proved by intuition or demonstration. In that case, the person who assents not only conceives the ideas in accordance with the proposition, but is necessarily determined to conceive them in that particular way, either immediately or through intervening ideas. Whatever is absurd is unintelligible, and the imagination cannot conceive anything contrary to a demonstration. But in reasonings from causation, and about matters of fact, this absolute necessity cannot hold, and the imagination is free to conceive both sides of the question. So I still ask: what does the difference between disbelief and belief consist in? For in both cases conceiving the idea is equally possible and required.

1.3.7.4 It will not do to answer that a person who rejects a proposition you put forward first conceives the object the same way you do, and then immediately conceives it in a different way and forms different ideas of it. This answer is unsatisfactory not because it contains anything false, but because it does not reveal the whole truth. It is granted that whenever we disagree with someone, we conceive both sides of the question. But since we can believe only one side, it plainly follows that belief must make some difference between the conception we assent to and the one we reject. We may mix, unite, separate, confuse, and

vary our ideas in a hundred different ways; but until some principle appears that fixes one of these arrangements, we do not really have any opinion. And since this principle plainly adds nothing to the ideas we already had, it can only change the manner in which we conceive them.

1.3.7.5 All the perceptions of the mind are of two kinds, impressions and ideas, and they differ from each other only in their degrees of force and vivacity. Our ideas are copied from our impressions and represent them in all their parts. If you want to vary the idea of a particular object in any way, all you can do is increase or decrease its force and vivacity. If you make any other change to it, it represents a different object or impression. It is the same with colors. A particular shade of a color may take on a new degree of liveliness or brightness without any other change. But if you change it in any other way, it is no longer the same shade or color. So since belief does nothing but vary the manner in which we conceive an object, it can only give our ideas additional force and vivacity. An opinion or belief, then, may be

most accurately defined as a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression.[7]

1.3.7.6 Here are the main points of the arguments that lead us to this conclusion. When we infer the existence of one object from that of others, some object must always be present to the memory or the senses to serve as the foundation of our reasoning, since the mind cannot run its inferences back to infinity. Reason can never convince us that the existence of any one object ever implies the existence of another. So when we pass from the impression of one object to the idea of another, or the belief in it, we are not determined by reason but by custom, or a principle of association. But belief is something more than a simple idea. It is a particular manner of forming an idea. And since the same idea can only be varied by varying its degrees of force and vivacity, it follows, all things considered, that belief is

7 HUME'S NOTE. We may take this opportunity to point out a very remarkable error which, having been taught again and again in the Schools, has become a kind of established maxim and is accepted by every logician. The error lies in the common division of the acts of the understanding into *conception, judgment* and *reasoning*, and in the definitions we give of them. Conception is defined as the simple survey of one or more ideas; judgment as the separating or uniting of different ideas; reasoning as the separating or uniting of different ideas by means of others, which show the relation they bear to each other. But these distinctions and definitions are faulty in some very important respects. For, *first*, it is far from true that in every judgment we form we unite two different ideas. In the proposition *God is*, or indeed in any other that concerns existence, the idea of existence is not a distinct idea that we unite with the idea of the object, and that could form a compound idea by that union. *Secondly*, just as we can form a proposition that contains only one idea, so we can exercise our reason using no more than two ideas, without calling on a third to serve as a middle term between them. We infer a cause immediately from its effect; and this inference is not only a genuine kind of reasoning but the strongest kind of all, more convincing than when we insert another idea to connect the two extremes. What we can say in general about these three acts of the understanding is that, seen in their proper light, they all reduce to the first, and are nothing but particular ways of conceiving our objects. Whether we consider a single object or several; whether we dwell on these objects or move from them to others; and in whatever form or order we survey them, the act of the mind never goes beyond a simple conception. The only notable difference that arises here is when we join belief to the conception and are convinced of the truth of what we conceive. No philosopher has yet explained this act of the mind, so I am free to propose my own hypothesis about it: that it is only a strong and steady conception of an idea, one that comes close, to some degree, to an immediate impression.

a lively idea produced by a relation to a present impression, as in the definition just given.

1.3.7.7 This operation of the mind, which forms our belief in any matter of fact, seems so far to have been one of the greatest mysteries of philosophy—though no one has so much as suspected that there was any difficulty in explaining it. For my part, I must admit that I find the case considerably difficult, and that even when I think I understand the subject perfectly, I am at a loss for words to express my meaning. I conclude, by an induction that seems to me very evident, that an opinion or belief is nothing but an idea that differs from a fiction not in the nature or the order of its parts, but in the manner in which it is conceived. But when I try to explain this manner, I can hardly find any word that fully fits the case, and I am forced to appeal to everyone's own feeling to give them a complete notion of this operation of the mind. An idea we assent to *feels* different from a fictitious idea that the fancy alone presents to us. I try to explain this different feeling by calling it a superior force, or vivacity, or solidity, or *firmness*, or steadiness. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is meant only to express the act of the mind that makes realities more present to us than fictions, makes them weigh more in our thought, and gives them a greater influence on the passions and the imagination. As long as we agree about the thing, there is no need to argue about the terms. The imagination has command over all its ideas, and can join, mix, and vary them in every possible way. It can conceive objects with every circumstance of place and time. It can set them, so to speak, before our eyes in their true colors, just as they might have existed. But since that faculty can never, by itself, arrive at belief, it is evident that belief does not consist in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner in which they are conceived and in how they feel to the mind. I confess that it is impossible to explain this feeling, or manner of conception, perfectly. We can use words that express something close to it. But its true and proper name is *belief*, a term everyone understands well enough in ordinary life. And in philosophy we

can go no further than to assert that it is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more force and influence, makes them seem more important, fixes them in the mind, and makes them the governing principles of all our actions.

1.3.7.8 This definition will also be found to fit everyone's feeling and experience entirely. Nothing is more evident than that the ideas we assent to are stronger, firmer, and more vivid than the loose daydreams of someone building castles in the air. If one person sits down to read a book as a novel, and another as a true history, they plainly receive the same ideas, in the same order. The one's disbelief and the other's belief do not prevent them from taking the author to mean exactly the same thing. His words produce the same ideas in both, though his testimony does not have the same influence on them. The second reader has a more lively conception of all the events. He enters more deeply into the concerns of the characters. He pictures to himself their actions and characters, their friendships and enmities. He even goes so far as to form a notion of their features, their bearing, and their appearance. The first reader, meanwhile, who gives no credit to the author's testimony, has a fainter and more listless conception of all these details, and apart from the style and ingenuity of the writing, can get little enjoyment from it.

THE CAUSES OF BELIEF

A present impression passes its force to related ideas, and custom produces belief without reasoning.

1.3.8.1 Having thus explained the nature of belief, and shown that it consists in a lively idea related to a present impression, let us now go on to examine what principles it comes from, and what gives the idea its vivacity.

1.3.8.2 I would gladly establish it as a general maxim in the science of human nature that when an impression becomes present to us, it not only carries the mind to the ideas related to

it, but also passes on to them a share of its own force and vivacity. All the operations of the mind depend to a great extent on its disposition at the time it performs them. The higher our spirits and the more fixed our attention, the more vigor and vivacity the action will have, and the lower and looser they are, the less. So when an object appears that raises and enlivens our thought, every action the mind turns to will be stronger and more vivid for as long as that disposition lasts. Now it is evident that how long the disposition lasts depends entirely on the objects the mind is occupied with. Any new object naturally gives a new direction to our spirits and changes the disposition. By contrast, when the mind stays fixed on the same object, or passes easily and imperceptibly along related objects, the disposition lasts much longer. This is why, once the mind has been enlivened by a present impression, it goes on to form a more lively idea of the related objects, by a natural carrying-over of the disposition from the one to the other. The change of objects is so easy that the mind hardly notices it, and it applies itself to conceiving the related idea with all the force and vivacity it acquired from the present impression.

1.3.8.3 If, by considering the nature of relation and the ease of transition that is essential to it, we can satisfy ourselves that this phenomenon is real, well and good. But I must confess that I put my main trust in experience to prove so important a principle. As the first experiment bearing on our present purpose, then, we may observe that when we see a picture of an absent friend, our idea of him is clearly enlivened by the resemblance, and every passion that idea gives rise to, whether joy or sorrow, gains new force and vigor. Two things work together to produce this effect: a relation and a present impression. Where the picture does not resemble him, or at least was not meant to be of him, it does not even bring him to mind. And where the picture is absent as well as the person, the mind may pass from the thought of the one to the thought of the other, but it feels its idea to be weakened rather than enlivened by that transition. We take pleasure in looking at a friend's picture when it is set before

us; but when it is taken away, we would rather think of him directly than through the reflection of an image that is as remote and obscure as he is.

1.3.8.4 The ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion may be regarded as experiments of the same kind. The devotees of that strange superstition usually plead, in defense of the theatrical rituals they are mocked for, that they feel the good effect of these outward movements, postures, and actions in enlivening their devotion and quickening their fervor, which would otherwise fade if directed entirely at distant and immaterial objects. We represent the objects of our faith, they say, in visible symbols and images, and the immediate presence of these symbols makes those objects more present to us than we could ever make them by intellectual contemplation alone. Objects of the senses always have a greater influence on the fancy than any others, and they readily pass this influence on to the ideas they are related to and resemble. From these practices and this reasoning I shall infer only that the effect of resemblance in enlivening an idea is very common. And since in every such case a resemblance and a present impression must work together, we have plenty of experiments to prove that the principle stated above is real.

1.3.8.5 We may strengthen these experiments with others of a different kind by considering the effects of contiguity as well as of resemblance. It is certain that distance weakens every idea, and that as we approach an object—even one not yet visible to our senses—it acts on the mind with an influence that imitates an immediate impression. Thinking of any object readily carries the mind to what is contiguous to it; but only the actual presence of an object carries it there with superior vivacity. When I am a few miles from home, whatever relates to it affects me more closely than when I am two hundred leagues away—though even at that distance, thinking of anything in the neighborhood of my friends and family naturally produces an idea of them. But in this second case both objects in the mind are ideas; and so, even though there is an easy transition between them,

that transition alone cannot give either idea any superior vivacity, for lack of some immediate impression.[8]

1.3.8.6 No one can doubt that causation has the same influence as the other two relations, resemblance and contiguity. Superstitious people are fond of the relics of saints and holy men for the same reason that they seek out symbols and images: to enliven their devotion, and to give them a more intimate and strong conception of the exemplary lives they want to imitate. Now it is evident that one of the best relics a devotee could obtain would be something a saint made with his own hands. And if his clothes and furniture are ever regarded in this light, it is because they were once in his possession and were moved and handled by him. In this respect they are to be seen as imperfect effects, connected with him by a shorter chain of consequences than any of those by which we learn that he really existed. This phenomenon clearly proves that a present impression, together with a relation of causation, can enliven any idea, and so produce belief or assent, according to the definition of it given earlier.

1.3.8.7 But why should we look for other arguments to prove that a present impression, together with a relation or transition of the fancy, can enliven any idea, when this very case of our reasonings from cause and effect is enough on its own? It is certain that we must have an idea of every matter of fact we believe. It is certain that this idea arises only from a relation to a

8 HUME'S NOTE. *"Shall I say it is a gift of nature," he said, "or some kind of illusion, that when we see places where we are told men worthy of remembrance spent much of their time, we are more moved than when we hear of their deeds or read something they wrote? This is how I am moved now. For Plato comes to my mind, who we are told was the first to hold his discussions here. Those little gardens nearby do not merely remind me of him; they seem to set the man himself before my eyes. Here was Speusippus, here Xenocrates, here his pupil Polemo, and that very seat we see was his. Even when I looked at our own senate-house—the old Hostilian, I mean, not this new one, which seems smaller to me now that it has been enlarged—I used to think of Scipio, Cato, Laelius, and above all of my own grandfather. So great is the power of suggestion that places possess, that it is not without reason that the art of memory has been built on them."* Cicero, *On Ends*, Book 5.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Hume quotes Cicero, *On Ends* 5.1.2, in Latin; the speaker is Piso, visiting the site of Plato's Academy at Athens. The passage is given here in English.

present impression. It is certain that belief adds nothing to the idea, but only changes the manner in which we conceive it, making it stronger and more lively. The present conclusion about the influence of relation follows immediately from all these steps, and every step seems to me sure and infallible. Nothing enters into this operation of the mind except a present impression, a lively idea, and a relation or association in the fancy between the impression and the idea; so there can be no suspicion of a mistake.

1.3.8.8 To put this whole matter in a fuller light, let us treat it as a question in natural philosophy, to be settled by experience and observation. Suppose an object is presented to me, from which I draw a certain conclusion and form ideas that I am said to believe or assent to. Here it is evident that, however much the object present to my senses and the other object whose existence I infer by reasoning may be thought to influence each other through their particular powers or qualities, those powers and qualities, being entirely unknown, can play no part in producing the phenomenon of belief we are now examining, since that phenomenon is purely internal. It is the present impression that must be regarded as the true and real cause of the idea, and of the belief that accompanies it. So we must try to discover by experiments the particular qualities that enable it to produce so extraordinary an effect.

1.3.8.9 First, then, I observe that the present impression does not have this effect by its own power and efficacy, when considered alone as a single perception limited to the present moment. I find that an impression from which I can draw no conclusion when it first appears may later become the foundation of belief, once I have had experience of what usually follows it. In every case we must have observed the same impression in past instances, and found it to be constantly conjoined with some other impression. This is confirmed by so many experiments that it does not admit of the slightest doubt.

1.3.8.10 From a second observation I conclude that the belief which accompanies the present impression, and which is pro-

duced by a number of past impressions and conjunctions—this belief, I say, arises immediately, without any new operation of reason or the imagination. I can be certain of this because I am never conscious of any such operation, and I find nothing in the subject on which it could be based. Now since we call *custom* everything that comes from past repetition without any new reasoning or conclusion, we may establish it as a certain truth that all the belief that follows a present impression comes from that source alone. When we are accustomed to seeing two impressions conjoined, the appearance or idea of the one immediately carries us to the idea of the other.

1.3.8.11 Fully satisfied on this point, I make a third set of experiments to find out whether anything besides the customary transition is needed to produce this phenomenon of belief. So I change the first impression into an idea, and I observe that although the customary transition to the correlated idea remains, there is in fact no belief or conviction. A present impression, then, is absolutely necessary to the whole operation. And when I then compare an impression with an idea, and find that the only difference between them lies in their degrees of force and vivacity, I conclude, all things considered, that belief is a more vivid and intense conception of an idea, arising from its relation to a present impression.

1.3.8.12 Thus all probable reasoning is nothing but a kind of sensation. It is not only in poetry and music that we must follow our taste and sentiment, but in philosophy as well. When I am convinced of some principle, it is only an idea that strikes me more strongly. When I prefer one set of arguments to another, all I do is decide, from my feeling, which has the stronger influence. Objects have no discoverable connection with each other; and it is from no other principle than custom acting on the imagination that we can infer the existence of one from the appearance of another.

1.3.8.13 It is worth noting here that the past experience on which all our judgments about cause and effect depend may work on our minds so imperceptibly that we never notice it, and it may

even be, to some extent, unknown to us. A person who stops short on his journey when he meets a river in his way foresees the consequences of going forward; and his knowledge of these consequences comes to him from past experience, which informs him of certain conjunctions of causes and effects. But can we suppose that on this occasion he reflects on any past experience, and calls to mind cases he has seen or heard of, in order to work out the effects of water on animal bodies? Surely not; that is not how his reasoning proceeds. The idea of sinking is so closely connected with that of water, and the idea of suffocating with that of sinking, that the mind makes the transition without the help of memory. Custom operates before we have time to reflect. The objects seem so inseparable that we do not pause for a moment in passing from one to the other. But since this transition comes from experience, and not from any original connection between the ideas, we must admit that experience can produce a belief and a judgment about causes and effects by a hidden operation, without our once thinking of it. This removes any pretext that may still remain for claiming that the mind is convinced by reasoning of the principle that cases we have no experience of must resemble those we have experienced. For we find here that the understanding or imagination can draw inferences from past experience without reflecting on it—much less forming any principle about it, or reasoning on that principle.

1.3.8.14 In general we may observe that in all the most established and uniform conjunctions of causes and effects, such as those of gravity, impact, solidity, and so on, the mind never explicitly turns its attention to any past experience. In other associations of objects, which are rarer and more unusual, it may assist the custom and transition of ideas by such reflection. Indeed, we find that in some cases reflection produces belief without custom—or, more properly speaking, that reflection produces the custom in an indirect and artificial way. Let me explain. It is certain that, not only in philosophy but even in ordinary life, we can come to know a particular cause from a

single experiment, provided it is done with judgment and after carefully removing all irrelevant and superfluous circumstances. Now since after one experiment of this kind the mind, on the appearance of either the cause or the effect, can infer the existence of its correlate, and since a habit can never be acquired from a single instance, it might be thought that in this case belief cannot be regarded as the effect of custom. But this difficulty will vanish if we consider that although we are supposed here to have had only one experiment of a particular effect, we have many millions to convince us of this principle: that like objects placed in like circumstances will always produce like effects. And since this principle has established itself by sufficient custom, it gives evidence and firmness to any opinion it can be applied to. The connection of the ideas is not habitual after one experiment; but this connection falls under another principle that is habitual, which brings us back to our hypothesis. In every case we transfer our experience to instances we have no experience of—explicitly or tacitly, directly or indirectly.

1.3.8.15 I must not end this subject without observing that it is very hard to speak of the operations of the mind with perfect propriety and precision. Ordinary language has seldom drawn any very fine distinctions among them, but has generally used the same term for all those that closely resemble each other. This is an almost unavoidable source of obscurity and confusion for the author; and it can often give rise to doubts and objections in the reader that would otherwise never have occurred to him. Thus my general position, that an opinion or belief is nothing but a strong and lively idea derived from a present impression related to it, may be open to the following objection, owing to a slight ambiguity in the words "strong" and "lively." It may be said that not only an impression but also an idea can give rise to reasoning—especially on my own principle that all our ideas are derived from corresponding impressions. For suppose I now form an idea whose corresponding impression I have forgotten. I am able to conclude from this idea that such an impression

once existed; and since this conclusion is accompanied by belief, it may be asked where the qualities of force and vivacity that make up this belief come from. To this I answer very readily: from the present idea. For since this idea is not considered here as the representation of some absent object, but as a real perception in the mind, of which we are intimately conscious, it must be able to give whatever is related to it the same quality—call it firmness, or solidity, or force, or vivacity—with which the mind reflects on it and is assured of its present existence. Here the idea takes the place of an impression, and is entirely the same as one, as far as our present purpose is concerned.

1.3.8.16 On the same principles, we need not be surprised to hear of the memory of an idea—that is, of the idea of an idea—and of its having more force and vivacity than the loose conceptions of the imagination. In thinking of our past thoughts, we not only sketch out the objects we were thinking about, but also conceive the action of the mind in thinking about them: that certain *je-ne-sais-quoi* which cannot be defined or described, but which everyone understands well enough. When memory offers an idea of this, and represents it as past, it is easy to see how that idea may have more vigor and firmness than when we think of a past thought we have no memory of.

1.3.8.17 After this, anyone will understand how we can form the idea of an impression and of an idea, and how we can believe in the existence of an impression and of an idea.

OTHER RELATIONS AND OTHER HABITS

Resemblance, contiguity, and education also enliven ideas, which confirms Hume's account of belief.

1.3.9.1 However convincing the foregoing arguments may seem, we must not rest content with them. We must turn the subject over on every side, to find new points of view from which to illustrate and confirm principles so extraordinary and so fundamental. A careful reluctance to accept any new hypothesis is so commendable a disposition in philosophers, and so necessary

for the pursuit of truth, that it deserves to be respected. It requires that every argument be offered that may help satisfy them, and every objection removed that may halt them in their reasoning.

1.3.9.2 I have often observed that, besides cause and effect, the two relations of resemblance and contiguity must be regarded as associating principles of thought, capable of carrying the imagination from one idea to another. I have also observed that when one of two objects connected by any of these relations is immediately present to the memory or senses, the mind is not only carried to its correlate by means of the associating principle, but also conceives it with additional force and vigor, through the combined operation of that principle and the present impression. I pointed all this out in order to confirm, by analogy, my explanation of our judgments about cause and effect. But perhaps this very argument can be turned against me, and become an objection to my hypothesis instead of a confirmation of it. For it may be said that if all the parts of that hypothesis are true—namely, that these three kinds of relation derive from the same principles; that their effects in shaping and enlivening our ideas are the same; and that belief is nothing but a more forceful and vivid conception of an idea—then it should follow that this action of the mind can arise not only from the relation of cause and effect, but also from the relations of contiguity and resemblance. But since we find by experience that belief arises only from causation, and that we can draw no inference from one object to another unless they are connected by this relation, we may conclude that there is some error in the reasoning that leads us into these difficulties.

1.3.9.3 That is the objection; now let us consider its solution. It is evident that whatever is present to the memory, striking the mind with a vivacity resembling an immediate impression, must carry considerable weight in all the operations of the mind, and must easily stand out above the mere fictions of the imagination. Out of these impressions or ideas of the memory we form a kind of system, including everything we remember

having been present either to our inner perception or to our senses; and every item in that system, together with our present impressions, we are pleased to call a *reality*. But the mind does not stop there. For it finds that another system of perceptions is connected with this one by custom—or, if you like, by the relation of cause and effect—and so it goes on to consider their ideas. And since it feels that it is in a way necessarily determined to view these particular ideas, and that the custom or relation that determines it does not allow the slightest change, it forms them into a new system, which it likewise honors with the title of realities. The first of these systems is the object of the memory and the senses; the second, of the judgment.

1.3.9.4 It is this latter principle that peoples the world, and acquaints us with things that lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory because they are remote in time and place. By means of it I paint the universe in my imagination and fix my attention on any part of it I please. I form an idea of *Rome*, which I neither see nor remember, but which is connected with impressions I remember receiving from the conversation and books of travelers and historians. I place this idea of Rome at a certain position on the idea of an object I call the globe. I join to it the conception of a particular government, religion, and way of life. I look back and consider its first founding, its various revolutions, successes, and misfortunes. All this, and everything else I believe, is nothing but ideas—though by their force and settled order, which come from custom and the relation of cause and effect, they stand apart from the other ideas, which are merely the offspring of the imagination.

1.3.9.5 As for the influence of contiguity and resemblance, we may observe that if the contiguous or resembling object is included in this system of realities, these two relations will certainly assist the relation of cause and effect, and fix the related idea more forcefully in the imagination. I shall expand on this shortly. Meanwhile I shall take my observation a step further and assert that even where the related object is only imagined, the relation will serve to enliven the idea and increase its influ-

ence. A poet will no doubt be better able to produce a vivid description of the Elysian fields if he stimulates his imagination by looking at a beautiful meadow or garden—just as at another time he may place himself, in fancy, in the middle of those fabled regions, so that the imagined contiguity may enliven his imagination.

1.3.9.6 But though I cannot altogether rule out the relations of resemblance and contiguity acting on the fancy in this way, it is noticeable that on their own their influence is very weak and uncertain. Just as the relation of cause and effect is needed to persuade us of any real existence, so this persuasion is needed to give force to these other relations. For where, on the appearance of an impression, we not only imagine another object but also arbitrarily, purely at our own whim and pleasure, give it a particular relation to the impression, this can have only a small effect on the mind. Nor is there any reason why, when the same impression returns, we should be determined to place the same object in the same relation to it. The mind is under no necessity whatever to imagine any resembling or contiguous objects; and if it does imagine them, it is under just as little necessity to stick always to the same ones, without any difference or variation. Indeed, such a fiction rests on so little reason that nothing but pure caprice can lead the mind to form it; and since that principle is fluctuating and uncertain, it can never operate with any considerable degree of force and constancy. The mind foresees and anticipates the change, and from the very first moment it feels the looseness of its actions and the weak hold it has on its objects. And since this imperfection is very noticeable in each single instance, it grows further with experience and observation, when we compare the various instances we remember and form a general rule against putting any confidence in those momentary glimmers of light that arise in the imagination from an imagined resemblance and contiguity.

1.3.9.7 The relation of cause and effect has all the opposite advantages. The objects it presents are fixed and unalterable. The impressions of the memory never change to any consider-

able degree, and each impression brings with it a precise idea, which takes its place in the imagination as something solid and real, certain and invariable. Thought is always determined to pass from the impression to the idea—and from that particular impression to that particular idea—without any choice or hesitation.

1.3.9.8 But not content with removing this objection, I shall try to extract from it a proof of the present doctrine. Contiguity and resemblance have a much weaker effect than causation; but they still have some effect, and they increase the conviction of any opinion and the vivacity of any conception. If this can be shown in several new cases, besides those we have already noted, it will be granted that this is no small argument that belief is nothing but a lively idea related to a present impression.

1.3.9.9 To begin with contiguity: it has been noticed among Muslims as well as Christians that pilgrims who have seen *Mecca* or the *Holy Land* are ever afterward more faithful and zealous believers than those who have not had that advantage. A man whose memory presents him with a lively image of the Red Sea, the desert, Jerusalem, and Galilee can never doubt any of the miraculous events related by Moses or the Evangelists. The lively idea of the places passes by an easy transition to the facts supposed to be related to them by contiguity, and increases the belief by increasing the vivacity of the conception. The memory of these fields and rivers has the same influence on ordinary people as a new argument would, and for the same reasons.

1.3.9.10 We may make a similar observation about resemblance. We have noted that the conclusion we draw from a present object to its absent cause or effect is never based on any qualities we observe in that object considered in itself; in other words, that it is impossible to determine, except by experience, what will result from any phenomenon or what has preceded it. But though this is so evident in itself that it seemed to need no proof, some philosophers have imagined that there is an evident cause for the communication of motion, and that a reasonable

man could immediately infer the motion of one body from the impact of another, without relying on any past observation. That this opinion is false is easy to prove. For if such an inference could be drawn merely from the ideas of body, motion, and impact, it would have to amount to a demonstration, and would imply that any contrary supposition is absolutely impossible. Every effect other than the communication of motion would then imply a formal contradiction; and it would be impossible not only for it to exist, but even for it to be conceived. But we can soon convince ourselves of the contrary by forming a clear and consistent idea of one body moving toward another and stopping immediately on contact; or bouncing back along the same line it came in; or being annihilated; or moving in a circle or an ellipse—in short, undergoing any of an infinite number of other changes we might suppose. These suppositions are all consistent and natural. The reason we imagine the communication of motion to be more consistent and natural, not only than these suppositions but than any other natural effect, lies in the relation of resemblance between the cause and the effect. Here this relation is united with experience, and binds the objects together in the closest and most intimate way, so that we imagine them to be absolutely inseparable. Resemblance, then, has the same influence as experience, or a parallel one; and since the only immediate effect of experience is to associate our ideas, it follows that all belief arises from the association of ideas, just as my hypothesis says.

1.3.9.11 Writers on optics universally agree that the eye always sees the same number of physical points, and that a man on the top of a mountain has no larger an image presented to his senses than when he is shut up in the narrowest courtyard or room. It is only by experience that he infers the size of the object from certain particular qualities of the image; and he confuses this inference of the judgment with sensation, as commonly happens in other cases. Now it is evident that the inference of the judgment is much more lively here than is usual in our ordinary reasonings. A man has a more vivid conception of the vast

extent of the ocean from the image he receives through his eye, standing on top of a high headland, than from merely hearing the roar of the waters. He feels a more noticeable pleasure in its magnificence, which is a proof of a more lively idea; and he confuses his judgment with sensation, which is another proof of it. But since the inference is equally certain and immediate in both cases, the greater vivacity of our conception in one case can come only from this: that when we draw an inference from sight, besides the customary conjunction there is also a resemblance between the image and the object we infer. This strengthens the relation, and carries the vivacity of the impression over to the related idea with an easier and more natural movement.

1.3.9.12 No weakness of human nature is more universal and conspicuous than what we commonly call *credulity*, or too easy a faith in the testimony of others; and this weakness, too, is very naturally explained by the influence of resemblance. When we accept a matter of fact on human testimony, our faith arises from exactly the same source as our inferences from causes to effects and from effects to causes. Nothing but our experience of the governing principles of human nature can give us any assurance that people are telling the truth. But though experience is the true standard of this judgment, as of all others, we seldom govern ourselves entirely by it. We have a remarkable tendency to believe whatever is reported, even about ghosts, enchantments, and prodigies, however contrary to daily experience and observation. The words or speech of others have a close connection with certain ideas in their minds, and these ideas are in turn connected with the facts or objects they represent. This second connection is generally greatly overrated, and commands our assent beyond what experience can justify—which can come from nothing but the resemblance between the ideas and the facts. Other effects point to their causes only indirectly; but human testimony does so directly, and is to be regarded as an image as well as an effect. No wonder, then, that we are so rash in drawing inferences from it, and are less guided by exper-

ience in our judgments about it than in our judgments about any other subject.

1.3.9.13 Just as resemblance, when joined to causation, strengthens our reasonings, so the lack of it, in any very great degree, can almost entirely destroy them. There is a remarkable example of this in people's universal carelessness and obtuseness about a future state, where they show as stubborn an incredulity as they show blind credulity on other occasions. Indeed, nothing gives the studious man more cause for wonder, or the pious man more cause for regret, than to see how negligent most of mankind are about their approaching condition. And many eminent theologians have with good reason not hesitated to affirm that although ordinary people have no formal principles of unbelief, they are really unbelievers at heart, and have nothing that could be called a belief in the eternal duration of their souls. For let us consider, on the one hand, what preachers have set forth so eloquently about the importance of eternity; and let us reflect that, although in matters of rhetoric we ought to allow for some exaggeration, in this case we must grant that the strongest figures of speech fall infinitely short of the subject. And then let us look, on the other hand, at people's astonishing complacency on this point. I ask whether these people really believe what is drummed into them and what they claim to affirm; and the answer is obviously no. Since belief is an act of the mind arising from custom, it is not strange that a lack of resemblance should overturn what custom has established, and weaken the idea as much as custom strengthens it. A future state is so far beyond our comprehension, and we have so obscure an idea of the way we shall exist after the body dissolves, that all the reasons we can devise, however strong in themselves and however much reinforced by education, can never, in people of sluggish imagination, overcome this difficulty or give the idea enough authority and force. I prefer to attribute this incredulity to the faint idea we form of our future condition because it does not resemble the present life, rather than because it is remote. For I observe that people everywhere

are concerned about what may happen after their death, provided it concerns this world; and there are few people to whom their name, their family, their friends, and their country are entirely indifferent at any period of time.

1.3.9.14 And indeed the lack of resemblance in this case destroys belief so completely that there are hardly any who believe in the immortality of the soul with a true and settled judgment, of the kind we get from the testimony of travelers and historians. The exceptions are the few who, reflecting coolly on the importance of the subject, have taken care through repeated meditation to imprint the arguments for a future state on their minds. This shows up very plainly whenever people have occasion to compare the pleasures and pains, the rewards and punishments, of this life with those of a future one. It shows up even when the case does not concern themselves and there is no violent passion to disturb their judgment. Roman Catholics are certainly the most zealous of any sect in the Christian world. Yet you will find few among the more sensible members of that communion who do not condemn the Gunpowder Plot and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre as cruel and barbarous. They condemn them even though these were planned or carried out against the very people whom they themselves, without the least hesitation, condemn to eternal and infinite punishment. All we can say to excuse this inconsistency is that they do not really believe what they affirm about a future state. And there is no better proof of this than the inconsistency itself.

1.3.9.15 We may add a further remark: in matters of religion people take pleasure in being terrified, and no preachers are so popular as those who stir up the most dismal and gloomy passions. In the ordinary affairs of life, where we feel the solidity of the subject and are penetrated by it, nothing is more unpleasant than fear and terror. It is only in dramatic performances and religious sermons that they ever give pleasure. In these latter cases the imagination rests lazily on the idea. The passion, softened by the lack of belief in the subject, has no more than

the pleasant effect of enlivening the mind and fixing the attention.

1.3.9.16 The present hypothesis will be further confirmed if we examine the effects of other kinds of custom, as well as of other relations. To understand this, we must consider that custom, to which I attribute all belief and reasoning, can invigorate an idea in two different ways. Suppose that in all past experience we have found two objects always conjoined. Then clearly, when one of these objects appears in an impression, custom must make us pass easily to the idea of the object that usually accompanies it. And by means of the present impression and the easy transition, we must conceive that idea in a stronger and livelier way than we do any loose, floating image of the fancy. But now suppose that a mere idea by itself, without any of this curious and almost artificial preparation, frequently appears in the mind. This idea must gradually acquire ease and force, and by its firm hold and easy entry it will set itself apart from any new and unusual idea. This is the only respect in which these two kinds of custom agree. If it turns out that their effects on the judgment are similar and proportionate, we can certainly conclude that the foregoing explanation of that faculty is satisfactory. But can we doubt that they agree in their influence on the judgment, when we consider the nature and effects of *education*?

1.3.9.17 All the opinions and notions of things we have been accustomed to since infancy take such deep root that we cannot eradicate them with all the powers of reason and experience. This habit approaches, in its influence, the habit that arises from the constant and inseparable union of causes and effects, and on many occasions it even prevails over it. Here we must not be content with saying that the vividness of the idea produces the belief: we must maintain that they are strictly one and the same. The frequent repetition of an idea fixes it in the imagination. But repetition could never by itself produce belief if that act of the mind were, by the original constitution of our nature, attached only to reasoning and the comparison of ideas. Custom may lead us into some false comparison of ideas; that is

the most we can conceive it doing. But it certainly could never take the place of that comparison, or produce any act of the mind that naturally belonged to that principle.

1.3.9.18 Someone who has lost a leg or an arm to amputation keeps trying, for a long time afterward, to use it. After someone dies, it is a common remark of the whole family, but especially of the servants, that they can hardly believe he is dead. They still imagine him in his room, or in any other place where they were used to finding him. In conversation about some person who is in any way famous, I have often heard someone who does not know him say, "I have never seen so-and-so, but I almost fancy I have—I have heard him talked about so often." All these are parallel instances.

1.3.9.19 If we view this argument from *education* in the right light, it will seem very convincing. It is all the more convincing because it rests on one of the most common phenomena to be met with anywhere. I am convinced that on examination we will find more than half the opinions prevailing among mankind to be owed to education. I am also convinced that the principles embraced implicitly in this way outweigh those owed either to abstract reasoning or to experience. Liars, by repeating their lies often, come at last to remember them. In the same way the judgment, or rather the imagination, can by similar means have ideas so strongly imprinted on it, and conceive them in so full a light, that they act on the mind just as the ideas presented by the senses, memory, or reason do. But education is an artificial rather than a natural cause, and its maxims are often contrary to reason, and even to one another in different times and places. For that reason philosophers never acknowledge it. Yet in reality

it is built on almost the same foundation of custom and repetition as our reasonings from causes and effects.[9]

THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEF

Belief gives ideas influence on the passions, and the passions and imagination in turn promote belief.

1.3.10.1 Philosophy rejects education as a deceptive ground for assenting to any opinion. Education nevertheless prevails in the world, and it is the reason why all systems tend to be rejected at first as new and unusual. This will perhaps be the fate of what I have put forward here about belief. The proofs I have given seem to me perfectly conclusive, but I do not expect to win many converts to my opinion. People will hardly ever be persuaded that effects of such importance can flow from principles that seem so insignificant. They will be just as slow to accept that by far the greatest part of our reasonings, together with all our actions and passions, can be derived from nothing but custom and habit. To head off this objection, I will anticipate here a little of what would more properly come up later, when we treat of the passions and the sense of beauty.

1.3.10.2 A perception of pain and pleasure is implanted in the human mind as the chief spring and moving principle of all its actions. But pain and pleasure can appear in the mind in two ways, and the effects of the one are very different from those of the other. They may appear as impressions, to actual feeling, or only as ideas, as they do now when I mention them. Clearly

9 HUME'S NOTE. In general we may observe that, since our assent to all probable reasonings is founded on the vivacity of ideas, it resembles many of those whims and prejudices that are rejected with the disparaging label of being "the offspring of the imagination." This expression shows that the word "imagination" is commonly used in two different senses. Nothing is more contrary to true philosophy than this inaccuracy, yet in the reasonings that follow I have often been forced to fall into it. When I contrast the imagination with the memory, I mean the faculty by which we form our fainter ideas. When I contrast it with reason, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings. When I contrast it with neither, it does not matter whether it is taken in the broader or the narrower sense, or at least the context will make the meaning clear enough.

their influence on our actions is far from equal. Impressions always move the soul, and to the highest degree, but not every idea has the same effect. Nature has proceeded cautiously here, and seems to have carefully avoided the drawbacks of two extremes. If impressions alone influenced the will, we would be exposed every moment of our lives to the greatest calamities. For even if we foresaw them coming, nature would not have given us any principle of action that might drive us to avoid them. On the other hand, if every idea influenced our actions, our condition would not be much better. Thought is so unsteady and active that images of everything, especially of goods and evils, are always wandering through the mind. If the mind were moved by every idle conception of this kind, it would never enjoy a moment's peace and calm.

1.3.10.3 Nature has therefore chosen a middle course. It has not given every idea of good and evil the power to move the will, nor has it entirely excluded them from this influence. An idle fiction has no effect. Yet we find by experience that the ideas of objects we believe either exist or will exist produce, to a lesser degree, the same effect as impressions immediately present to the senses and perception. The effect of belief, then, is to raise a simple idea to an equality with our impressions and give it a similar influence on the passions. It can have this effect only by making an idea approach an impression in force and vivacity. The different degrees of force make up the whole original difference between an impression and an idea. They must therefore be the source of all the differences in the effects of these perceptions. And removing those differences, wholly or partly, must be the cause of every new resemblance the perceptions acquire. Wherever we can make an idea approach impressions in force and vivacity, it will also imitate them in its influence on the mind. And conversely, where it imitates them in that influence, as in the present case, this must come from its approaching them in force and vivacity. Belief, therefore, since it makes an idea imitate the effects of impressions, must make it resemble them in these qualities. Belief is nothing but a *more vivid and*

intense conception of any idea. This, then, can serve both as an additional argument for the present system and as a hint of how our reasonings from causation are able to act on the will and passions.

1.3.10.4 Belief is almost absolutely necessary for arousing our passions, and the passions in turn are very favorable to belief. Facts that convey pleasant emotions, and very often facts that give pain as well, become for that very reason more readily objects of faith and opinion. A coward, whose fears are easily awakened, readily assents to every report of danger he comes across. In the same way, a person of sorrowful and melancholy disposition is very credulous about everything that feeds his prevailing passion. When any moving object is presented, it raises the alarm and immediately excites some degree of its proper passion, especially in people naturally inclined to that passion. This emotion passes by an easy transition to the imagination and spreads over our idea of the moving object. It makes us form that idea with greater force and vivacity, and consequently assent to it, according to the system above. Admiration and surprise have the same effect as the other passions. Accordingly we can observe that among ordinary people, quacks and schemers are more readily believed because of their grand pretensions than they would be if they kept within the bounds of moderation. The first astonishment that naturally accompanies their miraculous stories spreads over the whole soul. It so vivifies and enlivens the idea that the idea comes to resemble the inferences we draw from experience. This is a mystery we may already know a little about, and we will have further occasion to be let into it as this treatise goes on.

1.3.10.5 After this account of the influence of belief on the passions, we will find it less difficult to explain its effects on the imagination, however extraordinary they may seem. It is certain that we cannot take pleasure in any discourse where our judgment gives no assent to the images presented to our fancy. The conversation of those who have acquired a habit of lying, even about trivial matters, never gives any satisfaction. That is

because the ideas they present to us, not being accompanied by belief, make no impression on the mind. Even poets, though liars by profession, always try to give their fictions an air of truth. Where this is entirely neglected, their works, however ingenious, will never give much pleasure. In short, even when ideas have no influence at all on the will and passions, truth and reality are still needed to make them entertaining to the imagination.

1.3.10.6 But suppose we compare all the phenomena that occur on this topic. We will find that truth, however necessary it may seem in all works of genius, has only one effect. It secures an easy reception for the ideas and makes the mind accept them with satisfaction, or at least without reluctance. This effect can easily be supposed to flow from the solidity and force that, according to my system, accompany ideas established by reasonings from causation. It follows that all the influence of belief on the fancy can be explained from that system. Accordingly, wherever this influence arises from principles other than truth or reality, those principles take their place and give the imagination equal entertainment. Poets have formed what they call a poetical system of things. Neither they nor their readers believe it, yet it is commonly considered a sufficient foundation for any fiction. We have grown so used to the names *Mars, Jupiter, Venus* that the constant repetition of these ideas works the way education fixes an opinion. It makes them enter the mind easily and prevail on the fancy, without influencing the judgment. In the same way, writers of tragedy always borrow their plot, or at least the names of their principal characters, from some well-known episode in history. They do this not to deceive the audience, since they will frankly admit that truth is not strictly observed in every detail. They do it to secure an easier reception in the imagination for the extraordinary events they represent. But this precaution is not required of comic poets. Their characters and incidents are of a more familiar kind, so they enter easily into our conception and are accepted without any such form-

ality. This holds even though they are known from the first to be fictitious, the pure offspring of the fancy.

1.3.10.7 This mixture of truth and falsehood in the plots of tragic poets serves our present purpose by showing that the imagination can be satisfied without any absolute belief or assurance. Seen from another angle, it may also be regarded as a very strong confirmation of this system. Clearly, poets borrow the names of their characters and the chief events of their poems from history in order to secure an easier reception for the whole. They use this device to make the whole leave a deeper impression on the fancy and the affections. The various incidents of the piece acquire a kind of relation by being united in one poem or performance. If any of these incidents is an object of belief, it gives force and vivacity to the others related to it. The vividness of the first conception spreads along the relations. It is conveyed, as if through so many pipes or channels, to every idea that has any communication with the primary one. This can never, indeed, amount to a perfect assurance, because the union among the ideas is, in a way, accidental. But it still comes so close in its influence as to convince us that the two derive from the same origin. Belief must please the imagination by means of the force and vivacity that accompany it, since every idea that has force and vivacity is found to be agreeable to that faculty.

1.3.10.8 To confirm this, we may observe that the judgment and the fancy help each other, just as the judgment and passion do. Belief gives vigor to the imagination, and a vigorous and strong imagination is, of all talents, the one best suited to win belief and authority. It is hard for us to withhold our assent from what is painted for us in all the colors of eloquence. In many cases the vivacity produced by the fancy is greater than what arises from custom and experience. We are carried away by the lively imagination of our author or companion, and he himself is often a victim of his own fire and genius.

1.3.10.9 It will not be out of place to remark, too, that a lively imagination very often degenerates into madness or folly and

closely resembles them in its operations. So they influence the judgment in the same way and produce belief from the very same principles. Sometimes the imagination, from some extraordinary ferment of the blood and spirits, acquires such vivacity that it disorders all its powers and faculties. Then there is no way of distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Every loose fiction or idea has the same influence as the impressions of the memory or the conclusions of the judgment. It is received on the same footing and acts with equal force on the passions. A present impression and a customary transition are no longer needed to enliven our ideas. Every chimera of the brain is as vivid and intense as any of the inferences we previously honored with the name of conclusions about matters of fact. Sometimes it is as vivid as the present impressions of the senses.

1.3.10.10 We can observe the same effect of poetry to a lesser degree. Poetry and madness have this in common: the vivacity they give to ideas does not come from the particular situations or connections of the objects of those ideas. It comes from the person's present temper and disposition. But however high this vivacity may rise, in poetry it clearly never feels the same as what arises in the mind when we reason, even on the lowest kind of probability. The mind can easily tell the one from the other. Whatever emotion poetic enthusiasm may give to the spirits, it is still the mere phantom of belief or persuasion. The idea is in the same case as the passion it gives rise to. There is no passion of the human mind that cannot arise from poetry. Yet the passions feel very different when excited by poetic fictions from how they feel when they arise from belief and reality. A passion that is unpleasant in real life may give the greatest entertainment in a tragedy or epic poem. In the latter case it does not weigh on us so heavily. It feels less firm and solid, and its only effect is the pleasant one of exciting the spirits and rousing the attention. The difference in the passions is clear proof of a similar difference in the ideas from which the passions derive. Sometimes the vivacity arises from a customary conjunction with a present impression. Then, even if the imagination does

not seem so strongly moved, there is always something more forceful and real in its actions than in the fervors of poetry and eloquence. The force of our mental actions, in this case as in any other, is not to be measured by the apparent agitation of the mind. A poetic description may have a more noticeable effect on the fancy than a historical narrative. It may gather more of the circumstances that make up a complete image or picture. It may seem to set the object before us in livelier colors. But still the ideas it presents feel different from those that arise from the memory and the judgment. The fictions of poetry come with a seeming vehemence of thought and sentiment, but amid it all there is something weak and imperfect.

1.3.10.11 We will later have occasion to note both the resemblances and the differences between poetic enthusiasm and serious conviction. In the meantime I cannot help observing that the great difference in how they feel comes in some measure from reflection and *general rules*. We observe that the vigor of conception that fictions receive from poetry and eloquence is a merely accidental circumstance, to which every idea is equally open. We also observe that such fictions are connected with nothing real. This observation makes us only lend ourselves, so to speak, to the fiction. It makes the idea feel very different from the eternal, settled convictions founded on memory and custom. They are of somewhat the same kind, but one is far inferior to the other, both in its causes and in its effects.

1.3.10.12 A similar reflection on general rules keeps us from increasing our belief with every increase in the force and vivacity of our ideas. Where an opinion admits of no doubt or opposing probability, we give it full conviction. We do so even though a lack of resemblance or contiguity may make its force inferior to that of other opinions. This is how the understanding corrects the appearances of the senses. It makes us imagine that an object twenty feet away looks, even to the eye, as large as one of the same size at ten.

THE PROBABILITY OF CHANCES

Using a die as example, Hume explains how a greater number of equal chances produces belief.

1.3.11.1 But to give this system its full force and evidence, we must turn our eyes from it for a moment and consider its consequences. From the same principles we must explain some other kinds of reasoning that derive from the same origin.

1.3.11.2 Some philosophers have divided human reason into knowledge and probability, and have defined knowledge as the evidence that arises from the comparison of ideas. They are forced to include all our arguments from causes or effects under the general term "probability." Everyone is free to use his terms in whatever sense he likes, and in the earlier part of this discourse I have followed that way of speaking myself. It is nonetheless certain that in ordinary talk we readily affirm that many arguments from causation go beyond probability. We accept them as a superior kind of evidence. Anyone would look ridiculous who said it is only probable that the sun will rise tomorrow, or that all men must die. Yet it is plain we have no further assurance of these facts than experience gives us. For this reason it might be more convenient to divide human reason into three kinds: *that from knowledge, from proofs, and from probabilities*. This would both preserve the ordinary meaning of words and mark the different degrees of evidence. By knowledge I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, I mean those arguments that derive from the relation of cause and effect and are entirely free of doubt and uncertainty. By probability, I mean the evidence that is still accompanied by uncertainty. It is this last kind of reasoning that I now go on to examine.

1.3.11.3 Probability, or reasoning from conjecture, can be divided into two kinds: that founded on chance, and that arising from causes. We will consider each in turn.

1.3.11.4 The idea of cause and effect is derived from experience. Experience presents us with certain objects constantly conjoined with one another, and so produces a habit of viewing them in that relation. The habit is so strong that we cannot view them in any other relation without a noticeable strain. Chance, on the other hand, is nothing real in itself. Strictly speaking it is merely the negation of a cause, so its influence on the mind is the opposite of that of causation. It is essential to chance that it leave the imagination perfectly indifferent between considering the existence and the non-existence of the object regarded as contingent. A cause marks out the path for our thought, and in a way forces us to view certain objects in certain relations. Chance can only destroy this determination of the thought and leave the mind in its native state of indifference. When a cause is absent, the mind is instantly restored to that state.

1.3.11.5 Complete indifference is essential to chance. So no one chance can possibly be superior to another except by being made up of a greater number of equal chances. Suppose we claim that one chance can be superior to another in some other way. Then we must also claim that something gives it the superiority and determines the outcome to that side rather than the other. In other words, we must admit a cause, and so destroy the supposition of chance we had already laid down. Perfect and total indifference is essential to chance, and one total indifference can never in itself be either superior or inferior to another. This truth is not peculiar to my system. Everyone who makes calculations about chances acknowledges it.

1.3.11.6 And here something is remarkable. Chance and causation are direct opposites. Yet we cannot conceive the combination of chances needed to make one outcome more likely than another without supposing a mixture of causes among the chances. We must suppose necessity conjoined with total indifference: necessity in some respects, indifference in others. Where nothing limits the chances, every notion the most extravagant fancy can form stands on an equal footing, and there can be no circumstance to give one an advantage over another. Thus

unless we allow that there are some causes that make the dice fall, keep their shape as they fall, and land on one of their sides, we can make no calculation about the laws of chance. But suppose these causes operate, and suppose everything else is indifferent and determined by chance. Then it is easy to arrive at the notion of a superior combination of chances. A die with four sides marked with one number of spots and only two with another gives us an obvious and easy example of this superiority. Here the causes limit the mind to a precise number and kind of outcomes. At the same time the mind is undetermined in its choice of any particular outcome.

1.3.11.7 So far this reasoning has advanced three steps. First, chance is merely the negation of a cause and produces total indifference in the mind. Second, one negation of a cause and one total indifference can never be superior or inferior to another. Third, there must always be a mixture of causes among the chances to provide a foundation for any reasoning. Continuing, we must next consider what effect a superior combination of chances can have on the mind, and how it influences our judgment and opinion. Here we can repeat all the same arguments we used in examining the belief that arises from causes. In the same way we can prove that a greater number of chances produces our assent neither by demonstration nor by probability. We clearly can never, by comparing mere ideas, make any discovery of consequence in this matter. It is impossible to prove with certainty that an event must fall on the side with the greater number of chances. To suppose any certainty here would be to overthrow what we have established about the opposition of chances and their perfect equality and indifference.

1.3.11.8 It may be said that in an opposition of chances it is impossible to determine with certainty which side the outcome will fall on. Yet, the objection runs, we can still pronounce with certainty that it is more likely and probable to fall on the side with the greater number of chances than on the side with fewer. If this is said, I would ask: what is meant here by likelihood and

probability? The likelihood and probability of chances is a greater number of equal chances. So when we say it is likely the event will fall on the superior side rather than the inferior, we are only affirming that where there is a greater number of chances there actually is a greater number, and where there is a smaller number there is a smaller. These are identical propositions, of no consequence. The question is how a greater number of equal chances acts on the mind and produces belief or assent. It appears to do so neither by arguments drawn from demonstration nor by arguments drawn from probability.

1.3.11.9 To clear up this difficulty, let us suppose someone takes a die made so that four of its sides are marked with one figure, or one number of spots, and two with another. He puts it in the box, intending to throw it. Clearly he must conclude that the one figure is more probable than the other. He must give preference to the one inscribed on the greater number of sides. He in a way believes that this one will come up on top, though still with hesitation and doubt, in proportion to the number of contrary chances. As these contrary chances diminish and the superiority on the other side increases, his belief gains new degrees of stability and assurance. This belief arises from an operation of the mind on the simple, limited object before us, so its nature will be all the easier to discover and explain. We have nothing but a single die to contemplate in order to understand one of the most curious operations of the understanding.

1.3.11.10 This die, made as described, involves three circumstances worth our attention. First, there are certain causes, such as gravity, solidity, a cubical shape, etc. These determine it to fall, to keep its shape in falling, and to turn up one of its sides. Second, there is a certain number of sides, which are supposed indifferent. Third, there is a certain figure inscribed on each side. These three particulars make up the whole nature of the die so far as our present purpose is concerned. They are consequently the only circumstances the mind attends to in forming a judgment about the result of such a throw. Let us therefore

consider, step by step and carefully, what influence these circumstances must have on thought and imagination.

1.3.11.11 First: we have already observed that custom determines the mind to pass from any cause to its effect. When the one appears, it is almost impossible for the mind not to form an idea of the other. Their constant conjunction in past instances has produced such a habit in the mind that it always joins them in thought. From the existence of the one it infers the existence of its usual companion. When the mind considers the die as no longer supported by the box, it cannot without strain regard it as hanging in the air. It naturally places the die on the table and views it as turning up one of its sides. This is the effect of the intermingled causes that are required for making any calculation about chances.

1.3.11.12 Second: it is supposed that the die is necessarily determined to fall and turn up one of its sides. Yet nothing fixes which particular side; that is determined entirely by chance. The very nature and essence of chance is a negation of causes, leaving the mind perfectly indifferent among the events supposed to be contingent. So the causes determine the thought to consider the die as falling and turning up one of its sides. The chances, meanwhile, present all these sides as equal, and make us consider each of them, one after another, as equally probable and possible. The imagination passes from the cause, namely the throwing of the die, to the effect, namely the turning up of one of the six sides. It feels a kind of impossibility both of stopping short on the way and of forming any other idea. But all six sides are incompatible, and the die cannot turn up more than one at a time. So this principle does not direct us to consider all of them at once as lying on top, which we regard as impossible. Nor does it direct us with its entire force to any particular side, for then that side would be considered certain and inevitable. Instead it directs us to all six sides in such a way as to divide its force equally among them. We conclude in general that one of them must result from the throw. We run over all of them in our minds. The determination of the thought is common to all, but

no more of its force falls to any one of them than suits its proportion to the rest. This is how the original impulse arising from the causes, and consequently the vivacity of thought, is divided and broken into pieces by the intermingled chances.

1.3.11.13 We have now seen the influence of the first two qualities of the die, namely the causes and the number and indifference of the sides. We have learned how they give an impulse to the thought and divide that impulse into as many parts as there are units in the number of sides. We must now consider the effects of the third particular, namely the figures inscribed on each side. Clearly, where several sides have the same figure inscribed on them, they must join in their influence on the mind. The divided impulses were spread over the several sides that bear that figure. These sides must unite all those impulses on one image or idea of the figure. If the question were only which side will turn up, these are all perfectly equal, and no one of them could ever have any advantage over another. But the question concerns the figure, and the same figure is presented by more than one side. So the impulses belonging to all these sides must clearly reunite in that one figure, and become stronger and more forceful through the union. In the present case four sides are supposed to have the same figure inscribed on them, and two to have another. The impulses of the former are therefore superior to those of the latter. But the outcomes are contrary, and both figures cannot turn up. So the impulses also become contrary, and the weaker cancels the stronger as far as its strength goes. The vivacity of the idea is always proportional to the degree of the impulse or tendency to make the transition. And belief is the same as the vivacity of the idea, according to the doctrine above.

THE PROBABILITY OF CAUSES

Contrary experiences weaken or divide habit, producing belief in proportion to the balance of instances.

1.3.12.1 What I have said about the probability of chances can serve no other purpose than to help us explain the probability of causes. Philosophers commonly allow that what ordinary people call chance is nothing but a secret, hidden cause. That kind of probability, then, is what we must chiefly examine.

1.3.12.2 The probabilities of causes are of several kinds, but all derive from the same origin: *the association of ideas to a present impression*. The habit that produces the association arises from the frequent conjunction of objects. It must therefore reach its perfection by degrees, gaining new force from each instance that comes under our observation. The first instance has little or no force. The second adds some, and the third becomes still more noticeable. It is by these slow steps that our judgment arrives at full assurance. But before it reaches this pitch of perfection, it passes through several lower degrees, and in all of them it counts only as a presumption or probability. In many cases, therefore, the gradation from probabilities to proofs is imperceptible. The difference between these kinds of evidence is easier to see in the distant degrees than in the neighboring ones.

1.3.12.3 It is worth remarking here that the kind of probability explained here is first in order and naturally occurs before any complete proof can exist. Even so, no one who has reached maturity can be acquainted with it any longer. It is true that nothing is more common than for people of the most advanced knowledge to have only an imperfect experience of many particular events. This naturally produces only an imperfect habit and transition. But the mind has also made another observation, about the connection of causes and effects, and it gives new force to its reasoning from that observation. By means of it, the mind can build an argument on one single experiment, when

the experiment has been properly prepared and examined. What we have once found to follow from an object, we conclude will always follow from it. If this maxim is not always relied on as certain, it is not for lack of a sufficient number of experiments. It is because we often meet with contrary instances. This leads us to the second kind of probability, where there is a contrariety in our experience and observation.

1.3.12.4 It would be very fortunate for people in the conduct of their lives and actions if the same objects were always conjoined. We would then have nothing to fear but the mistakes of our own judgment, and no reason to worry about the uncertainty of nature. But we often find that one observation contradicts another, and that causes and effects do not follow in the order we have experienced. We are therefore forced to vary our reasoning because of this uncertainty, and to take the contrariety of events into account. The first question that arises on this topic concerns the nature and causes of this contrariety.

1.3.12.5 Ordinary people take things at first appearance. They attribute the uncertainty of events to an uncertainty in the causes, which makes the causes often fail to have their usual influence even though they meet with no obstacle or hindrance in their operation. But philosophers observe that almost every part of nature contains a vast variety of springs and principles, hidden by their minuteness or remoteness. So they find it at least possible that the contrariety of events comes not from any contingency in the cause but from the secret operation of contrary causes. Further observation turns this possibility into certainty. They note that on close scrutiny a contrariety of effects always reveals a contrariety of causes, and arises from their mutual hindrance and opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for a clock or watch stopping than to say that it often does not run right. But a craftsman easily sees that the same force in the spring or pendulum always has the same influence on the wheels. When it fails of its usual effect, perhaps a grain of dust has stopped the whole movement. From observing several parallel instances, philosophers form the maxim that the con-

nection between all causes and effects is equally necessary. Its seeming uncertainty in some instances comes from the secret opposition of contrary causes.

1.3.12.6 But however philosophers and ordinary people may differ in explaining the contrariety of events, their inferences from it are always of the same kind and founded on the same principles. A contrariety of events in the past can give us a kind of hesitating belief about the future in two different ways. The first is by producing an imperfect habit and transition from the present impression to the related idea. Suppose two objects are frequently but not entirely constantly conjoined. The mind is then determined to pass from one to the other, but not with as complete a habit as when the union is uninterrupted and all the instances we have ever met with are uniform and of a piece. We find from common experience, in our actions as well as our reasonings, that steady perseverance in any course of life produces a strong inclination and tendency to continue it in the future. There are also habits of lesser force, proportioned to lesser degrees of steadiness and uniformity in our conduct.

1.3.12.7 No doubt this principle sometimes operates and produces the inferences we draw from contrary phenomena. Yet I am convinced that on examination we will not find it to be the principle that most commonly influences the mind in this kind of reasoning. When we follow only the habitual determination of the mind, we make the transition without any reflection. We allow not a moment's delay between the view of one object and belief in the one often found to accompany it. Since custom does not depend on any deliberation, it operates immediately, without allowing any time for reflection. But we have few instances of this way of proceeding in our probable reasonings. We have even fewer than in the reasonings derived from the uninterrupted conjunction of objects. In the former kind of reasoning we commonly take the contrariety of past events knowingly into account. We compare the different sides of the contrariety and carefully weigh the experiments we have on each side. From this we may conclude that our reasonings of this

kind arise from habit not directly but in an oblique way, which we must now try to explain.

1.3.12.8 Clearly, when an object is accompanied by contrary effects, we judge them only by our past experience. We always consider as possible those effects we have observed to follow from it. Past experience governs our judgment about the possibility of these effects, and it governs our judgment about their probability too. The effect that has been most common we always consider most likely. Here, then, are two things to consider. The first is the reasons that determine us to make the past a standard for the future. The second is how we extract a single judgment from a contrariety of past events.

1.3.12.9 First, we may observe that the supposition that the future resembles the past is not founded on arguments of any kind. It derives entirely from habit, which determines us to expect in the future the same train of objects we have been accustomed to. This habit or determination to transfer the past to the future is full and perfect. Consequently, the first impulse of the imagination in this kind of reasoning has the same qualities.

1.3.12.10 But second, when we look at past experiments and find that they point in contrary directions, this determination, though full and perfect in itself, gives us no steady object. Instead it offers us a number of disagreeing images in a certain order and proportion. So the first impulse is here broken into pieces and spreads itself over all those images, and each of them gets an equal share of the force and vivacity that comes from the impulse. Any of these past events may happen again, and we judge that when they do, they will be mixed in the same proportion as in the past.[10]

1.3.12.11 So if our aim is to consider the proportions of contrary events over a large number of instances, the images presented by our past experience must stay in their *first form* and keep their original proportions. Suppose, for instance, that I have found by long observation that of twenty ships that go to sea,

10 Hume's "experiment" means any observed instance, not a planned test.

only nineteen return. Suppose I now see twenty ships leave port. I transfer my past experience to the future, and I picture nineteen of these ships returning safely and one being lost. There can be no difficulty about this. But we often run over these various ideas of past events in order to form a judgment about one single event that seems uncertain. This must change the *first form* of our ideas and draw together the separate images presented by experience, since it is to experience that we look to settle the particular event we are reasoning about. Many of these images are taken to agree, and a larger number to agree on one side. These agreeing images unite and make the idea stronger and livelier. It becomes livelier than a mere fiction of the imagination, and also livelier than any idea supported by a smaller number of experiments. Each new experiment is like a new stroke of the brush, which adds vivacity to the colors without either multiplying or enlarging the figure. I explained this operation of the mind so fully when I treated the probability of chance that I need not try to make it any clearer here. Every past experiment can be regarded as a kind of chance, since we are uncertain whether the object will turn out in line with one experiment or another. For this reason, everything said on the one subject applies to both.

1.3.12.12 So, on the whole, contrary experiments produce an imperfect belief. They do this either by weakening the habit, or by dividing that perfect habit and then recombining it in different parts. That perfect habit is what makes us conclude, in general, that instances we have no experience of must necessarily resemble those we have experienced.

1.3.12.13 To support this account further, I shall propose the following considerations about this second kind of probability, where we reason knowingly and reflectively from a contrariety of past experiments. I do not fear giving offense by the air of subtlety that comes with them. Sound reasoning ought, perhaps, to keep its force however subtle it is, just as matter keeps its solidity in air, fire, and animal spirits as well as in its coarser and more perceptible forms.

1.3.12.14 First, we may observe that no probability is so great that it does not allow a contrary possibility. Otherwise it would stop being a probability and become a certainty. The probability of causes is the most extensive kind, and the one we are now examining. It depends on a contrariety of experiments, and clearly an experiment in the past proves at least a possibility for the future.

1.3.12.15 Second, the component parts of this possibility and of this probability are of the same nature. They differ in number only, not in kind. It has been observed that all single chances are entirely equal, and that the only thing that can give one contingent event an advantage over another is a greater number of chances. In the same way, the uncertainty of causes is discovered by experience, which shows us contrary events. So it is plain that when we transfer the past to the future, the known to the unknown, every past experiment carries the same weight, and only a greater number of them can tip the balance to one side. So the possibility that enters into every reasoning of this kind is made up of parts that are of the same nature as one another, and of the same nature as the parts that make up the opposite probability.

1.3.12.16 Third, we may lay down a certain maxim for all phenomena, moral as well as natural. Wherever a cause consists of a number of parts, and the effect increases or decreases as that number varies, the effect is, strictly speaking, a compound one. It arises from the union of the several effects that come from each part of the cause. Thus, because the weight of a body increases or decreases as its parts increase or decrease, we conclude that each part has this quality and contributes to the weight of the whole. When a part of the cause is absent or present, a proportionate part of the effect is absent or present too. This connection, or constant conjunction, is enough to prove the one part to be the cause of the other. Our belief in any event increases or decreases with the number of chances or past experiments. So that belief should be regarded as a compound

effect, each part of which arises from a proportionate number of chances or experiments.

1.3.12.17 Let us now put these three observations together and see what conclusion we can draw. Every probability has an opposite possibility. This possibility is made up of parts entirely of the same nature as those of the probability, and so these parts have the same influence on the mind and understanding. The belief that goes with the probability is a compound effect, formed by the combination of the several effects that come from each part of the probability. Each part of the probability, then, contributes to producing the belief. So each part of the possibility must have the same influence on the opposite side, since the nature of these parts is entirely the same. The contrary belief that goes with the possibility involves a view of a certain object, just as the probability involves an opposite view. In this respect both degrees of belief are alike. So there is only one way the greater number of similar parts in the one can exert its influence and prevail over the smaller number in the other: by producing a stronger and livelier view of its object. Each part presents a particular view, and all these views unite to produce one general view. The greater the number of causes or principles it comes from, the fuller and more distinct that view is.

1.3.12.18 The component parts of the probability and of the possibility are alike in nature, so they must produce like effects. The likeness of their effects consists in this: each of them presents a view of a particular object. But though these parts are alike in nature, they are very different in quantity and number, and this difference must show up in the effect as well as the similarity. Now in both cases the view they present is full and complete and takes in the object in all its parts, so there cannot possibly be any difference in this respect. Nothing can distinguish these effects except a greater vivacity in the probability, which arises from the combination of a greater number of views.

1.3.12.19 Here is almost the same argument in a different light. All our reasonings about the probability of causes are founded on transferring the past to the future. Transferring any past

experiment to the future is enough to give us a view of the object. This holds whether that experiment stands alone or is combined with others of the same kind, and whether it is unopposed or opposed by others of a contrary kind. Suppose, then, that it acquires both these qualities, combination and opposition. It does not lose its former power of presenting a view of the object on that account. It only joins with, and is opposed by, other experiments that have a similar influence. So a question may arise about how both the combining and the opposing work. As for the combining, we are left with a choice between just two hypotheses. First, that the view of the object produced by transferring each past experiment stays intact and only multiplies the number of views. Or, *second*, that it merges into the other similar and corresponding views and gives them a greater degree of force and vivacity. But experience shows that the first hypothesis is wrong. It tells us that the belief attending any reasoning consists in one conclusion, not in a multitude of similar ones. Such a multitude would only distract the mind, and in many cases it would be too large for any finite capacity to take in distinctly. The only reasonable view left, then, is that these similar views merge into one another and unite their forces, so as to produce a stronger and clearer view than any one of them would produce alone. This is how past experiments combine when they are transferred to a future event. As for how they oppose each other, contrary views are incompatible, and the object cannot exist in accordance with both at once. So their influence becomes mutually destructive, and the mind is carried toward the stronger side only with the force that remains after the weaker is subtracted.

1.3.12.20 I am aware how abstruse all this reasoning must seem to most readers. They are not used to such deep reflections on the intellectual faculties of the mind, and they will tend to reject as fanciful whatever does not fit with commonly accepted notions and with the easiest and most obvious principles of philosophy. No doubt it takes some effort to follow these arguments. But perhaps very little effort is needed to see the imper-

fection of every popular hypothesis on this subject, and how little light philosophy can yet give us in such lofty and intricate speculations. Let people once be fully persuaded of these two principles: *that there is nothing in any object, considered in itself, that can give us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond* it; and *that even after observing the frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference about any object beyond those we have experienced*. I say, let people once be fully convinced of these two principles, and it will cut them so loose from all the usual systems that they will have no trouble accepting any system, however extraordinary it may seem. We have found these principles convincing enough even for our most certain reasonings from causation. But I venture to claim that for these conjectural or probable reasonings they gain a further degree of evidence.

1.3.12.21 First, it is obvious that in reasonings of this kind, the object presented to us, considered in itself, does not give us any reason to draw a conclusion about any other object or event. This latter object is supposed to be uncertain, and the uncertainty comes from a hidden contrariety of causes in the former. If any of those causes lay in the known qualities of that object, they would no longer be hidden, and our conclusion would not be uncertain.

1.3.12.22 But second, it is equally obvious in this kind of reasoning that if the transfer of the past to the future were founded merely on a conclusion of the understanding, it could never produce any belief or assurance. When we transfer contrary experiments to the future, we can only repeat these contrary experiments with their particular proportions. That could not produce assurance about any single event we are reasoning about unless the imagination fused together all the images that agree. From them it would have to extract one single idea or image, intense and lively in proportion to the number of experiments it comes from and to their superiority over their rivals. Our past experience presents no definite object. But our belief, however faint, fixes on a definite object. So the belief clearly arises not merely

from transferring the past to the future, but from some operation of the imagination joined with it. This may help us see how that faculty enters into all our reasonings.

1.3.12.23 I shall close this subject with two reflections that may deserve our attention. The *first* can be explained like this. When the mind reasons about a matter of fact that is only probable, it looks back on past experience and transfers it to the future. It is then presented with so many contrary views of its object. Those of the same kind unite and merge into one act of the mind, and they serve to strengthen and enliven it. But suppose this multitude of views or glimpses of an object comes not from experience but from a voluntary act of the imagination. Then this effect does not follow, or at least not to the same degree. Custom and education do produce belief by a repetition that does not come from experience. But this requires a long stretch of time, along with very frequent and unintended repetition. In general we may say that a person who would[11] voluntarily repeat an idea in his mind, even one supported by a single past experience, would be no more inclined to believe in the existence of its object than if he had been content to survey it once. Besides the effect of deliberate intention, each act of the mind is separate and independent. So each has a separate influence and does not join its force with that of the others. Since they are not united by any common object that produces them, they have no relation to one another. So they make no transition and no union of forces. We shall understand this phenomenon better later on.

1.3.12.24 My second reflection concerns the large probabilities the mind can judge of, and the tiny differences it can notice between them. Suppose the chances or experiments on one side amount to ten thousand, and on the other to ten thousand and one. The judgment prefers the latter because of that superiority. Yet the mind plainly cannot run over every particular view and detect the greater vivacity of the image that arises from the greater number, when the difference is so slight. We have a parallel case in the passions. Suppose an object produces a passion

11 HUME'S NOTE. Pages 9–10.

in us that varies with the quantity of the object. By the principles stated above, it is evident that the passion, strictly speaking, is not a simple emotion but a compound one. It is made of a great number of weaker passions, each arising from a view of one part of the object. Otherwise the passion could not possibly increase as these parts increase. Thus a man who desires a thousand pounds really has a thousand or more desires, which unite and seem to make only one passion. Yet the composition clearly gives itself away whenever the object changes, because he prefers the larger number even if it is larger by only one. At the same time, nothing could be more certain than that so small a difference could not be detected in the passions, and could not make them distinguishable from each other. So our conduct in preferring the greater number depends not on our passions but on custom and general rules. We have found in a multitude of cases that increasing any sum increases the passion, where the numbers are precise and the difference noticeable. The mind can tell from its immediate feeling that three guineas produce a greater passion than two. It transfers this to larger numbers because of the resemblance, and by a general rule it assigns a stronger passion to a thousand guineas than to nine hundred and ninety-nine. I shall explain these general rules shortly.

1.3.12.25 But besides these two kinds of probability, which come from imperfect experience and from contrary causes, there is a third, arising from *analogy*, which differs from them in some important respects. According to the hypothesis explained above, all kinds of reasoning from causes or effects are founded on two things. The first is the constant conjunction of any two objects in all past experience, and the second is the resemblance of a present object to one of them. The effect of these two things is that the present object invigorates and enlivens the imagination. The resemblance, together with the constant union, then conveys this force and vivacity to the related idea, which we are therefore said to believe, or assent to. If you weaken either the union or the resemblance, you weaken the principle of transition, and so you weaken the belief that arises from it. The viva-

city of the first impression cannot be fully conveyed to the related idea in two cases: where the conjunction of their objects is not constant, or where the present impression does not perfectly resemble any of those whose union we are used to observing. In the probabilities of chance and of causes explained above, it is the constancy of the union that is reduced. In the probability derived from analogy, it is only the resemblance that is affected. Without some degree of resemblance, as well as of union, there cannot be any reasoning at all. But this resemblance comes in many different degrees, so the reasoning becomes correspondingly more or less firm and certain. An experiment loses some of its force when it is transferred to instances that do not resemble it exactly. Still, it may clearly keep enough force to be the foundation of probability, as long as any resemblance remains.

UNPHILOSOPHICAL PROBABILITY

Hume examines the pull of recent memory, long chains of argument, and hasty general rules.

1.3.13.1 Philosophers accept all these kinds of probability and allow them to be reasonable foundations of belief and opinion. But there are others that come from the same principles, though they have not had the good fortune to receive the same approval. The first probability of this kind can be explained as follows. Reducing the union and the resemblance, as explained above, reduces the ease of the transition and so weakens the evidence. We may further observe that the same reduction in evidence will follow from a weakening of the impression, and from the fading of the colors in which it appears to the memory or the senses. When we base an argument on a matter of fact we remember, it is more or less convincing depending on whether the fact is recent or remote. Philosophy does not accept this difference in degrees of evidence as sound and legitimate, because then an argument would have a different force today from the force it will have a month from now. Yet despite philosophy's

opposition, this circumstance certainly has a considerable influence on the understanding. It quietly alters the authority of the same argument according to when it is put to us. Greater force and vivacity in the impression naturally conveys greater force and vivacity to the related idea. And according to the foregoing system, belief depends on the degrees of force and vivacity.

1.3.13.2 There is a second difference we can often observe in our degrees of belief and assurance. It never fails to occur, though philosophers disown it. An experiment that is recent and fresh in memory affects us more than one that has been partly erased, and it has a greater influence on the judgment as well as on the passions. A lively impression produces more assurance than a faint one, because it has more original force to pass on to the related idea, which thereby gains greater force and vivacity. A recent observation has a similar effect, because in that case the custom and transition are more complete and better preserve the original force as it is passed on. Thus a drunkard who has seen his companion die from a drinking bout is struck by that example for some time and dreads a similar fate for himself. But as the memory of it gradually fades, his former sense of security returns, and the danger seems less certain and real.

1.3.13.3 As a third instance of this kind, I add the following. Our reasonings from proofs and from probabilities differ considerably from each other. Yet the former kind of reasoning often slides imperceptibly into the latter through nothing but the sheer number of connected arguments. When an inference is drawn directly from an object, with no intermediate cause or effect, the conviction is certainly much stronger and the persuasion livelier than when the imagination is carried through a long chain of connected arguments. This holds however infallible the connection of each link may be thought to be. The vivacity of all the ideas comes from the original impression, by means of the customary transition of the imagination. Clearly this vivacity must gradually fade in proportion to the distance, and it must lose something at each transition. Sometimes this distance has a greater influence than even contrary experiments

would have. A person may get a livelier conviction from a probable reasoning that is close and immediate than from a long chain of consequences, even when each part of the chain is sound and conclusive. Indeed, such long reasonings seldom produce any conviction at all. It takes a very strong and steady imagination to keep the evidence alive to the end when it passes through so many stages.

1.3.13.4 But here it may not be out of place to note a very curious phenomenon that the present subject suggests. Clearly we can have no assurance about any point of ancient history except by passing through many millions of causes and effects, and through a chain of arguments of almost immeasurable length. Before knowledge of the fact could reach the first historian, it must have passed through many mouths. After it was written down, each new copy is a new object, and we know its connection with the previous copy only by experience and observation. So the preceding reasoning might seem to imply that the evidence of all ancient history must by now be lost, or at least will be lost in time, as the chain of causes grows and stretches to greater lengths. But suppose the world of learning and the art of printing continue on the same footing as now. It seems contrary to common sense to think that our descendants, even after a thousand ages, could ever doubt whether there had been such a man as *Julius Caesar*. So this may be considered an objection to the present system. If belief consisted only in a certain vivacity conveyed from an original impression, it would fade with the length of the transition and must at last be utterly extinguished. Conversely, if belief on some occasions cannot be extinguished in this way, it must be something other than that vivacity.

1.3.13.5 Before I answer this objection, I shall observe that a very famous argument against the Christian religion has been borrowed from this topic, but with one difference. That argument supposed that the connection between each link in the chain of human testimony goes no further than probability, and is open to some degree of doubt and uncertainty. And indeed it must be admitted that, on this way of looking at the subject (which, how-

ever, is not a true one), every history or tradition must in the end lose all its force and evidence. Every new probability reduces the original conviction. However great that conviction is supposed to be, it cannot possibly survive such repeated reductions. This is true in general, though we shall find later[12] that there is one very memorable exception, which is of great consequence for the present subject of the understanding.

1.3.13.6 Meanwhile, let us answer the preceding objection on the assumption that historical evidence amounts at first to a complete proof. The present impression is the foundation of belief, and the links connecting any original fact with it are countless. But they are all of the same kind, and they depend on the faithfulness of printers and copyists. One edition passes into another, that into a third, and so on, until we reach the volume we are now reading. There is no variation in the steps. Once we know one, we know them all; and once we have made one step, we can have no qualms about the rest. This circumstance alone preserves the evidence of history, and it will carry the memory of the present age down to the latest generations. Suppose the whole long chain of causes and effects connecting any past event with any volume of history were made up of parts that differed from each other, each of which the mind had to conceive separately. Then we could not possibly keep any belief or evidence to the end. But most of these proofs resemble each other perfectly. So the mind runs easily along them, jumps readily from one part to another, and forms only a confused and general notion of each link. In this way a long chain of argument does as little to reduce the original vivacity as a much shorter chain would do if its parts differed from each other and each required separate consideration.

12 HUME'S NOTE. Part IV, Section 1.

GENERAL RULES AND PREJUDICE

Hasty general rules produce prejudice, and only better general rules can correct it.

1.3.13.7 A fourth unphilosophical kind of probability comes from general rules that we rashly form for ourselves. These are the source of what we properly call *prejudice*. An *Irishman* cannot have wit, and a Frenchman cannot have solidity. So even when, in some particular case, the conversation of the former is plainly very agreeable and that of the latter very judicious, we have developed such a prejudice against them that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason. Human nature is very prone to errors of this kind, and perhaps this nation is as prone as any other.

1.3.13.8 Someone may ask why people form general rules and let them influence their judgment, even against present observation and experience. I would answer that in my opinion this comes from the very principles on which all judgments about causes and effects depend. Our judgments about cause and effect come from habit and experience. When we have been used to seeing one object united with another, our imagination passes from the first to the second by a natural transition. This transition comes before reflection and cannot be prevented by it. Now it is the nature of custom to operate with full force when we are presented with objects exactly the same as those we have become accustomed to. But custom also operates to a lesser degree when we come across similar objects. The habit loses some of its force with every difference, but it is seldom entirely destroyed where any important circumstances remain the same. A man who has acquired a habit of eating fruit by eating pears or peaches will content himself with melons when he cannot find his favorite fruit. In the same way, someone who has become a drunkard on red wine will be drawn almost as violently to white if it is offered to him. I have used this principle to account for the kind of probability derived from analogy. There

we transfer our experience of past instances to objects that resemble those we have experienced but are not exactly the same. As the resemblance fades, the probability decreases; but it still has some force as long as any traces of the resemblance remain.

1.3.13.9 We may carry this observation further. Custom is the foundation of all our judgments, yet it sometimes affects the imagination in opposition to the judgment, and produces a conflict in our sentiments about the same object. Let me explain. In almost all kinds of causes there is a complex of circumstances. Some are essential and others superfluous: some are absolutely required for producing the effect, and others are joined with it only by accident. Now we may observe what happens when these superfluous circumstances are numerous and striking, and frequently joined with the essential ones. They then have such an influence on the imagination that, even when the essential ones are absent, they carry us on to conceive the usual effect. They also give that conception a force and vivacity that make it superior to mere fictions of the imagination. We may correct this tendency by reflecting on the nature of those circumstances. But it is still certain that custom gets there first and gives the imagination a bias.

1.3.13.10 To illustrate this with a familiar example, consider a man who is hung out from a high tower in an iron cage. He cannot help trembling when he looks at the drop below him. Yet he knows he is perfectly safe from falling, from his experience of the solidity of the iron that supports him. And the ideas of falling and descent, of harm and death, come solely from custom and experience. The same custom goes beyond the instances it comes from and to which it perfectly corresponds. It influences his ideas of objects that are similar in some respects but do not fall precisely under the same rule. The circumstances of depth and descent strike him so strongly that their influence cannot be destroyed by the contrary circumstances of support and solidity, which ought to give him complete security. His imagination runs away with its object and stirs up a passion proportioned to

it. That passion returns upon the imagination and enlivens the idea. This lively idea has a new influence on the passion and in turn increases its force and violence. So his imagination and his feelings support each other in this way, and together they give the whole thing a very great influence on him.

1.3.13.11 But why look for other examples, when the present subject of philosophical probabilities offers so obvious a one? These effects of custom set judgment and imagination against each other. According to my system, all reasonings are nothing but effects of custom, and custom has no influence except by enlivening the imagination and giving us a strong conception of some object. It might therefore be concluded that our judgment and our imagination can never be at odds, and that custom cannot act on the imagination in a way that sets it against the judgment. The only way we can remove this difficulty is by supposing the influence of general rules. We shall later take[13] notice of some general rules by which we ought to regulate our judgment about causes and effects. These rules are formed on the nature of our understanding, and on our experience of how it operates in the judgments we form about objects. By them we learn to distinguish accidental circumstances from efficacious causes. When we find that an effect can be produced without some particular circumstance being present, we conclude that the circumstance is not part of the efficacious cause, however frequently it is joined with it. But this frequent conjunction necessarily has some effect on the imagination, despite the opposite conclusion drawn from general rules. The opposition of these two principles produces a conflict in our thoughts, and it makes us ascribe the one inference to our judgment and the other to our imagination. We attribute the general rule to our judgment, as being broader and more constant. We attribute the exception to the imagination, as being more capricious and uncertain.

1.3.13.12 So our general rules are in a way set against each other. Suppose an object appears that resembles some cause in very significant circumstances. The imagination naturally carries us

13 HUME'S NOTE. Section 15.

to a lively conception of the usual effect, even though the object differs from that cause in the most important and most efficacious circumstances. Here is the first influence of general rules. But then we review this act of the mind and compare it with the more general and authoritative operations of the understanding. We find it to be irregular in nature and destructive of all the best-established principles of reasoning, and this is why we reject it. This is a second influence of general rules, and it involves condemning the first. Sometimes the one prevails, sometimes the other, depending on a person's disposition and character. Ordinary people are usually guided by the first, and wise people by the second. Meanwhile the skeptics may here enjoy observing a new and striking contradiction in our reason. They may see all philosophy on the point of being overturned by a principle of human nature, and then rescued by a new direction of that very same principle. Following general rules is a very unphilosophical kind of probability. And yet it is only by following them that we can correct this and all other unphilosophical probabilities.

1.3.13.13 We have cases where general rules act on the imagination even against the judgment. So we need not be surprised to see their effects increase when they are joined with the judgment, or to find that they then give the ideas they present to us a greater force than any other ideas have. Everyone knows there is an indirect way of hinting at praise or blame that is much less shocking than openly flattering or censuring someone. Someone may communicate his sentiments through such covert hints and make them known as certainly as if he had disclosed them openly. Even so, their influence is certainly not as strong and powerful. Someone who lashes me with veiled strokes of satire does not rouse my indignation as much as if he told me flatly that I was a fool and a coxcomb, though I understand his meaning just as well as if he had. This difference is to be attributed to the influence of general rules.

1.3.13.14 Whether a person openly insults me or slyly hints at his contempt, in neither case do I perceive his sentiment or opinion

directly. I become aware of it only by signs, that is, by its effects. So the only difference between these two cases is this. In openly disclosing his sentiments, he uses signs that are general and universal. In the covert hint, he uses signs that are more peculiar and uncommon. The effect of this circumstance is that the imagination, in running from the present impression to the absent idea, makes the transition more easily where the connection is common and universal than where it is rarer and more particular. So in the first case it conceives the object with greater force. Accordingly, we may note that openly declaring our sentiments is called taking off the mask, while hinting at our opinions covertly is said to be veiling them. Here the difference between an idea produced by a general connection and one arising from a particular connection is compared to the difference between an impression and an idea. This difference in the imagination has a corresponding effect on the passions, and another circumstance increases that effect. A covert hint of anger or contempt shows that we still have some regard for the person and avoid insulting him directly. This makes a veiled satire less disagreeable. But this too depends on the same principle. If an idea were not weaker when merely hinted at, it would never be thought a mark of greater respect to proceed in this way rather than the other.

1.3.13.15 Sometimes crude abuse is less displeasing than subtle satire. In a way it avenges us for the injury at the very moment the injury is done, because it gives us good reason to blame and despise the person who injures us. But this phenomenon too depends on the same principle. Why do we blame all coarse and insulting language, unless because we consider it contrary to good manners and humanity? And why is it contrary to them, unless because it is more shocking than any subtle satire? The rules of good manners condemn whatever is openly offensive and causes noticeable pain and embarrassment to the people we are talking with. Once this is established, abusive language is universally blamed. It then gives less pain because of its coarseness and incivility, which make the person who uses it con-

temptible. It becomes less disagreeable merely because it is originally more so. And it is more disagreeable because it allows an inference by general and common rules that are obvious and undeniable.

1.3.13.16 To this explanation of the different influence of open and veiled flattery or satire, I shall add the consideration of another phenomenon that is analogous to it. There are many points of honor, for both men and women, whose violation the world never excuses when it is open and admitted. But the world is more inclined to overlook such a violation when appearances are kept up and the transgression is secret and hidden. Even those who know with equal certainty that the fault has been committed forgive it more easily when the proofs seem somewhat indirect and ambiguous than when they are direct and undeniable. The same idea is presented in both cases and, strictly speaking, the judgment assents to it equally. Yet its influence differs because of the different way it is presented.

1.3.13.17 Now let us compare these two cases, the open and the hidden violation of the laws of honor. We shall find that the difference between them is this. In the first case the sign from which we infer the blameworthy action is single, and it is enough by itself to be the foundation of our reasoning and judgment. In the second case the signs are numerous. Taken alone, they decide little or nothing unless they are accompanied by many tiny, almost imperceptible circumstances. But it is certainly true that any reasoning is more convincing the more single and unified it looks to the eye. It is also more convincing the less work it gives the imagination in gathering up all its parts and running from them to the correlative idea that forms the conclusion. The labor of thought disturbs the regular progress of the sentiments, as we shall observe shortly.[14] The idea does not strike us with as much vivacity, and so it has less influence on the passions and the imagination.

1.3.13.18 From the same principles we can account for two observations of *Cardinal de Retz*: that there are many things in which

14 HUME'S NOTE. Part IV, Section 1.

the world wishes to be deceived, and that it more readily excuses a person for acting against the decorum of his profession and character than for speaking against it. A fault in words is usually more open and distinct than a fault in actions. Actions allow many extenuating excuses, and they do not reveal so clearly the intentions and aims of the person acting.[15]

1.3.13.19 So on the whole it appears that every kind of opinion or judgment that falls short of knowledge comes entirely from the force and vivacity of the perception. These qualities constitute in the mind what we call the *belief* in the existence of any object. This force and vivacity are most conspicuous in the memory. So our confidence in the truthfulness of that faculty is the greatest imaginable, and in many respects it equals the assurance of a demonstration. The next degree of these qualities comes from the relation of cause and effect. This too is very great, especially when experience finds the conjunction to be perfectly constant, and when the object present to us exactly resembles those we have experienced. But below this degree of evidence there are many others. Each has an influence on the passions and imagination proportioned to the degree of force and vivacity it communicates to the ideas. It is by habit that we make the transition from cause to effect, and it is from some present impression that we borrow the vivacity we spread over the correlative idea. The evidence can be weakened in several ways. We may not have observed enough instances to produce a strong habit, or the instances may be contrary to each other. The resemblance may not be exact, or the present impression may be faint and obscure. The experience may be partly erased from memory, or the connection may depend on a long chain of objects. Or the inference may come from general rules and yet not conform to them. In all these cases the evidence decreases as the force and intensity of the idea decrease. This, then, is the nature of judgment and probability.

1.3.13.20 Each part of this system is founded on solid arguments. But what chiefly gives it authority is that its parts agree, and that

each part is needed to explain another. The belief that attends our memory is of the same nature as the belief that comes from our judgments. Nor is there any difference between a judgment derived from a constant and uniform connection of causes and effects and one that depends on an interrupted and uncertain connection. Indeed it is evident that whenever the mind decides from contrary experiments, it is first divided within itself. It inclines to each side in proportion to the number of experiments we have seen and remember. This contest is finally settled in favor of the side on which we observe the greater number of these experiments. But the evidence still loses force in proportion to the number of opposing experiments. Each possibility that makes up the probability acts separately on the imagination. The larger collection of possibilities finally prevails, with a force proportionate to its superiority. All these phenomena lead directly to the preceding system, and it will never be possible to give a satisfactory and consistent explanation of them on any other principles. Unless we regard these judgments as the effects of custom on the imagination, we shall lose ourselves in endless contradiction and absurdity.

THE IDEA OF NECESSARY CONNECTION

No impression of power is found in objects; necessity is a determination of the mind produced by custom.

1.3.14.1 I have now explained how we reason beyond our immediate impressions and conclude that such particular causes must have such particular effects. We must now retrace our steps to examine the question that[16] first occurred to us and that we dropped along the way: what is our idea of necessity when we say that two objects are necessarily connected? On this point I repeat what I have often had occasion to note. We have no idea that is not derived from an impression. So if we claim really to

15 Cardinal de Retz (1613–79), French churchman and conspirator, known for his *Memoirs*.

16 HUME'S NOTE. Section 2.

have such an idea of necessity, we must find some impression that gives rise to it. To do this, I consider in what objects necessity is commonly supposed to lie. I find that it is always ascribed to causes and effects. So I turn my eye to two objects supposed to stand in that relation, and I examine them in every situation they can be placed in. I immediately see that they are contiguous in time and place, and that the object we call the cause precedes the one we call the effect. In no single instance can I go any further, and I cannot discover any third relation between these objects. So I widen my view to take in several instances, where I find like objects always existing in like relations of contiguity and succession. At first sight this seems to do little for my purpose. Reflecting on several instances only repeats the same objects, and so can never give rise to a new idea. But on further inquiry I find that the repetition is not the same in every respect. It produces a new impression, and by that means the idea I am now examining. For after frequent repetition I find that, when one of the objects appears, the mind is determined by custom to consider its usual companion. It also considers that companion in a stronger light because of its relation to the first object. It is this impression, then, or determination, that gives me the idea of necessity.

1.3.14.2 I have no doubt that these conclusions will at first be accepted without difficulty, as obvious deductions from principles we have already established and have often used in our reasoning. This obviousness, both in the first principles and in the deductions, may lead us carelessly into the conclusion and make us imagine it contains nothing extraordinary or worth our curiosity. But though such inattention may make this reasoning easier to accept, it will also make it easier to forget. For this reason I think it right to give a warning that I have just examined one of the most sublime questions in philosophy, namely the question of the power and efficacy of causes, in which all the sciences seem to have so great a stake. Such a warning will naturally rouse the reader's attention and make him want a fuller account of my doctrine, and of the arguments

on which it rests. This request is so reasonable that I cannot refuse to meet it, especially as I hope that these principles, the more they are examined, will gain the more force and evidence.

1.3.14.3 No question has caused more disputes among philosophers, ancient and modern, than this one about the efficacy of causes, that is, the quality which makes them be followed by their effects. Its importance and its difficulty have both played a part. But before they entered into these disputes, it seems to me it would not have been out of place to examine what idea we have of the efficacy that is the subject of the controversy. This is what I find chiefly missing in their reasonings, and what I will try to supply here.

1.3.14.4 I begin by observing that the terms *efficacy, agency, power, force, energy, necessity, connection*, and *productive quality* are all nearly synonymous, and so it is absurd to use any of them in defining the rest. By this observation we reject at once all the common definitions philosophers have given of power and efficacy. Instead of searching for the idea in these definitions, we must look for it in the impressions from which it is originally derived. If it is a complex idea, it must arise from complex impressions. If simple, from simple impressions.

1.3.14.5 I believe the most general and most popular explanation of this matter is to say[17] that we arrive at last at the idea of power and efficacy by the following reasoning. We find from experience that there are several new productions in matter, such as the motions and changes of bodies, and we conclude that there must somewhere be a power capable of producing them. But to be convinced that this explanation is more popular than philosophical, we need only reflect on two very obvious principles. First, reason alone can never give rise to any original idea. Second, reason, as distinguished from experience, can never make us conclude that a cause or productive quality is absolutely required for every beginning of existence. Both these points have been sufficiently explained, so I will not insist on them any further now.

17 HUME'S NOTE. See Mr. Locke, the chapter on power.

1.3.14.6 I will only infer from them that, since reason can never give rise to the idea of efficacy, that idea must be derived from experience. It must come from some particular instances of this efficacy, which make their way into the mind by the common channels of sensation or reflection. Ideas always represent their objects or impressions, and conversely, some objects are necessary to give rise to every idea. If we claim, therefore, to have any accurate idea of this efficacy, we must produce some instance in which the efficacy is plainly discoverable to the mind, and its operations obvious to our consciousness or sensation. If we refuse this, we admit that the idea is impossible and imaginary. The principle of innate ideas is the only thing that could rescue us from this dilemma, and it has already been refuted and is now almost universally rejected in the learned world. Our present business, then, must be to find some natural production where the operation and efficacy of a cause can be clearly conceived and understood by the mind, without any risk of obscurity or mistake.

1.3.14.7 In this search we get very little encouragement from the enormous diversity found in the opinions of those philosophers who have claimed to explain the secret force and energy of causes.[18] Some maintain that bodies operate by their substantial form, others by their accidents or qualities, several by their matter and form, some by their form and accidents, and others by certain virtues and faculties distinct from all these. All these views, again, are mixed and varied in a thousand different ways. This creates a strong presumption that none of them has any solidity or evidence, and that the supposition of an efficacy in any of the known qualities of matter is entirely without foundation. This presumption must grow stronger when we consider that these principles of substantial forms, accidents, and fac-

18 HUME'S NOTE. See Father Malebranche, Book VI, Part 2, Chapter 3, and the illustrations on it.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), French philosopher, in *The Search after Truth* (1674–75); the "illustrations" are the *Elucidations* he added to it.

ulties are not really any of the known properties of bodies, but are completely unintelligible and inexplicable. For it is obvious that philosophers would never have resorted to such obscure and uncertain principles if they had found any satisfaction in clear and intelligible ones. This is especially true in a matter like this one, which must be an object of the simplest understanding, if not of the senses. On the whole, we may conclude that it is impossible, in any single instance, to show the principle in which the force and agency of a cause is located. On this point the most refined and the most ordinary understandings are equally at a loss. If anyone sees fit to refute this claim, he need not go to the trouble of inventing long arguments. He can simply show us an instance of a cause in which we discover the power or operating principle. We are often obliged to use this challenge, since it is almost the only means of proving a negative in philosophy.

1.3.14.8 All the attempts to pin down this power have met with so little success that philosophers have at last been obliged to conclude that the ultimate force and efficacy of nature is completely unknown to us, and that it is useless to search for it in any of the known qualities of matter. On this they are almost unanimous. Their views differ only in the inference they draw from it. Some of them, the *Cartesians* in particular, have laid it down as a principle that we are perfectly acquainted with the essence of matter. They have quite naturally inferred from this that matter has no efficacy, and that it cannot of itself communicate motion or produce any of the effects we ascribe to it. Since the essence of matter consists in extension, and extension implies not actual motion but only mobility, they conclude that the energy which produces motion cannot lie in extension.[19]

1.3.14.9 This conclusion leads them to another, which they regard as completely unavoidable. Matter, they say, is in itself entirely inactive and lacks any power by which it could produce, continue, or communicate motion. But these effects are evident to our senses, and the power that produces them must be loc-

19 The followers of René Descartes (1596–1650).

ated somewhere. So it must lie in the *deity*, that divine being who contains in his nature all excellence and perfection. It is the deity, therefore, who is the prime mover of the universe. He not only first created matter and gave it its original impulse, but also, by a continual exercise of omnipotence, sustains its existence and successively gives it all the motions, configurations, and qualities it has.

1.3.14.10 This opinion is certainly very curious and well worth our attention. But examining it here will seem unnecessary if we reflect for a moment on why we are taking notice of it now. We have established as a principle that all ideas are derived from impressions or some earlier perceptions. It follows that we cannot possibly have any idea of power and efficacy unless some instances can be produced in which this power is perceived to exert itself. Now, since such instances can never be found in bodies, the Cartesians, proceeding on their principle of innate ideas, have resorted to a supreme spirit or deity. They regard him as the only active being in the universe and the immediate cause of every change in matter. But once the principle of innate ideas is granted to be false, it follows that the supposition of a deity is of no help in accounting for the idea of agency. We search for that idea in vain in all the objects presented to our senses and in all those we are inwardly conscious of in our own minds. For if every idea is derived from an impression, the idea of a deity comes from the same source. And if no impression, whether of sensation or reflection, implies any force or efficacy, it is equally impossible to discover or even imagine any such active principle in the deity. These philosophers have concluded that matter cannot have any efficacious principle, because no such principle can be discovered in it. The same line of reasoning should therefore lead them to exclude it from the supreme being. Or if they consider that opinion absurd and impious, as it really is, I will tell them how they can avoid it. They can conclude from the very start that they have no adequate idea of power or efficacy in any object, since they can-

not discover one single instance of it, whether in body or in spirit, in higher natures or in lower ones.

1.3.14.11 The same conclusion is unavoidable on the hypothesis of those who maintain the efficacy of second causes and attribute a derivative but real power and energy to matter. They admit that this energy does not lie in any of the known qualities of matter, so the difficulty about the origin of its idea still remains. If we really have an idea of power, we may attribute power to an unknown quality. But that idea cannot possibly be derived from such a quality, and there is nothing in the known qualities that can produce it. It follows that we deceive ourselves when we imagine we possess any idea of this kind, in the way we commonly understand it. All ideas are derived from impressions and represent them. We never have any impression that contains any power or efficacy. Therefore we never have any idea of power.

1.3.14.12 Some have claimed that we feel an energy or power in our own mind. Having acquired the idea of power in this way, they say, we transfer that quality to matter, where we cannot discover it directly. The motions of our body and the thoughts and feelings of our mind obey the will, they say, and we look no further for an accurate notion of force or power. But to see how fallacious this reasoning is, we need only consider that the will, regarded here as a cause, has no more discoverable connection with its effects than any material cause has with its own effect. Far from our perceiving the connection between an act of volition and a motion of the body, it is admitted that no effect is harder to explain from the powers and essence of thought and matter. Nor is the will's command over our mind any more intelligible. There, too, the effect is distinguishable and separable from the cause, and could not be foreseen without experience of their constant conjunction. We have command over our mind to a certain degree, but beyond that we lose all control over it. And it is clearly impossible to set any precise limits to our authority unless we consult experience. In short, the actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same as those of matter. We perceive

only their constant conjunction, and we can never reason beyond it. No internal impression has any more apparent energy than external objects have. Philosophers admit that matter operates by an unknown force. So it would be vain to hope to get an idea of force by consulting our own minds.[20]

1.3.14.13 It has been established as a certain principle that general or abstract ideas are nothing but individual ones taken in a certain light. It is also established that, in reflecting on any object, it is as impossible to exclude all particular degrees of quantity and quality from our thought as it is to exclude them from the real nature of things. If we have any idea of power in general, then, we must also be able to conceive some particular kind of it. Power cannot exist alone but is always regarded as an attribute of some being or existence. So we must be able to place this power in some particular being, and conceive that being as having a real force and energy by which a particular effect necessarily results from its operation. We must distinctly and particularly conceive the connection between the cause and effect, and be able to declare, from simply looking at the one, that it must be followed or preceded by the other. This is the true way of conceiving a particular power in a particular body. A general idea is impossible without an individual one, so where the individual idea is impossible, the general one can certainly never exist. Now nothing is more evident than that the human mind cannot form such an idea of two objects as to conceive any connection between them, or understand distinctly the power or efficacy by which they are united. Such a connection would amount to a demonstration. It would imply that it was absolutely impossible for the one object not to follow the other, or to be conceived not to follow it. That kind of connection has already been rejected in all cases. If anyone holds the opposite

20 HUME'S NOTE. The same imperfection affects our ideas of the Deity, but this can have no effect on either religion or morals. The order of the universe proves an omnipotent mind, that is, a mind whose will is *constantly attended* by the obedience of every creature and being. Nothing more is needed to provide a foundation for all the articles of religion. Nor is it necessary for us to form a distinct idea of the force and energy of the supreme Being.

opinion and thinks he has arrived at a notion of power in some particular object, I ask him to point that object out to me. But I despair of meeting such a person, and until I do, I cannot help drawing a conclusion. Since we can never distinctly conceive how any particular power could possibly reside in any particular object, we deceive ourselves in imagining that we can form any such general idea.

1.3.14.14 So on the whole we may infer the following. We talk of some being, whether of a higher or lower nature, as having a power or force proportioned to some effect. We speak of a necessary connection between objects, and suppose that this connection depends on an efficacy or energy that some of these objects possess. In all these expressions, so applied, we really have no distinct meaning, and are only using common words without any clear and determinate ideas. But it is more likely that these expressions lose their true meaning here by being wrongly applied than that they never have any meaning. So it will be worth giving the subject further consideration, to see whether we can perhaps discover the nature and origin of the ideas we attach to them.

1.3.14.15 Suppose two objects are presented to us, one of which is the cause and the other the effect. It is plain that from simply considering one or both of these objects we will never perceive the tie by which they are united, or be able to declare with certainty that there is a connection between them. It is not, therefore, from any single instance that we arrive at the idea of cause and effect, of a necessary connection, of power, of force, of energy, and of efficacy. If we never saw anything but particular conjunctions of objects, entirely different from one another, we would never be able to form any such ideas.

1.3.14.16 But again, suppose we observe several instances in which the same objects are always conjoined. We immediately conceive a connection between them and begin to draw an inference from one to the other. This multiplicity of resembling instances, therefore, constitutes the very essence of power or connection, and is the source from which the idea of it arises. To

understand the idea of power, then, we must consider that multiplicity, and I ask nothing more to solve the difficulty that has perplexed us for so long. For this is how I reason. The repetition of perfectly similar instances can never by itself give rise to an original idea different from what is found in any particular instance. This has been observed already, and it clearly follows from our fundamental principle that all ideas are copied from impressions. The idea of power is a new original idea, not to be found in any one instance, and yet it arises from the repetition of several instances. It follows that the repetition alone does not have that effect, but must either discover or produce something new, which is the source of that idea. If the repetition neither discovered nor produced anything new, our ideas might be multiplied by it, but they would not be enlarged beyond what they are after observing one single instance. Every enlargement (such as the idea of power or connection) that arises from the multiplicity of similar instances is therefore copied from some effects of the multiplicity, and will be perfectly understood once we understand these effects. Wherever we find something new discovered or produced by the repetition, that is where we must place the power, and we must never look for it in any other object.

1.3.14.17 But it is evident, in the first place, that the repetition of like objects in like relations of succession and contiguity discovers nothing new in any one of them. As has already been proved, we can draw no inference from it, nor make it the subject of either our demonstrative or our probable reasonings.[21] Indeed, even if we could draw an inference, it would be of no consequence here, since no kind of reasoning can give rise to a new idea such as this idea of power. Wherever we reason, we must already have clear ideas that can be the objects of our reasoning. Conception always comes before understanding. Where the one is obscure, the other is uncertain, and where the one fails, the other must fail too.

1.3.14.18 Second, it is certain that this repetition of similar objects in similar situations produces nothing new either in these objects or in any external body. For it will readily be granted that the several instances we have of the conjunction of resembling causes and effects are in themselves entirely independent. The communication of motion I now see result from the collision of two billiard balls is totally distinct from the one I saw result from such an impact a year ago. These impacts have no influence on each other. They are entirely separated by time and place, and the one might have existed and communicated motion even if the other had never existed.

1.3.14.19 There is, then, nothing new either discovered or produced in any objects by their constant conjunction and by the uninterrupted resemblance of their relations of succession and contiguity. But it is from this resemblance that the ideas of necessity, power, and efficacy are derived. These ideas, therefore, do not represent anything that does or could belong to the objects that are constantly conjoined. From every angle we examine it, this argument will be found completely unanswerable. Similar instances are still the first source of our idea of power or necessity, even though by their similarity they have no influence either on each other or on any external object. We must, therefore, turn somewhere else to look for the origin of that idea.

NECESSITY IS IN THE MIND

The idea of necessity is copied from the felt determination of the mind to pass from cause to effect.

1.3.14.20 The several resembling instances that give rise to the idea of power have no influence on each other, and can never produce any new quality in the object that could be the model of that idea. Yet the observation of this resemblance produces a new impression in the mind, and this is the idea's real model. For after we have observed the resemblance in a sufficient num-

21 HUME'S NOTE. Section 6.

ber of instances, we immediately feel a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and to conceive it in a stronger light because of that relation. This determination is the only effect of the resemblance, so it must be the same as power or efficacy, whose idea is derived from the resemblance. The several instances of resembling conjunctions lead us to the notion of power and necessity. These instances are in themselves totally distinct from each other, and have no union except in the mind that observes them and collects their ideas. Necessity, then, is the effect of this observation. It is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another. Unless we consider it in this light, we can never arrive at the faintest notion of it, or be able to attribute it to external or internal objects, to spirit or body, to causes or effects.

1.3.14.21 The necessary connection between causes and effects is the foundation of our inference from one to the other. The foundation of our inference is the transition arising from the accustomed union. These, therefore, are the same.

1.3.14.22 The idea of necessity arises from some impression. No impression conveyed by our senses can give rise to that idea. It must, therefore, be derived from some internal impression, or impression of reflection. The only internal impression that has anything to do with the present question is the propensity, produced by custom, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. This, therefore, is the essence of necessity. On the whole, necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects. Nor is it possible for us ever to form the faintest idea of it considered as a quality in bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is nothing but that determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects and from effects to causes, according to their experienced union.

1.3.14.23 Thus the necessity that makes two times two equal four, or the three angles of a triangle equal two right angles, lies only in the act of the understanding by which we consider and compare these ideas. In the same way, the necessity or power that

unites causes and effects lies in the determination of the mind to pass from the one to the other. The efficacy or energy of causes is located neither in the causes themselves, nor in the deity, nor in the combination of these two principles. It belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances. It is here that the real power of causes is located, along with their connection and necessity.

1.3.14.24 I am aware that, of all the paradoxes I have had or will have occasion to put forward in the course of this treatise, the present one is the most extreme. I can only hope it will be admitted, and will overcome the deep-rooted prejudices of mankind, by sheer force of solid proof and reasoning. Before we are reconciled to this doctrine, how often must we repeat certain points to ourselves? Simply looking at any two objects or actions, however related, can never give us any idea of power, or of a connection between them. This idea arises from the repetition of their union. The repetition neither discovers nor causes anything in the objects, but influences only the mind, by the customary transition it produces. This customary transition is, therefore, the same as the power and necessity. These are consequently qualities of perceptions, not of objects, and are felt internally by the soul, not perceived externally in bodies. Astonishment commonly accompanies everything extraordinary, and this astonishment immediately turns into the highest degree of esteem or contempt, depending on whether we approve or disapprove of the subject. The foregoing reasoning seems to me the shortest and most decisive imaginable. Still, I very much fear that with most readers the bias of the mind will win out and prejudice them against the present doctrine.

1.3.14.25 This contrary bias is easily explained. It is a common observation that the mind has a great propensity to spread itself over external objects. It joins to them any internal impressions they occasion, since these always appear at the same moment the objects reveal themselves to the senses. Thus certain sounds and smells are always found to accompany certain visible objects, and so we naturally imagine a conjunction, even in

place, between the objects and the qualities. We do this even though the qualities are of such a nature as to admit of no such conjunction, and really exist nowhere. But more on this later.[22] Meanwhile it is enough to observe that the same propensity is the reason why we suppose necessity and power to lie in the objects we consider, not in the mind that considers them. We suppose this even though we cannot form the faintest idea of that quality when it is not taken to be the determination of the mind to pass from the idea of an object to that of its usual attendant.

1.3.14.26 But though this is the only reasonable account we can give of necessity, the principles just mentioned have fixed the contrary notion so firmly in the mind that I have no doubt many will treat my views as extravagant and ridiculous. What! The efficacy of causes lies in the determination of the mind! As if causes did not operate entirely independently of the mind, and would not continue to operate even if no mind existed to contemplate them or reason about them. Thought may well depend on causes for its operation, but not causes on thought. This is to reverse the order of nature, and make secondary what is really primary. To every operation there corresponds a proportioned power, and this power must be located in the body that operates. If we remove the power from one cause, we must ascribe it to another. But to remove it from all causes and bestow it on a being that is related to the cause or effect only by perceiving them is a gross absurdity, contrary to the most certain principles of human reason.

1.3.14.27 My only reply to all these arguments is that the case here is much the same as if a blind man claimed to find a great many absurdities in the supposition that the color scarlet is not the same as the sound of a trumpet, or light the same as solidity. If we really have no idea of a power or efficacy in any object, or of any real connection between causes and effects, there will be little point in proving that an efficacy is necessary in all operations. We do not understand our own meaning when we talk this

22 HUME'S NOTE. Part IV, Section 5.

way. We are ignorantly confusing ideas that are entirely distinct from each other. I am indeed ready to grant that there may be several qualities, in both material and immaterial objects, with which we are utterly unacquainted. If we choose to call these *power* or *efficacy*, it will matter little to the world. But sometimes, instead of meaning these unknown qualities, we make the terms power and efficacy signify something of which we have a clear idea, and which is incompatible with the objects to which we apply it. Then obscurity and error begin, and we are led astray by a false philosophy. This is what happens when we transfer the determination of the thought to external objects and suppose some real, intelligible connection between them. That connection is a quality that can belong only to the mind that considers them.

1.3.14.28 As for the objection that the operations of nature are independent of our thought and reasoning, I grant it. That is why I observed that objects bear to each other the relations of contiguity and succession, that like objects may be observed in several instances to have like relations, and that all this is independent of, and prior to, the operations of the understanding. But if we go any further and ascribe a power or necessary connection to these objects, we are ascribing something we can never observe in them. We must draw the idea of it from what we feel internally in contemplating them. And I carry this so far that I am ready to turn my present reasoning into an instance of it, by a subtlety that will not be hard to grasp.

1.3.14.29 When any object is presented to us, it immediately conveys to the mind a lively idea of the object usually found to accompany it, and this determination of the mind forms the necessary connection of these objects. But when we shift our point of view from the objects to the perceptions, the impression is to be considered as the cause, and the lively idea as the effect. Their necessary connection is then the new determination we feel to pass from the idea of the one to that of the other. The uniting principle among our internal perceptions is as unintelligible as that among external objects, and we know it only by

experience. Now the nature and effects of experience have already been sufficiently examined and explained. Experience never gives us any insight into the internal structure or operating principle of objects. It only accustoms the mind to pass from one to another.

1.3.14.30 It is now time to gather up all the different parts of this reasoning and, by joining them together, form an exact definition of the relation of cause and effect, which is the subject of the present inquiry. We first examined our inference from the relation before explaining the relation itself. This order would not have been excusable if it had been possible to proceed by a different method. But the nature of the relation depends so much on that of the inference that we have been obliged to advance in this seemingly backward way, and to use terms before we were able to define them exactly or fix their meaning. We will now correct this fault by giving a precise definition of cause and effect.

TWO DEFINITIONS OF CAUSE

Hume defines cause both as a relation between objects and as an association in the mind.

1.3.14.31 Two definitions may be given of this relation. They differ only in presenting different views of the same object. One makes us consider it as a philosophical relation, a comparison of two ideas. The other makes us consider it as a natural relation, an association between them. We may define a *cause* to be an object prior and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of priority and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter. If this definition is thought defective because it is drawn from objects foreign to the cause, we may substitute this other definition in its place: A *cause* is an object prior and contiguous to another, and so united with it that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other. Should this

definition also be rejected for the same reason, I know no other remedy than for the people who show this fastidiousness to substitute a more accurate definition in its place. But for my part I must admit that I am not capable of such an undertaking. I examine with the utmost care those objects commonly called causes and effects. In considering a single instance, I find that the one object is prior and contiguous to the other. When I widen my view to consider several instances, I find only that like objects are constantly placed in like relations of succession and contiguity. Again, when I consider the influence of this constant conjunction, I see that such a relation can never be an object of reasoning. It can act on the mind only by means of custom, which determines the imagination to make a transition from the idea of one object to that of its usual attendant, and from the impression of one to a more lively idea of the other. However extraordinary these views may seem, I think it pointless to trouble myself with any further inquiry or reasoning on the subject. I will rest on them as on established maxims.

1.3.14.32 Before we leave this subject, it will only be proper to draw some corollaries from it, by which we may remove several prejudices and popular errors that have been very widespread in philosophy. First, we may learn from the foregoing doctrine that all causes are of the same kind. In particular, there is no foundation for the distinction we sometimes make between efficient causes and causes sine qua non, or between efficient causes and formal, material, exemplary, and final causes. Our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects. So wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient, and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind. For the same reason we must reject the distinction between cause and occasion, when these are supposed to signify anything essentially different from each other. If constant conjunction is implied in what we call an occasion, it is a real cause. If not, it is no relation at all, and cannot give rise to any argument or reasoning.

1.3.14.33 Second, the same line of reasoning will make us conclude that there is only one kind of necessity, just as there is only one kind of cause. The common distinction between moral and physical necessity therefore has no foundation in nature. This is clear from the preceding account of necessity. It is the constant conjunction of objects, together with the determination of the mind, that constitutes a physical necessity, and the removal of these is the same thing as chance. Objects must either be conjoined or not, and the mind must either be determined or not to pass from one object to another. So it is impossible to admit any middle ground between chance and an absolute necessity. If you weaken this conjunction and determination, you do not change the nature of the necessity. Even in the operation of bodies, these have different degrees of constancy and force without producing a different species of that relation.

1.3.14.34 The distinction we often make between *power* and the *exercise* of it is equally without foundation.

1.3.14.35 Third, we may now be able to overcome completely all the reluctance we so naturally feel toward the foregoing reasoning, in which we tried to prove that the necessity of a cause for every beginning of existence is not founded on any arguments, either demonstrative or intuitive. Such an opinion will not seem strange after the foregoing definitions. Suppose we define a cause to be an object prior and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in a like relation of priority and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter. Then we can easily conceive that there is no absolute or metaphysical necessity that every beginning of existence should be accompanied by such an object. If we define a cause to be *an object prior and contiguous to another, and so united with it in the imagination that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other*, we will find it still easier to assent to this opinion. Such an influence on the mind is in itself utterly extraordinary and incomprehensible, and we can be certain of its reality only from experience and observation.

1.3.14.36 I will add, as a fourth corollary, that we can never have reason to believe that any object exists of which we cannot form an idea. All our reasonings about existence are derived from causation. All our reasonings about causation are derived from the experienced conjunction of objects, not from any reasoning or reflection. So the same experience must give us a notion of these objects and must remove all mystery from our conclusions. This is so evident that it would hardly have deserved our attention, except that it heads off certain objections of this kind that might be raised against the reasonings about matter and substance that follow. I hardly need to point out that a full knowledge of the object is not required, only a knowledge of those qualities of it that we believe to exist.

RULES FOR JUDGING CAUSES

Hume sets out eight rules by which to judge when objects really are causes and effects.

1.3.15.1 According to the preceding doctrine, there are no objects that we can determine, by mere inspection and without consulting experience, to be the causes of any others. Nor are there any objects that we can determine with certainty in the same way not to be causes. Anything may produce anything. Creation, annihilation, motion, reason, volition: all these may arise from one another, or from any other object we can imagine. Nor will this seem strange if we compare two principles explained above: *that the constant conjunction of objects determines their causation, and*[23] *that, properly speaking, no objects are contrary to each other except existence and non-existence*. Where objects are not contrary, nothing prevents them from having the constant conjunction on which the relation of cause and effect entirely depends.

23 HUME'S NOTE. Part I, Section 5.

1.3.15.2 Since, then, it is possible for all objects to become causes or effects of one another, it may be useful to set down some general rules by which we can know when they really are so. (1)[24]

1.3.15.3 The cause and effect must be contiguous in space and time. (2)

1.3.15.4 The cause must be prior to the effect. (3)

1.3.15.5 There must be a constant union between the cause and the effect. It is chiefly this quality that constitutes the relation. (4)

1.3.15.6 The same cause always produces the same effect, and the same effect never arises except from the same cause. We derive this principle from experience, and it is the source of most of our philosophical reasonings. For when some clear experiment has shown us the causes or effects of any phenomenon, we immediately extend our observation to every phenomenon of the same kind, without waiting for the constant repetition from which the first idea of this relation is derived. (5)

1.3.15.7 Another principle depends on this one: where several different objects produce the same effect, it must be by means of some quality we find they have in common. For since like effects imply like causes, we must always ascribe the causation to the circumstance in which we find the resemblance. (6)

1.3.15.8 The following principle rests on the same reasoning. The difference in the effects of two resembling objects must come from the particular respect in which they differ. For since like causes always produce like effects, when in any instance we find our expectation disappointed, we must conclude that this irregularity comes from some difference in the causes. (7)

1.3.15.9 When an object increases or diminishes as its cause increases or diminishes, it should be regarded as a compound effect, arising from the union of the several different effects that arise from the several different parts of the cause. Here the absence or presence of one part of the cause is assumed to be always accompanied by the absence or presence of a propor-

24 Each number, (1) through (8), introduces the rule stated in the paragraph that follows it.

tionate part of the effect. This constant conjunction is sufficient proof that the one part is the cause of the other. We must be careful, however, not to draw such a conclusion from a few experiments. A certain degree of heat gives pleasure; if you lessen the heat, the pleasure lessens. But it does not follow that if you raise it beyond a certain degree, the pleasure will rise too; for we find that it turns into pain. (8)

1.3.15.10 The eighth and last rule I will mention is this: an object that exists for some time in its full perfection without producing any effect is not the sole cause of that effect, but needs the help of some other principle to advance its influence and operation. For since like effects necessarily follow from like causes, and at a contiguous time and place, their separation even for a moment shows that these causes are not complete ones.

1.3.15.11 This is all the *logic* I think it proper to use in my reasoning; and perhaps even this was not really needed, since the natural principles of our understanding might have supplied it. Our scholastic masterminds and logicians show no such superiority over ordinary people in reasoning and ability as would make us want to imitate them by laying down a long system of rules and precepts to direct our judgment in philosophy. All rules of this kind are very easy to invent but extremely hard to apply; and even experimental philosophy, which seems the most natural and simple of all, demands the utmost stretch of human judgment. Every phenomenon in nature is compounded and modified by so many different circumstances that, to reach the decisive point, we must carefully separate out whatever is superfluous and inquire by new experiments whether every particular circumstance of the first experiment was essential to it. These new experiments are open to the same kind of scrutiny; so it takes the utmost constancy to keep us persevering in our inquiry, and the utmost shrewdness to choose the right path among the many that present themselves. If this is so even in natural philosophy, how much more so in moral philosophy, where circumstances are far more complicated, and where the views and sentiments essential to any action of the mind are so

implicit and obscure that they often escape our closest attention —not only inexplicable in their causes but even unknown in their existence? I very much fear that the small success of my inquiries will make this remark sound more like an apology than a boast.

1.3.15.12 If anything can give me security on this point, it will be widening the range of my experiments as far as possible. For that reason it may be appropriate here to examine the reasoning faculty of animals as well as that of human beings.

THE REASON OF ANIMALS

Animals reason from experience by custom just as people do, which confirms Hume's system.

1.3.16.1 Next to the absurdity of denying an evident truth comes that of going to great lengths to defend it; and no truth seems to me more evident than that animals are endowed with thought and reason as well as humans. The arguments here are so obvious that they never escape even the most stupid and ignorant.

1.3.16.2 We are conscious that we ourselves, in adapting means to ends, are guided by reason and design, and that it is not ignorantly or by chance that we perform the actions that tend toward self-preservation, getting pleasure, and avoiding pain. So when we see other creatures, in millions of instances, perform similar actions and direct them to the same ends, all our principles of reason and probability carry us with irresistible force to believe that a similar cause is at work. In my view there is no need to illustrate this argument by listing particulars. The slightest attention will supply more than we need. The resemblance between the actions of animals and those of humans is so complete in this respect that the very first action of the first animal we care to pick will give us an unanswerable argument for the present doctrine.

1.3.16.3 This doctrine is as useful as it is obvious, and it gives us a kind of touchstone by which to test every system in this branch of philosophy. It is from the resemblance between the

external actions of animals and those we ourselves perform that we judge their internal actions to resemble ours as well; and the same principle of reasoning, carried one step further, will lead us to conclude that since our internal actions resemble each other, the causes from which they derive must also be alike. So when any hypothesis is put forward to explain a mental operation common to humans and animals, we must apply the same hypothesis to both. And since every true hypothesis will pass this test, I venture to say that no false one will ever survive it. The common defect of the systems philosophers have used to account for the actions of the mind is that they presuppose a subtlety and refinement of thought beyond the capacity not only of mere animals but even of children and ordinary people of our own species—who are nonetheless capable of the same emotions and affections as people of the most accomplished genius and understanding. Such subtlety is a clear proof that a system is false, just as the opposite simplicity is a proof that it is true.

1.3.16.4 Let us, then, put our present system about the nature of the understanding to this decisive test, and see whether it accounts for the reasonings of animals as well as for those of humans.

1.3.16.5 Here we must distinguish between the actions of animals that are of an ordinary kind and seem on a level with their common capacities, and the more extraordinary displays of shrewdness they sometimes show for their own preservation and the propagation of their species. A dog that avoids fire and cliffs, shies away from strangers, and fawns on his master is an example of the first kind. A bird that chooses the site and materials of her nest with such care and precision, and sits on her eggs for the proper time and in the proper season, with all the caution a chemist could bring to the most delicate operation, gives us a vivid example of the second.

1.3.16.6 As for the first kind of action, I claim that it proceeds from a reasoning that is not in itself different from, nor founded on different principles from, the reasoning that appears in human nature. First, there must be some impression immedi-

ately present to the animal's memory or senses to serve as the basis of its judgment. From the tone of his master's voice the dog infers his anger and foresees his own punishment. From a certain sensation affecting his sense of smell, he judges that his game is not far off.

1.3.16.7 Second, the inference he draws from the present impression is built on experience, and on his observation of how objects were conjoined in past instances. Vary this experience, and he varies his reasoning. Make a beating follow one sign or motion for a while, and afterward another, and he will draw different conclusions in turn, according to his most recent experience.

1.3.16.8 Now let any philosopher try to explain the act of the mind we call *belief*, and to give an account of the principles from which it derives, without appealing to the influence of custom on the imagination, and let his hypothesis apply equally to animals and to humans; once he has done this, I promise to adopt his view. But at the same time I ask, as a fair condition, that if my system is the only one that can meet all these terms, it be accepted as entirely satisfactory and convincing. And that it is the only one is evident almost without argument. Animals certainly never perceive any real connection among objects. So it is by experience that they infer one from another. They can never, by any argument, form the general conclusion that objects they have not experienced resemble those they have. It is therefore by means of custom alone that experience works on them. All this was evident enough in the case of humans. But in the case of animals there cannot be the slightest suspicion of a mistake—which must be admitted to be a strong confirmation, or rather an irresistible proof, of my system.

1.3.16.9 Nothing shows the power of habit to reconcile us to a phenomenon better than this: people are not astonished at the workings of their own reason, while at the same time they marvel at the instinct of animals and find it hard to explain, merely because it cannot be reduced to exactly the same principles. Properly considered, reason is nothing but a wonderful and

unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas and endows them with particular qualities according to their particular situations and relations. This instinct, it is true, arises from past observation and experience; but can anyone give the ultimate reason why past experience and observation produce such an effect, any more than why nature alone should produce it? Nature can certainly produce whatever can arise from habit. Indeed, habit is nothing but one of the principles of nature, and derives all its force from that origin.

Book I, Part 4: Of the sceptical and other systems of philosophy

Hume turns skepticism on reason and the senses, examines the soul and personal identity, and takes stock.

SECT. I. OF SCEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO REASON

1.4.1.1 In all demonstrative sciences the rules are certain and infallible; but when we apply them, our fallible and uncertain faculties are very apt to depart from them and fall into error. So in every piece of reasoning we must form a new judgment as a check or control on our first judgment or belief, and we must widen our view to take in a kind of history of all the cases in which our understanding has deceived us, compared with those in which its testimony was accurate and true. Our reason must be seen as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect—but a cause that may often be prevented from acting by the intrusion of other causes and by the inconstancy of our mental powers. In this way all knowledge degenerates into probability; and this probability is greater or less according to our experience of the reliability or deceitfulness of our understanding, and according to the simplicity or complexity of the question.

1.4.1.2 No algebraist or mathematician is so expert in his science as to place complete confidence in any truth the moment he discovers it, or to regard it as anything but a mere probability. Every time he goes over his proofs, his confidence grows; it grows still more with the approval of his friends; and it reaches its height with the universal assent and applause of the learned world. Now it is evident that this gradual increase of assurance

is nothing but the addition of new probabilities, and derives from the constant union of causes and effects, according to past experience and observation.

1.4.1.3 In accounts of any length or importance, merchants seldom rely on the infallible certainty of numbers for their security; instead, by the artificial structure of the accounts, they produce a probability beyond what comes from the skill and experience of the accountant. For that skill is plainly, in itself, some degree of probability, though uncertain and variable according to the accountant's experience and the length of the account. Now since no one will maintain that our assurance in a long calculation goes beyond probability, I can safely say that there is hardly any proposition about numbers of which we can have fuller security. For by gradually reducing the numbers, we can easily reduce the longest series of additions to the simplest question that can be formed—an addition of two single numbers; and on this supposition we will find it impossible to show the exact boundary between knowledge and probability, or to find the particular number at which the one ends and the other begins. But knowledge and probability are of such contrary and incompatible natures that they cannot gradually shade into each other, because they will not divide, but must be either entirely present or entirely absent. Besides, if any single addition were certain, every one would be, and so would the whole or total sum—unless the whole can differ from all its parts. I almost said that this was certain; but I realize that it too, like every other reasoning, must reduce itself and degenerate from knowledge into probability.

1.4.1.4 Since, then, all knowledge resolves itself into probability and in the end becomes of the same nature as the evidence we use in everyday life, we must now examine this latter kind of reasoning and see on what foundation it rests.

1.4.1.5 In every judgment we can form about probability, as well as about knowledge, we ought always to correct the first judgment, derived from the nature of the object, by another judgment, derived from the nature of the understanding. It is certain

that a person of solid sense and long experience ought to have, and usually does have, greater assurance in his opinions than someone foolish and ignorant, and that our views carry different degrees of authority, even with ourselves, in proportion to our degree of reason and experience. In the person of the best sense and longest experience, this authority is never complete, since even such a person must be conscious of many errors in the past and must still fear similar ones in the future. Here, then, a new kind of probability arises to correct and regulate the first and to fix its proper standard and proportion. Just as demonstration is subject to the control of probability, so probability is open to a further correction by a reflexive act of the mind, in which the nature of our understanding, and our reasoning from the first probability, become our objects.

1.4.1.6 Having thus found in every probability, besides the original uncertainty inherent in the subject, a new uncertainty derived from the weakness of the faculty that judges, and having adjusted these two together, we are obliged by our reason to add a new doubt, derived from the possibility of error in our assessment of the truth and reliability of our faculties. This doubt occurs to us immediately, and if we follow our reason closely, we cannot avoid giving a verdict on it. But this verdict, even if it favors our previous judgment, is founded only on probability, and so must weaken our first evidence still further; and it must itself be weakened by a fourth doubt of the same kind, and so on in infinitum—until at last nothing remains of the original probability, however great we suppose it to have been, and however small the reduction at each new uncertainty. No finite object can survive a reduction repeated *in infinitum*; and even the vastest quantity the human imagination can take in must in this way be reduced to nothing. However strong our first belief may be, it must inevitably perish by passing through so many new examinations, each of which takes away something of its force and vigor. When I reflect on the natural fallibility of my judgment, I have less confidence in my opinions than when I consider only the objects I am reasoning about; and when I go still further and

turn the scrutiny against every successive assessment I make of my faculties, all the rules of logic require a continual diminution, and in the end a total extinction, of belief and evidence.

1.4.1.7 If I were asked here whether I sincerely assent to this argument, which I seem to take such pains to press, and whether I am really one of those skeptics who hold that everything is uncertain and that our judgment has no measure of truth and falsehood in anything, I would reply that the question is entirely superfluous, and that neither I nor anyone else was ever sincerely and consistently of that opinion. Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity, has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel. We can no more refrain from viewing certain objects in a stronger and fuller light, because of their customary connection with a present impression, than we can stop ourselves from thinking as long as we are awake, or from seeing the bodies around us when we turn our eyes toward them in broad sunshine. Anyone who has gone to the trouble of refuting the quibbles of this total skepticism has really been arguing without an opponent, and trying to establish by argument a faculty that nature has already implanted in the mind and made unavoidable.

1.4.1.8 My aim, then, in setting out so carefully the arguments of that fanciful sect is only to make the reader aware of the truth of my hypothesis: that all our reasonings about causes and effects derive from nothing but custom, and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cogitative part of our nature. I have proved here that the very same principles that lead us to reach a decision on any subject, and to correct that decision by considering our talents and capacity and the state of our mind when we examined the subject—I say, I have proved that these same principles, when carried further and applied to every new reflexive judgment, must, by continually diminishing the original evidence, finally reduce it to nothing and utterly overturn all belief and opinion. So if belief were a simple act of thought, without any distinctive manner of conception or any added force and vivacity, it would inevitably destroy itself and

in every case end in a total suspension of judgment. But experience will convince anyone who thinks it worth trying that, though he can find no error in the foregoing arguments, he still goes on believing, thinking, and reasoning as usual. He may therefore safely conclude that his reasoning and belief are some sensation or distinctive manner of conception, which mere ideas and reflections cannot possibly destroy.

WHY DOUBT DOES NOT DESTROY BELIEF

Hume explains why the regress of doubts leaves belief standing: strained reasoning loses its hold on the imagination.

1.4.1.9 But here it may perhaps be asked how it happens, even on my hypothesis, that these arguments do not produce a total suspension of judgment, and how the mind ever keeps any degree of assurance on any subject. For since these new probabilities, which by their repetition constantly diminish the original evidence, rest on exactly the same principles—whether of thought or of sensation—as the primary judgment, it may seem unavoidable that in either case they must equally overturn it, and, by the opposition of contrary thoughts or sensations, reduce the mind to total uncertainty. Suppose some question is put to me, and after turning over the impressions of my memory and senses, and carrying my thoughts from them to the objects commonly conjoined with them, I feel a stronger and more forceful conception on one side than on the other. This strong conception forms my first decision. Suppose that I then examine my judgment itself, and, observing from experience that it is sometimes right and sometimes wrong, I consider it as governed by contrary principles or causes, some leading to truth and some to error; and in weighing these contrary causes I diminish, by a new probability, the assurance of my first decision. This new probability is open to the same diminution as the previous one, and so on, *in infinitum*. So the question is how it happens that, even after all this, we keep a degree of belief sufficient for our purposes, whether in philosophy or in everyday life.

1.4.1.10 I answer that after the first and second decision, as the action of the mind becomes forced and unnatural and the ideas faint and obscure, the influence of these principles on the imagination, and the vigor they add to or take from the thought, is by no means equal—even though the principles of judgment and the weighing of opposite causes are the same as at the very beginning. Where the mind does not reach its objects with ease and facility, the same principles do not have the same effect as in a more natural conception of the ideas; nor does the imagination feel a sensation in any way proportionate to the one that arises from its ordinary judgments and opinions. The attention is strained; the posture of the mind is uneasy; and the spirits, diverted from their natural course, are not governed in their movements by the same laws—or at least not to the same degree —as when they flow in their usual channel.

1.4.1.11 If we want similar cases, they are not hard to find. The present subject of metaphysics supplies them in abundance. The same argument that would have been thought convincing in reasoning about history or politics has little or no influence in these more abstruse subjects, even when it is perfectly understood—and that is because understanding it requires study and an effort of thought, and this effort of thought disturbs the operation of our sentiments, on which belief depends. It is the same in other subjects. Straining the imagination always hinders the regular flow of the passions and sentiments. A tragic poet who portrayed his heroes as very clever and witty in their misfortunes would never move the passions. Just as the emotions of the soul prevent any subtle reasoning and reflection, so these latter actions of the mind are equally damaging to the former. The mind, like the body, seems to be endowed with a certain precise degree of force and activity, which it never employs in one action except at the expense of all the rest. This is more evidently true where the actions are of quite different natures; for in that case the force of the mind is not only diverted but its very disposition is changed, so that we are unable to pass suddenly from one action to the other, and still less to perform both

at once. No wonder, then, that the conviction arising from subtle reasoning diminishes in proportion to the effort the imagination makes to enter into the reasoning and conceive it in all its parts. Belief, being a lively conception, can never be complete where it is not founded on something natural and easy.

1.4.1.12 This I take to be the true state of the question. I cannot approve of the shortcut some take with the skeptics, rejecting all their arguments at once without inquiry or examination. If the skeptical reasonings are strong, they say, that proves that reason has some force and authority; if weak, they can never be enough to invalidate all the conclusions of our understanding. This argument is not sound, because the skeptical reasonings—if it were possible for them to exist, and if they were not destroyed by their own subtlety—would be alternately strong and weak, according to the successive dispositions of the mind. Reason first appears in possession of the throne, laying down laws and imposing maxims with absolute sway and authority. Her enemy is therefore obliged to take shelter under her protection, and, by using rational arguments to prove the fallaciousness and feebleness of reason, produces, as it were, a warrant under her own hand and seal. At first this warrant has an authority proportioned to the present and immediate authority of reason, from which it derives. But since it is supposed to contradict reason, it gradually weakens the force of that governing power and its own at the same time, until at last both vanish into nothing by a regular and proper diminution. The skeptical and dogmatic reasons are of the same kind, though contrary in their operation and tendency; so where the dogmatic is strong, it has an enemy of equal force to contend with in the skeptical; and since their forces were equal at the start, they remain so as long as either survives; nor does one of them lose any force in the contest without taking as much from its opponent. It is fortunate, then, that nature breaks the force of all skeptical arguments in time and keeps them from having any significant influence on the understanding. If we had to rely entirely on their self-destruc-

tion, that could never happen until they had first overturned all conviction and totally destroyed human reason.

SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE SENSES

Hume asks what makes us believe in bodies, and whether the senses, reason or imagination produce it.

1.4.2.1 Thus the skeptic still goes on reasoning and believing, even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason; and by the same rule he must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, though he cannot claim to uphold its truth by any philosophical arguments. Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless judged it too important a matter to be entrusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes lead us to believe in the existence of body? But it is pointless to ask, Is there body or not? That is a point we must take for granted in all our reasonings.

1.4.2.2 The subject of our present inquiry, then, is the causes that lead us to believe in the existence of body. I will begin my reasoning on this topic with a distinction that may at first seem superfluous, but will greatly help in fully understanding what follows. We should examine separately two questions that are usually confused: why we attribute a continued existence to objects even when they are not present to the senses; and why we suppose them to have an existence *distinct* from the mind and perception. Under this last heading I include their situation as well as their relations, their external position as well as the independence of their existence and operation. These two questions about the continued and distinct existence of body are closely connected. For if the objects of our senses continue to exist even when they are not perceived, their existence is of course independent of and distinct from the perception; and conversely, if their existence is independent of and distinct from the perception, they must continue to exist even when they are not perceived. But though deciding the one question decides the other, we will keep this distinction in view, so that we may more

easily discover the principles of human nature from which the decision arises; and we will consider whether it is the senses, reason, or the imagination that produces the opinion of a continued or of a distinct existence. These are the only intelligible questions on the present subject. For as to the notion of external existence, taken as something specifically different from our perceptions,[1] we have already shown its absurdity.

1.4.2.3 To begin with the *senses*: it is evident that these faculties cannot give rise to the notion of the continued existence of their objects after those objects no longer appear to the senses. For that is a contradiction in terms, and supposes that the senses go on operating even after they have ceased all operation whatever. So these faculties, if they have any influence in the present case, must produce the opinion of a distinct existence, not of a continued one; and to do that, they must present their impressions either as images and representations, or as those very distinct and external existences themselves.

1.4.2.4 That our senses do not offer their impressions as images of something distinct, independent, and external is evident; for they convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the slightest hint of anything beyond it. A single perception can never produce the idea of a double existence except by some inference of either reason or the imagination. When the mind looks beyond what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be credited to the senses; and it certainly looks beyond when, from a single perception, it infers a double existence and supposes relations of resemblance and causation between the two.

1.4.2.5 So if our senses suggest any idea of distinct existences, they must convey the impressions as those very existences, by a kind of fallacy and illusion. On this point we may observe that all sensations are felt by the mind as they really are, and that when we doubt whether they present themselves as distinct objects or as mere impressions, the difficulty concerns not their nature but their relations and situation. Now if the senses

1 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 6.

presented our impressions as external to and independent of ourselves, both the objects and we ourselves would have to be evident to our senses; otherwise these faculties could not compare them. The difficulty, then, is how far we are ourselves the objects of our senses.

1.4.2.6 It is certain that there is no question in philosophy more abstruse than that of identity and the nature of the uniting principle that constitutes a person. Far from being able to settle this question by our senses alone, we must turn to the most profound metaphysics to give a satisfactory answer; and in everyday life it is evident that these ideas of self and person are never very fixed or determinate. It is absurd, then, to imagine that the senses can ever distinguish between ourselves and external objects.

1.4.2.7 Add to this that every impression, external and internal—passions, affections, sensations, pains and pleasures—is originally on the same footing; and that whatever other differences we may observe among them, they all appear in their true colors, as impressions or perceptions. And indeed, properly considered, it could hardly be otherwise, nor is it conceivable that our senses should be more capable of deceiving us about the situation and relations of our impressions than about their nature. For since all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness, they must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear. Since everything that enters the mind is in reality a perception, it is impossible that anything should appear to feeling as something different. That would be to suppose that even where we are most intimately conscious, we might be mistaken.

1.4.2.8 But rather than lose time examining whether it is possible for our senses to deceive us and represent our perceptions as distinct from ourselves—that is, as external to and independent of us—let us consider whether they actually do so, and whether this error comes from an immediate sensation or from some other causes.

1.4.2.9 To begin with the question of *external* existence, it may perhaps be said that, setting aside the metaphysical question of the identity of a thinking substance, our own body evidently belongs to us; and since several impressions appear outside the body, we suppose them to be outside ourselves as well. The paper I am now writing on is beyond my hand. The table is beyond the paper. The walls of the room are beyond the table. And when I glance toward the window, I perceive a great expanse of fields and buildings beyond my room. From all this it might be inferred that no faculty besides the senses is needed to convince us of the external existence of body. But to block this inference we need only weigh the following three considerations. First, strictly speaking, it is not our body we perceive when we look at our limbs and members, but certain impressions that enter by the senses; so ascribing a real and bodily existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind as hard to explain as the one we are now examining. Second, sounds, tastes, and smells, though the mind commonly regards them as continued, independent qualities, do not appear to have any existence in extension, and so cannot appear to the senses as located outside the body. Why we ascribe a place to them will be considered[2] later. Third, even our sight does not inform us of distance or outness (so to speak) immediately and without a certain reasoning and experience, as the most rational philosophers acknowledge.

1.4.2.10 As for the independence of our perceptions from ourselves, this can never be an object of the senses; any opinion we form about it must come from experience and observation. And we will see later that our conclusions from experience are far from favorable to the doctrine that our perceptions are independent. Meanwhile we may observe that when we talk of real distinct existences, we usually have their independence in view more than their external location in space, and we think an object has sufficient reality when its being is uninterrupted and

2 HUME'S NOTE. Section 5.

independent of the incessant changes we are conscious of in ourselves.

1.4.2.11 To sum up, then, what I have said about the senses: they give us no notion of continued existence, because they cannot operate beyond the extent in which they actually operate. Nor do they produce the opinion of a distinct existence, because they can offer it to the mind neither as represented nor as original. To offer it as represented, they would have to present both an object and an image. To make it appear as original, they would have to convey a falsehood, and this falsehood would have to lie in the relations and situation; for which they would have to be able to compare the object with ourselves—and even in that case they do not, and cannot possibly, deceive us. We may therefore conclude with certainty that the opinion of a continued and of a distinct existence never arises from the senses.

1.4.2.12 To confirm this, we may observe that the senses convey three different kinds of impressions. The first are those of the shape, size, motion, and solidity of bodies. The second are those of colors, tastes, smells, sounds, heat, and cold. The third are the pains and pleasures that arise when objects are applied to our bodies, as when our flesh is cut with steel, and the like. Both philosophers and ordinary people suppose the first of these to have a distinct, continued existence. Only ordinary people regard the second as on the same footing. Both philosophers and ordinary people, again, consider the third to be merely perceptions, and so interrupted and dependent beings.

1.4.2.13 Now it is evident that, whatever our philosophical opinion may be, colors, sounds, heat, and cold, so far as the senses show, exist in the same way as motion and solidity, and that the difference we draw between them in this respect does not arise from mere perception. So strong is the prejudice in favor of the distinct, continued existence of the former qualities that when modern philosophers advance the contrary opinion, people imagine they can almost refute it from their own feeling and experience, and that their very senses contradict this philosophy. It is also evident that colors, sounds, etc. are originally on

the same footing as the pain that comes from steel and the pleasure that comes from a fire, and that the difference between them rests neither on perception nor on reason but on the imagination. For since both are admitted to be nothing but perceptions arising from the particular configurations and motions of the parts of body, where could their difference possibly lie? On the whole, then, we may conclude that, so far as the senses are judges, all perceptions are the same in their manner of existence.

1.4.2.14 We may also observe in this case of sounds and colors that we can attribute a distinct, continued existence to objects without ever consulting *reason* or weighing our opinions by any philosophical principles. And indeed, whatever convincing arguments philosophers may fancy they can produce to establish belief in objects independent of the mind, it is obvious that these arguments are known to very few, and that it is not by them that children, peasants, and the greater part of mankind are led to attribute objects to some impressions and deny them to others. Accordingly we find that all the conclusions ordinary people form on this topic are directly contrary to those confirmed by philosophy. For philosophy tells us that everything that appears to the mind is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted and dependent on the mind; whereas ordinary people confuse perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct, continued existence to the very things they feel or see. This sentiment, then, being entirely unreasonable, must come from some faculty other than the understanding. We may add that as long as we take our perceptions and objects to be the same, we can never infer the existence of the one from that of the other, nor form any argument from the relation of cause and effect—which is the only relation that can assure us of matters of fact. Even after we distinguish our perceptions from our objects, it will soon appear that we are still unable to reason from the existence of the one to that of the other. So, on the whole, our reason does not, and on no supposition possibly could, give us assurance of the continued and distinct existence of body. That

opinion must be entirely due to the *imagination*, which must now be the subject of our inquiry.

CONSTANCY AND COHERENCE

Hume finds that we ascribe continued existence to impressions marked by constancy and coherence.

1.4.2.15 Since all impressions are internal and perishing existences, and appear as such, the notion of their distinct and continued existence must arise from a combination of some of their qualities with the qualities of the imagination; and since this notion does not extend to all of them, it must arise from certain qualities peculiar to some impressions. So it will be easy for us to discover these qualities by comparing the impressions to which we attribute a distinct and continued existence with those we regard as internal and perishing.

1.4.2.16 We may observe, then, that it is neither because certain impressions are involuntary, as is commonly supposed, nor because of their greater force and violence, that we attribute to them a reality and continued existence which we deny to others that are voluntary or feeble. For it is evident that our pains and pleasures, our passions and affections, which we never suppose to exist beyond our perception, act with greater violence, and are just as involuntary, as the impressions of shape and extension, color and sound, which we suppose to be permanent beings. The heat of a fire, when moderate, is supposed to exist in the fire; but the pain it causes when we come close is not taken to have any being except in the perception.

1.4.2.17 Having rejected these popular opinions, then, we must look for some other hypothesis by which to discover the peculiar qualities in our impressions that make us attribute to them a distinct and continued existence.

1.4.2.18 After a little examination, we will find that all the objects to which we attribute a continued existence have a peculiar constancy, which distinguishes them from the impressions whose existence depends on our perception. The mountains and

houses and trees in front of my eyes right now have always appeared to me in the same order. When I lose sight of them by shutting my eyes or turning my head, I soon find them coming back to me without the slightest alteration. My bed and table, my books and papers, present themselves in the same uniform way, and do not change because of any interruption in my seeing or perceiving them. This is true of all the impressions whose objects are supposed to have an external existence. It is true of no other impressions, whether gentle or violent, voluntary or involuntary.

1.4.2.19 This constancy, however, is not so perfect as to exclude some very considerable exceptions. Bodies often change their position and qualities, and after a short absence or interruption they may become hardly recognizable. But notice that even in these changes they keep a coherence and have a regular dependence on one another. This is the foundation of a kind of reasoning from causation, and it produces the opinion of their continued existence. When I return to my room after an hour away, I do not find my fire in the same state I left it in. But then I am used to seeing, in other cases, a similar alteration produced in a similar time, whether I am present or absent, near or far. This coherence in their changes, then, is one of the characteristics of external objects, as well as their constancy.

1.4.2.20 Having found that the opinion of the continued existence of body depends on the *coherence* and *constancy* of certain impressions, I now go on to examine how these qualities give rise to so extraordinary an opinion. To begin with coherence: the internal impressions that we regard as fleeting and perishing also have a certain coherence or regularity in their appearances. Yet it is of a somewhat different nature from what we find in bodies. Experience shows that our passions have a mutual connection with and dependence on one another. But we never need to suppose that they existed and operated while unperceived in order to preserve the dependence and connection we have experienced. It is not the same with external objects. They require a continued existence, or else they largely lose the regu-

larity of their operation. I am sitting here in my room facing the fire, and all the objects that strike my senses are within a few yards of me. My memory, it is true, informs me of the existence of many objects. But this information goes no further than their past existence, and neither my senses nor my memory give any testimony that they continue to exist. So as I sit here turning these thoughts over, I suddenly hear a noise like a door turning on its hinges, and a moment later I see a porter coming toward me. This gives rise to many new reflections and reasonings. First, I have never observed that this noise could come from anything but the motion of a door. So I conclude that the present phenomenon contradicts all past experience, unless the door I remember on the other side of the room still exists. Again, I have always found that a human body has a quality I call gravity, which keeps it from rising into the air. This porter would have had to rise through the air to reach my room, unless the stairs I remember were not annihilated by my absence. But that is not all. I receive a letter, and on opening it I see from the handwriting and signature that it comes from a friend, who says he is two hundred leagues away. Clearly I can never account for this phenomenon in a way consistent with my experience in other cases unless I spread out in my mind the whole sea and continent between us, and suppose the effects and continued existence of couriers and ferries, as my memory and observation tell me of them. Seen in a certain light, these phenomena of the porter and the letter contradict common experience. They may be regarded as objections to the maxims we form about the connections of causes and effects. I am used to hearing such a sound and seeing such an object in motion at the same time. In this particular case I have not received both of these perceptions. These observations conflict, unless I suppose that the door still remains and was opened without my perceiving it. This supposition was at first entirely arbitrary and hypothetical. But it acquires force and evidence by being the only one on which I can reconcile these contradictions. There is hardly a moment of my life in which some similar case is not presented

to me. In each I need to suppose the continued existence of objects in order to connect their past and present appearances, and to give them the kind of union with one another that experience has shown me suits their particular natures and circumstances. Here, then, I am naturally led to regard the world as something real and lasting, which keeps its existence even when it is no longer present to my perception.

1.4.2.21 This conclusion from the coherence of appearances may seem to be of the same nature as our reasonings about causes and effects, since it is derived from custom and regulated by past experience. But on examination we will find that at bottom the two are considerably different, and that this inference arises from the understanding, and from custom, only in an indirect and oblique way. For it will readily be granted that nothing is ever really present to the mind except its own perceptions. It follows that no habit can be acquired except through the regular succession of these perceptions, and also that no habit can ever exceed that degree of regularity. So no degree of regularity in our perceptions can ever be a foundation for inferring a greater degree of regularity in objects that are not perceived. That would suppose a contradiction: a habit acquired from what was never present to the mind. Yet it is evident that whenever we infer the continued existence of the objects of the senses from their coherence and the frequency of their union, we do so in order to give the objects a greater regularity than is observed in our mere perceptions. We notice a connection between two kinds of objects in their past appearance to the senses. But we cannot observe this connection to be perfectly constant, since turning our head or shutting our eyes can break it. What, then, do we suppose in this case? Only that these objects still continue their usual connection despite their apparent interruption, and that the irregular appearances are joined by something we do not perceive. But all reasoning about matters of fact arises only from custom, and custom can only be the effect of repeated perceptions. So extending custom and reasoning beyond the perceptions can never be the direct and natural effect of their con-

stant repetition and connection. It must arise from the cooperation of some other principles.

1.4.2.22 I have already observed,[3] in examining the foundation of mathematics, that once the imagination is set on any train of thinking, it tends to continue even when its object gives out. Like a galley set moving by the oars, it carries on its course without any new impulse. I gave this as the reason why, after considering several loose standards of equality and correcting them by one another, we go on to imagine a standard of that relation so correct and exact that it is not liable to the least error or variation. The same principle makes us readily adopt this opinion of the continued existence of body. Objects have a certain coherence even as they appear to our senses. But this coherence is much greater and more uniform if we suppose the objects to have a continued existence. Once the mind is in the habit of observing a uniformity among objects, it naturally continues until it makes the uniformity as complete as possible. The simple supposition of their continued existence is enough for this purpose. It gives us a notion of a much greater regularity among objects than they have when we look no further than our senses.

1.4.2.23 But whatever force we may ascribe to this principle, I am afraid it is too weak to support on its own so vast a structure as the continued existence of all external bodies. To give a satisfactory account of that opinion, we must add the constancy of their appearance to their coherence. Explaining this will take me through a considerable stretch of very deep reasoning. To avoid confusion, then, I think it best to give a short sketch or summary of my system first, and afterward to set out all its parts in full. This inference from the constancy of our perceptions, like the previous one from their coherence, gives rise to the opinion of the continued existence of body. That opinion comes before the opinion of body's distinct existence, and produces that latter principle.

1.4.2.24 Suppose we have become used to observing a constancy in certain impressions. We have found, for instance, that the perception of the sun or the ocean comes back to us after an absence or annihilation with the same parts and in the same order as when it first appeared. We then tend not to regard these interrupted perceptions as different, which is what they really are. Instead, because of their resemblance, we consider them individually the same. But this interruption of their existence is contrary to their perfect identity. It makes us regard the first impression as annihilated and the second as newly created. So we find ourselves somewhat at a loss, and caught up in a kind of contradiction. To free ourselves from this difficulty, we disguise the interruption as much as possible, or rather remove it entirely, by supposing that these interrupted perceptions are connected by a real existence that we do not perceive. This supposition, or idea of continued existence, acquires force and vivacity from the memory of these broken impressions, and from the propensity they give us to suppose them the same. And according to the earlier reasoning, the very essence of belief consists in the force and vivacity of the conception.

THE FICTION OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE

Hume explains identity and how resembling, interrupted perceptions lead us to feign a continued existence.

1.4.2.25 To justify this system, four things are needed. First, to explain the *principium individuationis,* or principle of identity. Second, to give a reason why the resemblance of our broken and interrupted perceptions leads us to attribute an identity to them. Third, to account for the propensity, produced by this illusion, to unite these broken appearances by a continued existence. Fourth and last, to explain the force and vivacity of conception that arises from this propensity.

1.4.2.26 First, the principle of individuation. The view of any one object is not enough to convey the idea of identity. Take the pro-

3 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 4.

position "an object is the same as itself." If the idea expressed by the word "object" were in no way distinguished from the one meant by "itself," we would really mean nothing. Nor would the proposition contain a predicate and a subject, although this affirmation implies both. A single object conveys the idea of unity, not that of identity.

1.4.2.27 On the other hand, a multiplicity of objects can never convey this idea, however closely they are supposed to resemble one another. The mind always declares that the one is not the other. It considers them as forming two, three, or some definite number of objects, whose existences are entirely distinct and independent.

1.4.2.28 Since both number and unity are incompatible with the relation of identity, identity must lie in something that is neither. But to tell the truth, at first sight this seems utterly impossible. Between unity and number there can be no middle term, any more than between existence and nonexistence. Once one object is supposed to exist, we must either suppose that another also exists, in which case we have the idea of number, or suppose that it does not, in which case the first object remains a unity.

1.4.2.29 To remove this difficulty, let us turn to the idea of time or duration. I have already observed[4] that time, strictly speaking, implies succession. When we apply its idea to an unchangeable object, we do so only by a fiction of the imagination, through which the unchangeable object is supposed to share in the changes of the objects that coexist with it, and in particular in the changes of our perceptions. This fiction of the imagination occurs almost universally. It is by means of it that a single object, placed before us and surveyed for some time without our discovering any interruption or variation in it, can give us a notion of identity. For when we consider any two points of this time, we can view them in different lights. We may survey them at the very same instant. Then they give us the idea of number, both by themselves and through the object, which must be mul-

4 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 5.

tiplied in order to be conceived at once as existing at these two different points of time. Or we may trace the succession of time by a similar succession of ideas. We conceive first one moment, along with the object then existing, and afterward imagine a change in the time without any *variation* or *interruption* in the object. Then it gives us the idea of unity. Here, then, is an idea that is a middle term between unity and number. More properly, it is either of them, depending on how we view it. And this idea we call identity. Speaking properly, we cannot say that an object is the same as itself unless we mean that the object existing at one time is the same as itself existing at another. In this way we make a difference between the idea meant by the word *object* and the idea meant by *itself*, without going as far as number, and at the same time without confining ourselves to a strict and absolute unity.

1.4.2.30 Thus the principle of individuation is nothing but the *invariableness* and *uninterruptedness* of an object through a supposed variation of time. Through this the mind can trace the object across the different periods of its existence without any break in the view, and without being forced to form the idea of multiplicity or number.

1.4.2.31 I now go on to explain the *second* part of my system. I will show why the constancy of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect numerical identity, even though there are very long intervals between their appearances, and they have only one of the essential qualities of identity, namely *invariableness*. To avoid all ambiguity and confusion on this point, let me note that here I am accounting for the opinions and belief of ordinary people concerning the existence of body. I must therefore conform entirely to their way of thinking and of expressing themselves. Now we have already observed that philosophers distinguish between the objects and the perceptions of the senses, which they suppose to coexist and resemble one another. But most of mankind does not grasp this distinction. Since they perceive only one being, they can never assent to the opinion of a double existence and representation. For

them, the very sensations that come in through the eye or ear are the true objects. They cannot easily conceive that this pen or paper, which is immediately perceived, represents another that is different from it but resembles it. So, to accommodate myself to their notions, I will suppose at first that there is only a single existence. I will call it *object* or *perception* indifferently, whichever seems to suit my purpose best. By both I mean what any ordinary person means by a hat, or shoe, or stone, or any other impression conveyed to him by his senses. I will be sure to give warning when I return to a more philosophical way of speaking and thinking.

1.4.2.32 Let us take up, then, the question of where the error and deception about identity come from, when we attribute identity to our resembling perceptions despite their interruption. Here I must recall an observation I have already proved and explained.[5] Nothing is more apt to make us mistake one idea for another than any relation between them that associates them in the imagination and makes it pass easily from one to the other. Of all relations, resemblance is the most effective in this respect. That is because it causes an association not only of ideas but also of dispositions, and makes us conceive the one idea by an act or operation of the mind similar to the one by which we conceive the other. I have noted that this circumstance is of great importance. We may lay it down as a general rule that whatever ideas put the mind in the same disposition, or in similar ones, are very apt to be confused. The mind passes readily from one to the other, and does not notice the change without strict attention, of which, generally speaking, it is wholly incapable.

1.4.2.33 To apply this general maxim, we must first examine the disposition of the mind when it views an object that keeps a perfect identity. Then we must find some other object that gets confused with it by producing a similar disposition. When we fix our thought on an object and suppose it to remain the same for some time, clearly we suppose the change to lie only in the time. We never exert ourselves to produce any new image or idea of

5 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 5.

the object. The faculties of the mind rest, as it were, and do no more work than is needed to continue the idea we already had, which persists without variation or interruption. The passage from one moment to the next is hardly felt. It does not mark itself off by a different perception or idea, of the kind that might require a different direction of the spirits in order to be conceived.

1.4.2.34 Now what other objects, besides identical ones, can put the mind in the same disposition when it considers them, and produce the same uninterrupted passage of the imagination from one idea to another? This question is of the utmost importance. For if we can find any such objects, we may certainly conclude, from the principle just stated, that they are very naturally confused with identical ones and taken for them in most of our reasonings. But though this question is very important, it is neither very difficult nor doubtful. For I immediately reply that a succession of related objects puts the mind in this disposition. We consider it with the same smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination that accompanies the view of one and the same invariable object. The very nature and essence of a relation is to connect our ideas with one another, and, when one appears, to ease the transition to its correlative. The passage between related ideas is therefore so smooth and easy that it makes little alteration in the mind and seems like the continuation of the same action. Since the continuation of the same action is an effect of the continued view of the same object, we attribute sameness to every succession of related objects. Thought slides along the succession as easily as if it were considering only one object, and so it confuses the succession with identity.

1.4.2.35 We will later see many examples of this tendency of relation to make us ascribe an identity to different objects. Here, though, we will confine ourselves to the present subject. We find by experience that almost all the impressions of the senses are so constant that their interruption makes no alteration in them, and does not prevent them from returning the same in appear-

ance and position as when they first existed. I survey the furniture of my room. I shut my eyes, and then open them. I find that the new perceptions perfectly resemble those that struck my senses before. This resemblance is observed in a thousand cases. It naturally connects our ideas of these interrupted perceptions by the strongest relation, and carries the mind by an easy transition from one to another. An easy transition or passage of the imagination along the ideas of these different, interrupted perceptions is almost the same disposition of mind as the one in which we consider a single constant and uninterrupted perception. So it is very natural for us to mistake the one for the other.[6]

1.4.2.36 The people who hold this opinion about the identity of our resembling perceptions are, in general, the whole unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind (that is, all of us, at one time or another). They suppose their perceptions to be their only objects, and never think of a double existence, internal and external, representing and represented. For us, the very image present to the senses is the real body, and it is to these interrupted images that we ascribe a perfect identity. But the interruption of the appearance seems contrary to the identity, and naturally leads us to regard these resembling perceptions as different from one another. So we find ourselves at a loss how to reconcile such opposite opinions. The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe a perfect identity to them. The interrupted way they appear makes us consider them as so many resembling but still distinct beings, which appear after certain intervals. The perplexity

6 HUME'S NOTE. This reasoning, it must be admitted, is somewhat abstruse and hard to grasp. But remarkably, this very difficulty can be turned into a proof of the reasoning. Two relations, both of them resemblances, contribute to our mistaking the succession of our interrupted perceptions for an identical object. The first is the resemblance of the perceptions. The second is the resemblance between the act of the mind in surveying a succession of resembling objects and the act of surveying an identical object. Now we are apt to confuse these resemblances with each other, and it is natural that we should, according to this very reasoning. But let us keep them distinct, and we will have no difficulty understanding the preceding argument.

arising from this contradiction produces a propensity to unite these broken appearances by the fiction of a continued existence. This is the third part of the hypothesis I proposed to explain.

1.4.2.37 Nothing is more certain from experience than that any contradiction, either to our sentiments or to our passions, produces a noticeable uneasiness. This holds whether it comes from without or from within, from the opposition of external objects or from the conflict of internal principles. On the other hand, whatever falls in with our natural propensities is sure to give a noticeable pleasure, whether it outwardly advances their satisfaction or inwardly goes along with their movements. Now there is an opposition here between the notion of the identity of resembling perceptions and the interruption of their appearance. So the mind must be uneasy in that situation, and will naturally seek relief from the uneasiness. Since the uneasiness arises from the opposition of two contrary principles, the mind must look for relief by sacrificing one to the other. But the smooth passage of our thought along our resembling perceptions makes us ascribe an identity to them, so we can never give up that opinion without reluctance. We must therefore turn to the other side. We suppose that our perceptions are no longer interrupted, but have a continued as well as an invariable existence, and in that way are entirely the same. But here the interruptions in the appearance of these perceptions are so long and frequent that it is impossible to overlook them. And at first sight, the appearance of a perception in the mind and its existence seem to be entirely the same. So it may be doubted whether we can ever assent to so obvious a contradiction and suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind. To clear up this matter, and to learn how an interruption in the appearance of a perception does not necessarily imply an interruption in its existence, it will be useful to touch on some principles that we will explain more fully later.[7]

1.4.2.38 We may begin by observing that the difficulty in the present case is not about the matter of fact: whether the mind forms such a conclusion about the continued existence of its perceptions. It concerns only the way the conclusion is formed, and the principles it is derived from. It is certain that almost all mankind, and even philosophers themselves for most of their lives, take their perceptions to be their only objects. They suppose that the very being intimately present to the mind is the real body or material existence. It is also certain that this very perception or object is supposed to have a continued, uninterrupted being. It is supposed to be neither annihilated by our absence nor brought into existence by our presence. When we are away from it, we say it still exists, but that we do not feel it, do not see it. When we are present, we say we feel it or see it. Two questions may arise here. First, how can we be satisfied in supposing a perception to be absent from the mind without being annihilated? Second, how do we conceive an object to become present to the mind without some new creation of a perception or image? And what do we mean by this seeing, and feeling, and perceiving?

1.4.2.39 As to the first question: what we call a mind is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity. Now every perception is distinguishable from every other, and may be considered as existing separately. So it evidently follows that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind, that is, in breaking off all its relations with the connected mass of perceptions that constitutes a thinking being.

1.4.2.40 The same reasoning gives us an answer to the second question. If the name "perception" does not make this separation from a mind absurd and contradictory, the name "object," which stands for the very same thing, can never make their conjunction impossible. External objects are seen and felt and become present to the mind. That is, they acquire such a rela-

7 HUME'S NOTE. Section 6.

tion to a connected heap of perceptions that they influence them very considerably, adding to their number through present reflections and passions and stocking the memory with ideas. So the same continued and uninterrupted being may be sometimes present to the mind and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the being itself. An interrupted appearance to the senses does not necessarily imply an interruption in the existence. The supposition that sensible objects or perceptions exist continuously involves no contradiction. We can easily indulge our inclination toward that supposition. When the exact resemblance of our perceptions makes us ascribe an identity to them, we can remove the apparent interruption by feigning a continued being that fills those intervals and preserves a perfect and complete identity for our perceptions.

1.4.2.41 But here we not only feign this continued existence; we believe it. So the question is where such a belief comes from, and this question leads us to the fourth part of this system. It has already been proved that belief in general consists in nothing but the vivacity of an idea, and that an idea can acquire this vivacity through its relation to some present impression. Impressions are naturally the most vivid perceptions of the mind, and this quality is partly passed on through the relation to every connected idea. The relation produces a smooth passage from the impression to the idea, and even gives a propensity toward that passage. The mind slips so easily from the one perception to the other that it hardly notices the change, and it keeps in the second a considerable share of the vivacity of the first. The mind is stirred by the lively impression, and this vivacity is conveyed to the related idea without much loss along the way, because of the smooth transition and the propensity of the imagination.

1.4.2.42 But suppose this propensity arises from some other principle besides relation. Clearly it must still have the same effect, and convey the vivacity from the impression to the idea. Now this is exactly the present case. Our memory presents us

with a vast number of perceptions that perfectly resemble one another and return at different distances of time, after considerable interruptions. This resemblance gives us a propensity to consider these interrupted perceptions as the same. It also gives us a propensity to connect them by a continued existence, in order to justify this identity and avoid the contradiction in which their interrupted appearance seems necessarily to involve us. Here, then, we have a propensity to feign the continued existence of all sensible objects. Since this propensity arises from some lively impressions of the memory, it gives that fiction vivacity; in other words, it makes us believe the continued existence of body. Sometimes we ascribe a continued existence to objects that are completely new to us, and of whose constancy and coherence we have no experience. That is because the way they present themselves to our senses resembles that of constant and coherent objects. This resemblance is a source of reasoning and analogy, and leads us to attribute the same qualities to similar objects.

1.4.2.43 I think an intelligent reader will find it less difficult to assent to this system than to understand it fully and distinctly. After a little reflection, he will grant that every part carries its own proof with it. Ordinary people suppose their perceptions to be their only objects, and at the same time believe in the continued existence of matter. Clearly, then, we must account for the origin of the belief on that supposition. Now on that supposition, it is a false opinion that any of our objects, or perceptions, are identically the same after an interruption. Consequently the opinion of their identity can never arise from reason. It must arise from the imagination. The imagination is seduced into such an opinion only through the resemblance of certain perceptions, since we find that it is only our resembling perceptions that we have a propensity to suppose the same. This propensity to give our resembling perceptions an identity produces the fiction of a continued existence. For that fiction, like the identity, is really false, as all philosophers acknowledge. Its only effect is to remedy the interruption of our perceptions,

which is the only circumstance contrary to their identity. Finally, this propensity causes belief by means of the present impressions of the memory. Plainly, without the remembrance of former sensations we would never have any belief in the continued existence of body. So in examining all these parts, we find that each of them is supported by the strongest proofs, and that together they form a consistent system that is perfectly convincing. A strong propensity or inclination alone, without any present impression, will sometimes produce a belief or opinion. How much more when it is aided by a present impression?

THE PHILOSOPHERS' DOUBLE EXISTENCE

Philosophers split perceptions from objects; Hume argues this system inherits every difficulty of the popular view.

1.4.2.44 This is how the natural propensity of the imagination leads us to ascribe a continued existence to those sensible objects or perceptions that we find resembling one another in their interrupted appearance. Yet a very little reflection and philosophy is enough to make us see the fallacy of that opinion. I have already observed that there is an intimate connection between the two principles of a continued existence and of a distinct or independent existence, and that no sooner do we establish the one than the other follows as a necessary consequence. It is the opinion of a continued existence that comes first, and it draws the other along with it without much study or reflection, wherever the mind follows its first and most natural tendency. But when we compare experiments and reason a little about them, we quickly see that the doctrine of the independent existence of our sensible perceptions is contrary to the plainest experience. This leads us to retrace our steps and see our error in attributing a continued existence to our perceptions. It is also the origin of many very curious opinions, which we will try to account for here.

1.4.2.45 It will be useful first to note a few of the experiments that convince us that our perceptions do not have any independ-

ent existence. When we press one eye with a finger, we immediately see all objects become double, and half of them displaced from their usual, natural position. But we do not attribute a continued existence to both of these perceptions, and they are both of the same nature. So we clearly see that all our perceptions depend on our organs and on the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits. This opinion is confirmed by the apparent increase and decrease in the size of objects according to their distance; by the apparent alterations in their shape; by the changes in their color and other qualities caused by our illnesses and disorders; and by countless other experiments of the same kind. From all of these we learn that our sensible perceptions have no distinct or independent existence.

1.4.2.46 The natural consequence of this reasoning ought to be that our perceptions have no more a continued existence than an independent one. And philosophers have indeed gone so far in this opinion that they change their system and distinguish (as we shall from now on) between perceptions and objects. The former are supposed to be interrupted and perishing, and different at every return; the latter to be uninterrupted and to keep a continued existence and identity. But however philosophical this new system may be thought, I maintain that it is only a palliative remedy. It contains all the difficulties of the common system, along with some others peculiar to itself. There are no principles, either of the understanding or of the imagination, that lead us directly to embrace this opinion of the double existence of perceptions and objects. We can arrive at it only by passing through the common hypothesis of the identity and continuance of our interrupted perceptions. If we were not first persuaded that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue to exist even when they no longer appear to the senses, we would never be led to think that our perceptions and objects are different, and that our objects alone keep a continued existence. The latter hypothesis has no primary appeal either to reason or to the imagination. It gets all its influence on the imagination from the former. This proposition has two parts, which we will

try to prove as distinctly and clearly as such abstruse subjects allow.

1.4.2.47 Take the first part of the proposition: that this philosophical hypothesis has no primary appeal either to reason or to the imagination. We can soon satisfy ourselves with regard to reason by the following reflections. The only existences we are certain of are perceptions. Being immediately present to us through consciousness, they command our strongest assent and are the first foundation of all our conclusions. The only way we can draw a conclusion from the existence of one thing to that of another is by means of the relation of cause and effect. This relation shows that there is a connection between them, and that the existence of one depends on that of the other. The idea of this relation is derived from past experience, through which we find that two beings are constantly conjoined and are always present to the mind together. But no beings are ever present to the mind except perceptions. It follows that we may observe a conjunction or a relation of cause and effect between different perceptions, but can never observe it between perceptions and objects. It is impossible, therefore, that from the existence or any of the qualities of the former we could ever draw any conclusion about the existence of the latter, or ever satisfy our reason on this point.

1.4.2.48 It is no less certain that this philosophical system has no primary appeal to the imagination, and that this faculty would never have hit on such a principle on its own and by its original tendency. I admit it will be somewhat difficult to prove this to the reader's full satisfaction, because it involves a negative, which in many cases does not admit of any positive proof. Suppose someone took the trouble to examine this question, and devised a system to account for the direct origin of this opinion from the imagination. By examining that system, we would be able to pass a definite judgment on the present subject. Let it be granted that our perceptions are broken and interrupted, and, however alike, still different from one another. On this supposition, let anyone show why the imagination should proceed dir-

ectly and immediately to believe in another existence, resembling these perceptions in its nature, yet continued, uninterrupted, and identical. Once he has done this to my satisfaction, I promise to give up my present opinion. Meanwhile, from the very abstractness and difficulty of the first supposition, I cannot help concluding that it is an unsuitable subject for the imagination to work on. Whoever wants to explain the origin of the common opinion about the continued and distinct existence of body must take the mind in its ordinary situation. He must proceed on the supposition that our perceptions are our only objects and continue to exist even when they are not perceived. Though this opinion is false, it is the most natural of all, and it alone has any primary appeal to the imagination.

1.4.2.49 Now the second part of the proposition: that the philosophical system gets all its influence on the imagination from the common one. This is a natural and unavoidable consequence of the preceding conclusion, that the philosophical system has no primary appeal to reason or the imagination. Experience shows that the philosophical system takes hold of many minds, and in particular of everyone who reflects even a little on this subject. So it must derive all its authority from the common system, since it has no original authority of its own. These two systems are directly contrary, and the way they are connected may be explained as follows.

1.4.2.50 The imagination naturally runs along this train of thinking. Our perceptions are our only objects. Resembling perceptions are the same, however broken or interrupted their appearance. This apparent interruption is contrary to the identity. So the interruption goes no further than the appearance, and the perception or object really continues to exist, even when absent from us. Our sensible perceptions therefore have a continued and uninterrupted existence.[8] But a little reflection destroys this conclusion that our perceptions have a continued existence, by showing that they have a dependent one. One would naturally

8 Hume's text reads "however broken or uninterrupted"; the sense requires "interrupted," as rendered here.

expect, then, that we must reject altogether the opinion that there is any such thing in nature as a continued existence, which persists even when it no longer appears to the senses. That, however, is not what happens. Philosophers reject the independence and continuance of our sensible perceptions, but they are far from rejecting the opinion of a continued existence along with it. All schools agree on the first point. Yet the second, which is in a way its necessary consequence, has been held only by a few extravagant skeptics. And in the end even they held it in words only, and were never able to bring themselves to believe it sincerely.

1.4.2.51 There is a great difference between the opinions we form after calm and deep reflection and those we embrace by a kind of instinct or natural impulse, because they suit and fit the mind. If these opinions come into conflict, it is not hard to foresee which will have the advantage. As long as our attention is fixed on the subject, the philosophical and studied principle may prevail. But the moment we relax our thoughts, nature will show herself and draw us back to our former opinion. Indeed, nature sometimes has such influence that she can stop our progress even in the midst of our deepest reflections, and keep us from following out all the consequences of a philosophical opinion. Thus, though we clearly see that our perceptions are dependent and interrupted, we stop short, and never on that account reject the notion of an independent and continued existence. That opinion has taken such deep root in the imagination that it can never be torn out. No strained metaphysical conviction of the dependence of our perceptions will be enough for that purpose.

1.4.2.52 But though our natural and obvious principles win out here over our studied reflections, there must certainly be some struggle and opposition in the case, at least as long as these reflections keep any force or vivacity. To put ourselves at ease on this point, we devise a new hypothesis that seems to take in both of these principles, of reason and of imagination. This is the philosophical hypothesis of the double existence of perceptions

and objects. It pleases our reason by granting that our dependent perceptions are interrupted and different. At the same time it suits the imagination by attributing a continued existence to something else, which we call objects. This philosophical system, then, is the monstrous offspring of two principles that are contrary to each other, that the mind embraces both at once, and that cannot destroy each other. The imagination tells us that our resembling perceptions have a continued and uninterrupted existence, and are not annihilated by their absence. Reflection tells us that even our resembling perceptions are interrupted in their existence, and different from each other. We evade the contradiction between these opinions by a new fiction that fits the hypotheses of both reflection and fancy. We ascribe these contrary qualities to different existences: the interruption to perceptions, and the continuance to objects. Nature is obstinate and will not leave the field, however strongly reason attacks her. At the same time, reason is so clear on the point that there is no way to disguise her. Unable to reconcile these two enemies, we try to put ourselves at ease as far as we can. We grant each in turn whatever it demands, and we feign a double existence in which each can find something that meets all its conditions. If we were fully convinced that our resembling perceptions are continued, identical, and independent, we would never fall into this opinion of a double existence, since our first supposition would satisfy us and we would look no further. Again, if we were fully convinced that our perceptions are dependent, interrupted, and different, we would be just as disinclined to embrace the opinion of a double existence. In that case we would clearly see the error of our first supposition of a continued existence, and would never give it another thought. It is therefore from the mind's intermediate situation that this opinion arises. We cling to these two contrary principles in a way that makes us look for some pretext to justify accepting both, and that pretext is happily found at last in the system of a double existence.

1.4.2.53 Another advantage of this philosophical system is its similarity to the popular one. When our reason becomes

troublesome and insistent, this lets us humor it for a moment. Yet at its least lapse or inattention we can easily go back to our popular and natural notions. And indeed we find that philosophers do not neglect this advantage. As soon as they leave their studies, they join the rest of mankind in those discredited opinions that our perceptions are our only objects, and that they continue identically and uninterruptedly the same through all their interrupted appearances.

1.4.2.54 There are other details of this system in which we can see its dependence on the fancy very plainly. I shall point out the following two. First, we suppose external objects to resemble internal perceptions. I have already shown that the relation of cause and effect can never give us any sound inference from the existence or qualities of our perceptions to the existence of external continued objects. And I shall add that even if it could give us such an inference, we would never have any reason to infer that our objects resemble our perceptions. That opinion, therefore, comes from nothing but the quality of the fancy explained above, *that it borrows all its ideas from some prior perception*. We can never conceive anything but perceptions, and so we must make everything resemble them.

1.4.2.55 Second, just as we suppose our objects in general to resemble our perceptions, we take it for granted that every particular object resembles the perception it causes. The relation of cause and effect leads us to add the relation of resemblance. Since the ideas of these existences are already united in the fancy by the first relation, we naturally add the second to complete the union. We have a strong tendency to complete every union by adding new relations to those we have already observed between any ideas, as we shall soon have occasion to note.[9]

9 HUME'S NOTE. Section 5.

A MALADY WITH NO CURE

Hume confesses doubt about both senses and reason, and names carelessness and inattention as the only remedy.

1.4.2.56 Having now given an account of all the systems concerning external existences, both popular and philosophical, I cannot help venting a certain feeling that arises as I look back over them. I began this subject by stating that we ought to have an implicit faith in our senses, and that this would be the conclusion I would draw from the whole of my reasoning. But to be candid, at present I feel quite the opposite. I am more inclined to put no faith at all in my senses, or rather imagination, than to place such implicit confidence in it. I cannot see how such trivial qualities of the fancy, guided by such false suppositions, can ever lead to any solid and rational system. It is the coherence and constancy of our perceptions that produce the opinion of their continued existence, though these qualities of perceptions have no perceivable connection with such an existence. The constancy of our perceptions has the greatest effect, and yet it comes with the greatest difficulties. It is a gross illusion to suppose that our resembling perceptions are numerically the same. This illusion leads us into the opinion that these perceptions are uninterrupted and still exist even when they are not present to the senses. So it goes with our popular system. As for our philosophical system, it is open to the same difficulties, and on top of them it is burdened with this absurdity: it at once denies and upholds the popular supposition. Philosophers deny that our resembling perceptions are identically the same and uninterrupted. Yet they have so strong a tendency to believe them so that they arbitrarily invent a new set of perceptions, to which they attribute these qualities. I say a new set of perceptions, because we may well suppose in general that objects are in their nature something other than perceptions, but we cannot possibly conceive this distinctly. What then can we expect from this jumble of groundless and extraordinary opinions but error

and falsehood? And how can we justify to ourselves any belief we place in them?

1.4.2.57 This skeptical doubt, with respect to both reason and the senses, is a disease that can never be cured at the root. It must come back on us at every moment, however often we chase it away and even when we seem entirely free of it. No system can defend either our understanding or our senses, and we only expose them further when we try to justify them in that way. Since the skeptical doubt arises naturally from deep and intense reflection on these subjects, it always grows the further we carry our reflections, whether against it or in agreement with it. Carelessness and inattention alone can give us any remedy. For this reason I rely entirely on them. I take it for granted that, whatever the reader's opinion may be at this moment, an hour from now he will be persuaded that there is both an external and an internal world. Proceeding on that supposition, I intend to examine some general systems, both ancient and modern, that have been proposed about both, before going on to a more detailed inquiry into our impressions. In the end this will perhaps not turn out to be foreign to our present purpose.

THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Hume traces substance, substantial forms, accidents and occult qualities to natural tendencies of the imagination.

1.4.3.1 Several moralists have recommended an excellent way of getting to know our own hearts and measuring our progress in virtue: we should recall our dreams in the morning and examine them as strictly as we would our most serious and deliberate actions. Our character, they say, is the same throughout. It shows best where artifice, fear, and policy have no place, and where people can be hypocrites neither with themselves nor with others. The generosity or baseness of our temper, our gentleness or cruelty, our courage or cowardice, shape the fictions of the imagination with the most unbounded freedom, and reveal themselves in the most glaring colors. In the same way, I

am convinced that several useful discoveries might be made by critically examining the fictions of the ancient philosophy concerning substances, substantial forms, accidents, and occult qualities. However unreasonable and whimsical these fictions are, they are very closely connected with the principles of human nature.

1.4.3.2 The most judicious philosophers admit that our ideas of bodies are nothing but collections formed by the mind. They collect the ideas of the several distinct sensible qualities that objects are composed of, which we find to be constantly united with each other. But however entirely distinct these qualities may be in themselves, we commonly regard the compound they form as *one* thing, and as remaining the *same* through very considerable changes. The acknowledged composition plainly contradicts this supposed simplicity, and the variation contradicts the identity. It may therefore be worthwhile to consider the causes that make us almost universally fall into such obvious contradictions, and also the means by which we try to conceal them.

1.4.3.3 The ideas of the several distinct, successive qualities of objects are united by a very close relation. So it is evident that the mind, in running along the succession, must be carried from one part of it to another by an easy transition. It will no more notice the change than if it were contemplating the same unchanging object. This easy transition is the effect, or rather the essence, of relation. And the imagination readily takes one idea for another where their influence on the mind is similar. It follows that any such succession of related qualities is readily regarded as one continued object, existing without any variation. The smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought is alike in both cases. It easily deceives the mind, and makes us ascribe an identity to the changeable succession of connected qualities.

1.4.3.4 But suppose we change our way of considering the succession. Instead of tracing it gradually through the successive points of time, we survey any two distinct periods of its duration

at once, and compare the different states of the successive qualities. In that case the variations, which went unnoticed when they arose gradually, now appear significant and seem entirely to destroy the identity. In this way a kind of conflict arises in our way of thinking. It comes from the different points of view from which we survey the object, and from how near or far apart the moments of time we compare are. When we follow an object gradually through its successive changes, the smooth progress of the thought makes us ascribe an identity to the succession, because we consider an unchanging object by a similar act of the mind. When we compare its state after a considerable change, the progress of the thought is broken, and so we are presented with the idea of diversity. To reconcile these contradictions, the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to remain the same through all these variations. This unintelligible something it calls a substance, or original and first matter.

1.4.3.5 We form a similar notion about the simplicity of substances, and from similar causes. Suppose we are presented with an object that is perfectly simple and indivisible, along with another object whose coexistent parts are connected by a strong relation. It is evident that the mind acts in much the same way in considering these two objects. The imagination conceives the simple object all at once, easily, by a single effort of thought, without change or variation. The connection of parts in the compound object has almost the same effect. It unites the object within itself so well that the fancy does not feel the transition in passing from one part to another. Hence the color, taste, shape, solidity, and other qualities combined in a peach or a melon are conceived to form one thing. This is because of their close relation, which makes them affect the thought in the same way as if they were perfectly uncompounded. But the mind does not stop here. Whenever it views the object in another light, it finds that all these qualities are different, distinguishable, and separable from each other. This view of things destroys its primary and more natural notions. So it forces the imagination

to feign an unknown something, an original substance and matter, as a principle of union or cohesion among these qualities. This is what may entitle the compound object to be called one thing, despite its diversity and composition.

1.4.3.6 The Peripatetic philosophy holds that the original matter is perfectly homogeneous in all bodies. Because fire, water, earth, and air gradually turn and change into each other, it regards them as being of the very same substance. At the same time it assigns to each of these kinds of objects a distinct substantial form. It supposes this form to be the source of all the different qualities they have, and a new foundation of simplicity and identity for each particular kind. Everything depends on how we view the objects. When we run along the imperceptible changes of bodies, we suppose all of them to be of the same substance or essence.[10] When we consider their perceptible differences, we attribute to each of them a substantial and essential difference. And so that we can indulge ourselves in both these ways of considering our objects, we suppose all bodies to have at once a substance and a substantial form.

1.4.3.7 The notion of accidents is an unavoidable consequence of this way of thinking about substances and substantial forms. We cannot help regarding colors, sounds, tastes, shapes, and other properties of bodies as existences that cannot subsist on their own, but need a subject of inherence to sustain and support them. For the reasons given above, we have never found any of these sensible qualities without also imagining that a substance exists there. So the same habit that makes us infer a connection between cause and effect makes us infer here that every quality depends on the unknown substance. The custom of imagining a dependence has the same effect as the custom of observing it would have. This notion, however, is no more reasonable than any of the preceding ones. Every quality is a distinct thing from every other. So every quality can be conceived to exist apart,

10 The Peripatetics are the followers of Aristotle, whose philosophy dominated the medieval schools.

and can exist apart, not only from every other quality but also from that unintelligible chimera of a substance.

1.4.3.8 But these philosophers carry their fictions still further in their views about occult qualities. They suppose both a supporting substance, which they do not understand, and a supported accident, of which they have just as imperfect an idea. The whole system is therefore entirely incomprehensible. Yet it comes from principles as natural as any of those explained above.

1.4.3.9 In considering this subject we may notice a gradation of three opinions. Each rises above the last as the people who hold them acquire new degrees of reason and knowledge. These are the opinion of ordinary people, that of a false philosophy, and that of the true. On inquiry we shall find that the true philosophy comes closer to the views of ordinary people than to those of a mistaken learning. In their ordinary, careless way of thinking, people naturally imagine that they perceive a connection between objects they have constantly found united. And because custom has made it hard to separate the ideas, they are apt to fancy such a separation to be in itself impossible and absurd. But philosophers set aside the effects of custom and compare the ideas of objects. They see at once that these popular views are false, and discover that there is no known connection among objects. Every different object appears to them entirely distinct and separate. They see that we do not infer one object from another by viewing their nature and qualities, but only when we observe in several instances that they have been constantly conjoined. From this observation they ought to draw the sound inference that we have no idea of power or agency separate from the mind and belonging to causes. But instead of drawing this conclusion, I say, these philosophers often search for the qualities in which this agency consists, and are dissatisfied with every system their reason suggests to them for explaining it. They have enough force of mind to free them from the popular error that there is a natural and perceivable connection between the various sensible qualities and actions of matter. But

they do not have enough to keep them from forever looking for this connection in matter, or in causes. Had they hit on the right conclusion, they would have come back to the position of ordinary people, and would have regarded all these inquiries with indolence and indifference. As things stand, they seem to be in a very sorry condition. The poets have given us only a faint idea of it in their descriptions of the punishment of Sisyphus and Tantalus. For what could be more tormenting than to seek eagerly for what forever eludes us, and to seek it in a place where it cannot possibly exist?

1.4.3.10 But nature seems to have observed a kind of justice and compensation in everything. She has not neglected philosophers any more than the rest of creation, and has reserved for them a consolation amid all their disappointments and afflictions. This consolation consists chiefly in their invention of the words "faculty" and "occult quality." When we have used terms that are really meaningful and intelligible many times, we commonly leave out the idea we mean to express by them, and keep only the custom by which we can recall the idea at will. So it naturally happens that after we have used terms that are wholly meaningless and unintelligible many times, we fancy them to be on the same footing as the others, with a hidden meaning that we could discover by reflection. As usual, the resemblance of their appearance deceives the mind and makes us imagine that they resemble and agree with each other thoroughly. In this way these philosophers put themselves at ease. Through an illusion, they arrive at last at the same indifference that ordinary people reach through their stupidity, and true philosophers through their moderate skepticism. They need only say that any phenomenon that puzzles them arises from a faculty or an occult quality, and that ends all dispute and inquiry on the matter.

1.4.3.11 The Peripatetics have shown in many instances that they were guided by every trivial tendency of the imagination, but none is more remarkable than their sympathies, antipathies, and horrors of a vacuum. There is a very remarkable inclination in human nature to bestow on external objects the same emo-

tions it observes in itself, and to find everywhere the ideas that are most present to it. This inclination, it is true, is suppressed by a little reflection, and appears only in children, poets, and the ancient philosophers. It appears in children in their desire to beat the stones that hurt them; in poets, in their readiness to personify everything; and in the ancient philosophers, in these fictions of sympathy and antipathy. We must pardon children because of their age, and poets because they profess to follow the promptings of their fancy without question. But what excuse shall we find to justify our philosophers in so conspicuous a weakness?

THE MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Hume argues that denying real existence to colors and sounds leaves no coherent idea of body.

1.4.4.1 But here it may be objected that by my own admission the imagination is the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy. If so, I am unfair in blaming the ancient philosophers for making use of that faculty and letting themselves be entirely guided by it in their reasonings. To justify myself, I must distinguish two kinds of principles in the imagination. Some are permanent, irresistible, and universal, such as the customary transition from causes to effects and from effects to causes. Others are changeable, weak, and irregular, such as those I have just noted. The former are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that if they were removed human nature would immediately perish and go to ruin. The latter are neither unavoidable for mankind, nor necessary, nor even useful in the conduct of life. On the contrary, they are observed to take hold only in weak minds. And since they are opposed to the other principles of custom and reasoning, they can easily be overturned when they are properly set against those principles. For this reason philosophy accepts the former and rejects the latter. Someone who hears an articulate voice in the dark and concludes that somebody is near him reasons soundly and naturally. Yet that conclu-

sion comes from nothing but custom, which fixes and enlivens the idea of a human creature because such a creature is usually conjoined with the present impression. Someone who is tormented, he knows not why, by fear of ghosts in the dark may perhaps be said to reason, and to reason naturally too. But then it must be in the same sense in which a disease is said to be natural: it arises from natural causes, though it is contrary to health, the most agreeable and most natural condition of man.

1.4.4.2 The opinions of the ancient philosophers are like the ghosts in the dark. This includes their fictions of substance and accident, and their reasonings about substantial forms and occult qualities. They come from principles that, however common, are neither universal nor unavoidable in human nature. The modern philosophy claims to be entirely free of this defect, and to arise only from the solid, permanent, and consistent principles of the imagination. We must now inquire into the grounds of this claim.

1.4.4.3 The fundamental principle of that philosophy is its opinion about colors, sounds, tastes, smells, heat, and cold. It holds these to be nothing but impressions in the mind, produced by the operation of external objects and bearing no resemblance to the qualities of the objects. On examination, I find only one of the reasons usually given for this opinion to be satisfactory: the one drawn from the variations of those impressions even while the external object, to all appearance, stays the same. These variations depend on several circumstances. They depend on the different states of our health: a sick man finds a disagreeable taste in foods that used to please him most. They depend on the different complexions and constitutions of people: what seems bitter to one is sweet to another. They depend on differences in people's external situation and position: colors reflected from the clouds change with the distance of the clouds, and with the angle they make with the eye and the source of light. Fire, too, gives the sensation of pleasure at one distance and of pain at another. Instances of this kind are very numerous and common.

1.4.4.4 The conclusion drawn from them is also as satisfactory as can possibly be imagined. When different impressions of the same sense arise from an object, it is certain that not every one of these impressions has a resembling quality existing in the object. The same object cannot at the same time have different qualities of the same sense, and the same quality cannot resemble entirely different impressions. So it plainly follows that many of our impressions have no external model or archetype. Now from like effects we presume like causes. Many of the impressions of color, sound, etc., are admitted to be nothing but internal existences, arising from causes that in no way resemble them. These impressions look no different from the other impressions of color, sound, etc. We conclude, therefore, that all of them have a like origin.

1.4.4.5 Once this principle is admitted, all the other doctrines of that philosophy seem to follow easily. Once sounds, colors, heat, cold, and other sensible qualities are removed from the rank of continued independent existences, we are left with only what are called primary qualities, as the only real ones of which we have any adequate notion. These primary qualities are extension and solidity, with their various mixtures and modifications: shape, motion, gravity, and cohesion. The generation, growth, decline, and decay of animals and plants are nothing but changes of shape and motion. So are the operations of all bodies on each other: of fire, light, water, air, earth, and all the elements and powers of nature. One shape and motion produces another shape and motion. No other principle remains in the material universe, active or passive, of which we can form the remotest idea.

1.4.4.6 I believe many objections could be made to this system. But for now I shall confine myself to one, which in my opinion is quite decisive. I assert that this system does not explain the operations of external objects. Instead, we utterly annihilate all these objects, and reduce ourselves to the most extravagant skepticism about them. If colors, sounds, tastes, and smells are merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive has a real, contin-

ued, and independent existence. This holds even of motion, extension, and solidity, the primary qualities chiefly insisted on.

1.4.4.7 To begin with motion: it is evident that this quality is altogether inconceivable by itself, without reference to some other object. The idea of motion necessarily presupposes that of a moving body. Now what is our idea of the moving body, without which motion is incomprehensible? It must break down into the idea of extension or of solidity. So the reality of motion depends on the reality of these other qualities.

1.4.4.8 Everyone accepts this view concerning motion, and I have proved that it holds true of extension as well. I have shown that it is impossible to conceive extension except as composed of parts endowed with color or solidity. The idea of extension is a compound idea. But since it is not compounded of an infinite number of parts or lesser ideas, it must at last break down into ideas that are perfectly simple and indivisible. These simple and indivisible parts are not ideas of extension, so they must be nonentities unless they are conceived as colored or solid. Color is excluded from any real existence. The reality of our idea of extension therefore depends on the reality of our idea of solidity. The former cannot be sound while the latter is chimerical. Let us, then, turn our attention to examining the idea of solidity.

1.4.4.9 The idea of solidity is the idea of two objects that cannot penetrate each other even when driven together by the utmost force, but still maintain a separate and distinct existence. Solidity is therefore perfectly incomprehensible by itself, without the conception of some bodies that are solid and maintain this separate and distinct existence. Now what idea do we have of these bodies? The ideas of colors, sounds, and other secondary qualities are excluded. The idea of motion depends on that of extension, and the idea of extension on that of solidity. So the idea of solidity cannot possibly depend on either of them. For that would be to argue in a circle, making one idea depend on another while the second at the same time depends on the first. Our modern philosophy, then, leaves us no sound or satisfactory idea of solidity, and so none of matter.

1.4.4.10 This argument will seem entirely conclusive to everyone who understands it. But most readers may find it abstruse and intricate, so I hope I may be excused for trying to make it plainer by putting it in different words. To form an idea of solidity, we must conceive two bodies pressing on each other without any penetration. We cannot possibly reach this idea if we confine ourselves to one object, still less if we conceive none. Two nonentities cannot exclude each other from their places, because they never have any place, nor can they be endowed with any quality. Now I ask: what idea do we form of these bodies or objects to which we suppose solidity to belong? To say that we conceive them merely as solid is to run on to infinity. To say that we picture them to ourselves as extended either reduces everything to a false idea or brings us round in a circle. Extension must necessarily be considered either as colored, which is a false idea, or as solid, which brings us back to the first question. We can make the same observation about mobility and shape. On the whole we must conclude that once colors, sounds, heat, and cold are excluded from the rank of external existences, nothing remains that can give us a sound and constituent idea of body.

1.4.4.11 Add to this that, strictly speaking, solidity or impenetrability is nothing but an impossibility of annihilation, as[11] has already been observed. For this reason it is all the more necessary for us to form some distinct idea of the object whose annihilation we suppose impossible. An impossibility of being annihilated cannot exist by itself, and can never be conceived to exist by itself. It necessarily requires some object or real existence to which it can belong. Now the difficulty remains: how can we form an idea of this object or existence without resorting to the secondary and sensible qualities?

1.4.4.12 Nor must we leave out on this occasion our usual method of examining ideas by considering the impressions they are derived from. Modern philosophy declares that the impressions that come in through sight and hearing, smell and taste,

11 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 4.

have no resembling objects. So the idea of solidity, which is supposed to be real, can never be derived from any of these senses. That leaves touch as the only sense that can convey the impression from which the idea of solidity originally comes. And indeed we naturally imagine that we feel the solidity of bodies, and need only touch an object to perceive this quality. But this way of thinking is more popular than philosophical, as the following reflections will show.

1.4.4.13 First, it is easy to see that bodies are felt by means of their solidity, and yet the feeling is quite a different thing from the solidity. The two have not the least resemblance to each other. A man with palsy in one hand has as perfect an idea of impenetrability when he sees that hand supported by the table as when he feels the same table with the other hand. An object that presses on any of our limbs meets with resistance. That resistance, by the motion it gives to the nerves and animal spirits, conveys a certain sensation to the mind. But it does not follow that the sensation, the motion, and the resistance in any way resemble each other.

1.4.4.14 Second, the impressions of touch are simple impressions, except when considered with regard to their extension, which is irrelevant here. And from this simplicity I infer that they represent neither solidity nor any real object. Take two cases: a man who presses a stone, or any solid body, with his hand, and two stones that press each other. It will readily be granted that these two cases are not alike in every respect. In the first, a feeling or sensation is joined to the solidity, and there is no sign of it in the second. To make these two cases alike, then, we would have to remove some part of the impression the man feels through his hand, or organ of sensation. Since that is impossible in a simple impression, we are obliged to remove the whole of it. This proves that the whole impression has no archetype or model in external objects. We may add that solidity necessarily presupposes two bodies, along with contiguity and impulse. That is a compound object, and so it can never be represented by a simple impression. Not to mention that solidity

always remains invariably the same, while the impressions of touch change on us every moment. This is a clear proof that the latter are not representations of the former.

1.4.4.15 Thus there is a direct and total opposition between our reason and our senses. More properly speaking, the opposition lies between the conclusions we form from cause and effect and those that persuade us of the continued and independent existence of body. When we reason from cause and effect, we conclude that neither color, sound, taste, nor smell has a continued and independent existence. When we exclude these sensible qualities, nothing remains in the universe that has such an existence.

THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL

Hume argues we have no idea of the mind's substance, and that many perceptions exist nowhere.

1.4.5.1 We have found such contradictions and difficulties in every system about external objects, and in the idea of matter, which we fancy so clear and definite. So we would naturally expect still greater difficulties and contradictions in every hypothesis about our internal perceptions and the nature of the mind, which we tend to imagine so much more obscure and uncertain. But here we would be deceiving ourselves. The intellectual world is wrapped in endless obscurities, but it is not entangled in any contradictions like those we have found in the natural world. What is known about it agrees with itself, and what is unknown we must be content to leave so.

1.4.5.2 It is true that certain philosophers, if we listened to them, promise to reduce our ignorance. But I fear they would do it at the risk of running us into contradictions from which the subject itself is free. These philosophers are the curious reasoners about the material or immaterial substances in which they suppose our perceptions to inhere. To put a stop to these endless quibbles on both sides, I know no better method than to ask these philosophers, in a few words: What do they mean by sub-

stance and inherence? Once they have answered this question, it will be reasonable to enter seriously into the dispute, and not before.

1.4.5.3 We have found this question impossible to answer with regard to matter and body. In the case of the mind, it suffers from all the same difficulties, and is burdened with some additional ones peculiar to that subject. Every idea is derived from a prior impression. So if we had any idea of the substance of our minds, we would also have to have an impression of it, and that is very hard, if not impossible, to conceive. For how can an impression represent a substance except by resembling it? And how can an impression resemble a substance, since, according to this philosophy, it is not a substance and has none of the distinctive qualities or characteristics of a substance?

1.4.5.4 But let us leave the question of what may or may not be for the question of what actually is. Some philosophers claim that we have an idea of the substance of our minds. I ask them to point out the impression that produces it, and to say distinctly how that impression operates and from what object it is derived. Is it an impression of sensation or of reflection? Is it pleasant, or painful, or indifferent? Is it with us at all times, or does it only return at intervals? If at intervals, at what times does it chiefly return, and by what causes is it produced?

1.4.5.5 Instead of answering these questions, someone might dodge the difficulty by saying that the definition of a substance is something that can exist by itself, and that this definition ought to satisfy us. If this were said, I would point out that this definition fits everything that can possibly be conceived. It will never serve to distinguish substance from accident, or the soul from its perceptions. For I reason as follows. Whatever is clearly conceived can exist, and whatever is clearly conceived in any manner can exist in the same manner. This is one principle, which has already been granted. Again, everything that is different is distinguishable, and everything that is distinguishable is separable by the imagination. This is another principle. My conclusion from both is this. All our perceptions are different from

each other and from everything else in the universe. So they are also distinct and separable, and may be considered as existing separately, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything else to support their existence. They are therefore substances, as far as this definition explains a substance.

1.4.5.6 Thus we can arrive at no satisfactory notion of substance, either by considering the first origin of ideas or by means of a definition. This seems to me sufficient reason for abandoning entirely the dispute about the materiality and immateriality of the soul, and it makes me condemn outright even the question itself. We have no perfect idea of anything but a perception. A substance is entirely different from a perception. We therefore have no idea of a substance. Inherence in something is supposed to be required to support the existence of our perceptions. Nothing appears to be required to support the existence of a perception. We therefore have no idea of inherence. What possibility, then, is there of answering the question whether perceptions inhere in a material or an immaterial substance, when we do not even understand what the question means?

1.4.5.7 One argument commonly used for the immateriality of the soul strikes me as remarkable. Whatever is extended consists of parts, and whatever consists of parts is divisible, if not in reality, at least in the imagination. But a thought or perception is a being altogether inseparable and indivisible, and nothing divisible can possibly be conjoined with it. For supposing such a conjunction, would the indivisible thought exist on the left or on the right side of this extended, divisible body? On the surface or in the middle? On the back or the front of it? If it is conjoined with the extension, it must exist somewhere within its dimensions. If it exists within its dimensions, then either it exists in one particular part, or it exists in every part. If it exists in one particular part, that part is indivisible, and the perception is conjoined only with it, not with the extension. If the thought exists in every part, it must also be extended, separable, and divisible, just like the body, and that is utterly absurd and contradictory. For can anyone conceive a passion a yard long, a foot

wide, and an inch thick? Thought and extension, therefore, are wholly incompatible qualities, and can never be incorporated together in one subject.

1.4.5.8 This argument does not touch the question about the substance of the soul, but only the question about its local conjunction with matter. So it may not be out of place to consider in general which objects are capable of a local conjunction and which are not. This is an interesting question, and may lead us to some discoveries of considerable importance.

1.4.5.9 Our first notion of space and extension is derived solely from the senses of sight and touch. Only what is colored or tangible has parts arranged in such a way as to convey that idea. When we make a taste weaker or stronger, it is not in the same way that we make a visible object smaller or larger. When several sounds strike our hearing at once, only custom and reflection make us form an idea of how distant or contiguous the bodies they come from are. Whatever marks the place of its existence must either be extended or be a mathematical point, without parts or composition. What is extended must have a particular shape, such as square, round, or triangular. None of these fits a desire, or indeed any impression or idea except those of the two senses mentioned above. Nor should a desire, though indivisible, be regarded as a mathematical point. For in that case it would be possible, by adding others, to make two, three, or four desires, arranged and situated so as to have a definite length, breadth, and thickness, which is plainly absurd.

1.4.5.10 After this it will not be surprising if I put forward a maxim that several metaphysicians condemn, and that is thought contrary to the most certain principles of human reason. The maxim is that an object may exist, and yet be nowhere. I assert that this is not only possible, but that most beings do and must exist in this way. An object may be said to be nowhere when its parts are not situated with respect to each other so as to form any shape or quantity, and when the whole is not situated with respect to other bodies so as to fit our notions of contiguity or distance. Now this is plainly the case with all

our perceptions and objects except those of sight and touch. A moral reflection cannot be placed to the right or the left of a passion, nor can a smell or a sound be circular or square in shape. These objects and perceptions do not require any particular place. On the contrary, they are absolutely incompatible with one, and even the imagination cannot attribute a place to them. As for the absurdity of supposing them to be nowhere, consider this. If the passions and sentiments appeared to perception to have any particular place, the idea of extension could be derived from them as well as from sight and touch, contrary to what we have already established. If they do not *appear* to have any particular place, they may possibly exist in the same way, since whatever we conceive is possible.

1.4.5.11 It will not be necessary now to prove that perceptions which are simple and exist nowhere cannot be conjoined in place with matter or body, which is extended and divisible, since a relation[12] can only be founded on some common quality. It is more worth our while to note that this question of the local conjunction of objects does not come up only in metaphysical disputes about the nature of the soul. Even in common life we have occasion to examine it every moment. Suppose, for example, that we consider a fig at one end of the table and an olive at the other. Clearly, in forming the complex ideas of these substances, one of the most obvious ideas is that of their different tastes. It is just as clear that we incorporate and conjoin these qualities with the qualities that are colored and tangible. The bitter taste of the one and the sweet taste of the other are supposed to lie in the very visible body, and to be separated from each other by the whole length of the table. This illusion is so notable and so natural that it may be worth considering the principles it comes from.

1.4.5.12 An extended object cannot be conjoined in place with something that exists without any place or extension. Even so, the two can stand in many other relations. Thus the taste and smell of any fruit are inseparable from its other qualities of

12 HUME'S NOTE. Part I, Section 5.

color and tangibility. Whichever of them is the cause or the effect, it is certain that they always coexist. Nor do they only coexist in general. They also appear in the mind at the same time, and it is when the extended body is applied to our senses that we perceive its particular taste and smell. These relations between the extended object and the quality that exists without any particular place, namely causation and contiguity in the time of their appearance, must affect the mind in a certain way. When one appears, the mind immediately turns its thought to the conception of the other. Nor is that all. We not only turn our thought from one to the other because of their relation, but also try to give them a new relation, namely a *conjunction in place*, so as to make the transition easier and more natural. For it is a quality of human nature, which I will often have occasion to point out and will explain more fully in its proper place, that when objects are united by some relation, we have a strong propensity to add some new relation to them, in order to complete the union. In arranging bodies we never fail to place resembling ones next to each other, or at least in corresponding positions. Why? Only because we feel a satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or resemblance of situation to resemblance of qualities. The effects of this propensity have been[13] observed already in the resemblance we so readily suppose between particular impressions and their external causes. But we will not find a more evident effect of it than in the present case. Here, from the relations of causation and contiguity in time between two objects, we also feign a conjunction in place, in order to strengthen the connection.

1.4.5.13 We may form confused notions of a union in place between an extended body, such as a fig, and its particular taste. Whatever they are, it is certain that on reflection we must see something altogether unintelligible and contradictory in this union. For suppose we ask ourselves one obvious question: is the taste, which we conceive to be contained within the outline of the body, in every part of it, or in one part only? We will

13 HUME'S NOTE. Section 2, toward the end.

quickly find ourselves at a loss, and see that a satisfactory answer is impossible. We cannot reply that it is only in one part, for experience convinces us that every part has the same taste. Nor can we reply that it exists in every part, for then we must suppose it has shape and extension, which is absurd and incomprehensible. Here, then, we are influenced by two principles directly contrary to each other. One is the inclination of our imagination that leads us to incorporate the taste with the extended object. The other is our reason, which shows us that such a union is impossible. Divided between these opposing principles, we give up neither. Instead we wrap the subject in such confusion and obscurity that we no longer perceive the opposition. We suppose that the taste exists within the outline of the body, but in such a way that it fills the whole without extension, and exists entire in every part without separation. In short, in our most familiar way of thinking we use a scholastic principle that seems so shocking when stated baldly: *totum in toto & totum in qualibet parte*. This is much the same as saying that a thing is in a certain place and yet is not there.[14]

1.4.5.14 All this absurdity comes from our trying to give a place to what is utterly incapable of having one. That attempt in turn arises from our inclination to complete a union founded on causation and contiguity of time, which we do by attributing to the objects a conjunction in place. But if reason is ever strong enough to overcome prejudice, it must surely prevail in the present case. For we are left with only this choice. Either some beings exist without any place; or they have shape and extension; or, when they are incorporated with extended objects, the whole is in the whole and the whole in every part. The absurdity of the last two suppositions is sufficient proof of the truth of the first. Nor is there any fourth opinion. The supposition that they exist in the manner of mathematical points reduces to the second opinion. It supposes that several passions may be arranged in a circle, and that a certain number of smells, combined with a certain number of sounds, may make a body of

14 The Latin means "the whole in the whole, and the whole in every part."

twelve cubic inches. This seems ridiculous the moment it is mentioned.

1.4.5.15 This way of looking at things obliges us to condemn the materialists, who conjoin all thought with extension. Yet a little reflection will show us equal reason to blame their opponents, who conjoin all thought with a simple and indivisible substance. The most elementary philosophy tells us that no external object can make itself known to the mind directly, without the intervention of an image or perception. That table which I see right now is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception. Now the most obvious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts. These parts are arranged so as to give us the notion of distance and contiguity, and of length, breadth, and thickness. The boundary of these three dimensions is what we call shape. This shape is movable, separable, and divisible. Mobility and separability are the distinguishing properties of extended objects. And to cut short all dispute: the very idea of extension is copied from nothing but an impression, and so must agree with it perfectly. To say the idea of extension agrees with something is to say that thing is extended.

1.4.5.16 The freethinker may now triumph in his turn. He has found that there are impressions and ideas that are really extended, and he may ask his opponents how they can incorporate a simple and indivisible subject with an extended perception. All the theologians' arguments can here be turned back against them. Is the indivisible subject, or immaterial substance if you like, on the left or on the right of the perception? Is it in this particular part, or in that one? Is it in every part without being extended? Or is it entire in one part without deserting the rest? Every possible answer to these questions will be absurd in itself, and will also account for the union of our indivisible perceptions with an extended substance.

SPINOZA AND THE THEOLOGIANS

Hume argues that the doctrine of a simple, immaterial soul shares every absurdity of Spinoza's system.

1.4.5.17 This gives me occasion to reconsider the question about the substance of the soul. I have condemned that question as utterly unintelligible, but I cannot refrain from offering some further reflections on it. I claim that the doctrine of the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of a thinking substance is a true atheism, and will serve to justify all the views for which Spinoza is so universally infamous. From this topic I hope at least to gain one advantage. My adversaries will not have any pretext for making the present doctrine odious with their denunciations, once they see how easily those denunciations can be turned back on them.[15]

1.4.5.18 The fundamental principle of Spinoza's atheism is the doctrine of the simplicity of the universe and the unity of the substance in which he supposes both thought and matter to inhere. There is only one substance in the world, he says, and that substance is perfectly simple and indivisible, and exists everywhere without any local presence. Whatever we discover externally by sensation, and whatever we feel internally by reflection, is nothing but a modification of that one, simple, and necessarily existent being, and has no separate or distinct existence. Every passion of the soul and every configuration of matter, however different and various, inheres in the same substance. Each keeps its distinguishing character in itself, without communicating it to the subject in which it inheres. The same substratum, if I may put it that way, supports the most different modifications without any difference in itself, and varies them without any variation. Neither time, nor place, nor all the

15 Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza (1632–77), Dutch philosopher, whose *Ethics* (1677) holds that there is only one substance, God or nature; he was widely denounced as an atheist.

diversity of nature can produce any composition or change in its perfect simplicity and identity.

1.4.5.19 I think this brief account of the principles of that famous atheist will be enough for the present purpose. Without going further into these gloomy and obscure regions, I will be able to show that this hideous hypothesis is almost the same as the hypothesis of the immateriality of the soul, which has become so popular. To make this clear, let us[16] remember that every idea is derived from a preceding perception. It follows that our idea of a perception and our idea of an object or external existence can never represent things that are specifically different from each other. Whatever difference we may suppose between them is still incomprehensible to us. We are obliged either to conceive an external object merely as a relation without a relative, or to make it the very same as a perception or impression.

1.4.5.20 The consequence I will draw from this may at first look like a mere sophism, but on the slightest examination it will prove solid and satisfactory. We can suppose, but never conceive, a specific difference between an object and an impression. I say, then, that any conclusion we form about the connection and incompatibility of impressions will not be known with certainty to apply to objects. On the other hand, any conclusions of this kind that we form about objects will most certainly apply to impressions. The reason is not hard to see. An object is supposed to be different from an impression. So if we base our reasoning on the impression, we cannot be sure that the circumstance on which we base it is common to both. It is still possible that the object differs from the impression in that particular. But when we base our reasoning on the object in the first place, there is no doubt that the same reasoning must extend to the impression. The quality of the object on which the argument rests must at least be conceived by the mind. It could not be conceived unless it were common to an impression, since we have no idea that is not derived from that source. Thus we may establish it as a certain maxim that we can never discover a connec-

16 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 6.

tion or incompatibility between objects that does not extend to impressions. No principle can reveal one, except an irregular kind[17] of reasoning from experience. The converse proposition, however, may not be equally true: it does not follow that all the discoverable relations of impressions are common to objects.

1.4.5.21 To apply this to the present case: two different systems of being are presented to me, and I suppose I must assign each some substance, or ground of inherence. First I observe the universe of objects or of body: the sun, moon, and stars; the earth, seas, plants, animals, people, ships, houses, and other productions of art or nature. Here Spinoza appears and tells me that these are only modifications, and that the subject in which they inhere is simple, uncompounded, and indivisible. After this I consider the other system of beings, namely the universe of thought, or my impressions and ideas. There I observe another sun, moon, and stars; an earth and seas, covered and inhabited by plants and animals; towns, houses, mountains, rivers; in short, everything I can discover or conceive in the first system. When I ask about these, theologians come forward and tell me that these too are modifications, and modifications of one simple, uncompounded, and indivisible substance. At once I am deafened by the noise of a hundred voices that treat the first hypothesis with loathing and scorn, and the second with applause and reverence. I turn my attention to these hypotheses to see what the reason for so great a partiality might be. I find that they share the same fault of being unintelligible. As far as we can understand them, they are so alike that it is impossible to find any absurdity in one that is not common to both. We have no idea of any quality in an object that does not agree with, and could not represent, a quality in an impression, because all our ideas are derived from our impressions. Therefore we can never find any incompatibility between an extended object as a modification and a simple, uncompounded essence as its substance, unless that incompatibility holds equally between the

17 HUME'S NOTE. Such as the reasoning in Section 2, from the coherence of our perceptions.

perception or impression of that extended object and the same uncompounded essence. Every idea of a quality in an object passes through an impression. So every perceivable relation, whether of connection or incompatibility, must be common to both objects and impressions.

1.4.5.22 Considered in general, this argument seems evident beyond all doubt and contradiction. Still, to make it clearer and more tangible, let us look at it in detail, and see whether all the absurdities that have been found in Spinoza's system may not also be found in that of the theologians.[18]

1.4.5.23 First, it has been said against Spinoza, in the scholastic way of talking rather than of thinking, that a mode is not a distinct or separate existence, and so must be the very same as its substance. Consequently the extension of the universe must in a way be identified with the simple, uncompounded essence in which the universe is supposed to inhere. But this, it may be claimed, is utterly impossible and inconceivable, unless the indivisible substance expands so as to match the extension, or the extension contracts so as to match the indivisible substance. This argument seems sound, as far as we can understand it. Clearly nothing but a change of terms is needed to apply the same argument to our extended perceptions and the simple essence of the soul. The ideas of objects and of perceptions are the same in every respect, except that they come with the supposition of a difference that is unknown and incomprehensible.

1.4.5.24 Second, it has been said that we have no idea of substance that does not apply to matter, nor any idea of a distinct substance that does not apply to every distinct portion of matter. Matter, therefore, is not a mode but a substance, and each part of matter is not a distinct mode but a distinct substance. I have already proved that we have no perfect idea of substance. But if we take substance to be something that can exist by itself, then clearly every perception is a substance, and every distinct

18 HUME'S NOTE. See *Bayle's* dictionary, the article on *Spinoza*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), French skeptic, whose *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1697) has a long, hostile article on Spinoza.

part of a perception a distinct substance. And so in this respect the one hypothesis faces the same difficulties as the other.

1.4.5.25 Third, an objection has been raised to the system of one simple substance in the universe. This substance is the support or substratum of everything, so it must at the very same instant be modified into forms that are contrary and incompatible. Round and square shapes are incompatible in the same substance at the same time. How then can the same substance be modified at once into that square table and into this round one? I ask the same question about the impressions of these tables, and find that the answer is no more satisfactory in the one case than in the other.

1.4.5.26 It appears, then, that whichever way we turn, the same difficulties follow us. We cannot take one step toward establishing the simplicity and immateriality of the soul without preparing the way for a dangerous and irreversible atheism. The same holds if, instead of calling thought a modification of the soul, we give it the older and yet more fashionable name of an action. By an action we mean much the same as what is commonly called an abstract mode. That is, it is something which, strictly speaking, is neither distinguishable nor separable from its substance, and is conceived only by a distinction of reason, or an abstraction. But nothing is gained by exchanging the term "modification" for "action," and we escape not a single difficulty by doing so. The two following reflections will show this.

1.4.5.27 First, I observe that the word "action," understood this way, can never properly be applied to any perception as derived from a mind or thinking substance. Our perceptions are all really different, separable, and distinguishable from each other and from everything else we can imagine. So it is impossible to conceive how they can be the action or abstract mode of any substance. Motion is the example commonly used to show how perception depends, as an action, on its substance, but it confuses us more than it teaches us. Motion, to all appearances, produces no real or essential change in the body. It only alters the body's relation to other objects. But consider a person walking

in a garden in the morning with pleasant company, and a person shut in a dungeon in the afternoon, full of terror, despair, and resentment. There seems to be a radical difference between them, and of quite another kind than any produced in a body by a change of its position. We conclude from the distinctness and separability of their ideas that external objects exist separately from each other. In the same way, according to the preceding reasoning, when we make these ideas themselves our objects, we must draw the same conclusion about them. At least it must be admitted that, having no idea of the substance of the soul, we cannot possibly tell how it can admit such differences, and even contrarieties, of perception without any fundamental change. Consequently we can never tell in what sense perceptions are actions of that substance. So using the word "action," with no meaning attached, in place of "modification" adds nothing to our knowledge. Nor does it give any advantage to the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul.

1.4.5.28 I add, second, that if it gives that cause any advantage, it must give an equal advantage to the cause of atheism. For do our theologians claim a monopoly on the word "action"? May not the atheists also take possession of it, and affirm that plants, animals, people, and so on are nothing but particular actions of one simple universal substance, which exerts itself from a blind and absolute necessity? You will say this is utterly absurd. I admit it is unintelligible. But I also claim, on the principles explained above, that it is impossible to find any absurdity in the supposition that all the various objects in nature are actions of one simple substance that will not apply equally to a similar supposition about impressions and ideas.

CAN MATTER CAUSE THOUGHT?

Since anything may cause anything, experience shows motion can cause thought; religion loses nothing by this.

1.4.5.29 From these hypotheses about the substance and local conjunction of our perceptions, we may pass to another, which is

more intelligible than the first and more important than the second: the question of the cause of our perceptions. It is commonly said in the schools that matter and motion, however varied, are still matter and motion, and produce only a difference in the position and situation of objects. Divide a body as often as you like, and it is still body. Put it into any shape, and nothing ever results but shape, or the relation of parts. Move it in any way, and you still find motion, or a change of relation. It is absurd to imagine that motion in a circle, for example, should be nothing but motion in a circle, while motion in another direction, such as in an ellipse, should also be a passion or a moral reflection. It is equally absurd that the collision of two spherical particles should become a sensation of pain, and the meeting of two triangular ones should yield a pleasure. Now these various collisions, variations, and mixtures are the only changes matter is capable of, and they never give us any idea of thought or perception. It is therefore concluded that thought can never be caused by matter.

1.4.5.30 Few have been able to resist the apparent force of this argument, and yet nothing in the world is easier than to refute it. We need only reflect on what has been proved at length: that we are never aware of any connection between causes and effects, and that only through our experience of their constant conjunction can we arrive at any knowledge of this relation. Now all objects that are not contrary are capable of a constant conjunction, and no real objects are contrary.[19] From these principles I have inferred that, considering the matter *a priori*, anything may produce anything. We will never discover a reason why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however great or however small the resemblance between them. This clearly destroys the preceding reasoning about the cause of thought or perception. For though there appears to be no connection whatever between motion and thought, the same holds of all other causes and effects. Place one body weighing a pound on one end of a lever, and another body of the same weight on

19 HUME'S NOTE. Part III, Section 15.

the other end. You will never find in these bodies any principle of motion depending on their distances from the center, any more than a principle of thought and perception. Suppose, then, you claim to prove a priori that such an arrangement of bodies can never cause thought, because, turn it whichever way you like, it is nothing but an arrangement of bodies. By the same reasoning you must conclude that it can never produce motion, since there is no more apparent connection in the one case than in the other. But this latter conclusion is contrary to plain experience. And we may have a similar experience in the operations of the mind, and perceive a constant conjunction of thought and motion. So you reason too hastily when, merely from considering the ideas, you conclude that motion can never produce thought, or that a different arrangement of parts can never give rise to a different passion or reflection. Indeed, it is not only possible that we have such experience; it is certain that we do, since everyone can see that the different states of his body change his thoughts and feelings. Someone may say that this depends on the union of soul and body. I would answer that we must separate the question about the substance of the mind from the question about the cause of its thought. Confining ourselves to the latter question, we find by comparing their ideas that thought and motion are different from each other, and by experience that they are constantly united. These are all the circumstances that enter into the idea of cause and effect when applied to the operations of matter. So we may certainly conclude that motion may be, and actually is, the cause of thought and perception.

1.4.5.31 There seems to be only one dilemma left in the present case. Either we assert that nothing can be the cause of another thing except where the mind can perceive the connection in its idea of the objects. Or we maintain that all objects we find constantly conjoined are, for that reason, to be regarded as causes and effects. If we choose the first horn of the dilemma, these are the consequences. First, we in effect affirm that there is no such thing in the universe as a cause or productive principle, not even the deity himself. Our idea of that supreme Being is

derived from particular impressions, none of which contains any efficacy or seems to have any connection with any other existence. It may be said that the connection between the idea of an infinitely powerful being and the idea of any effect he wills is necessary and unavoidable. To this I answer that we have no idea of a being endowed with any power, much less of one endowed with infinite power. But if we want to change our terms, we can only define power by connection. Then, in saying that the idea of an infinitely powerful being is connected with the idea of every effect he wills, we are really doing no more than asserting that a being whose volition is connected with every effect is connected with every effect. That is an identical proposition, and gives us no insight into the nature of this power or connection. Second, suppose the deity were the great and efficacious principle that makes up for the deficiency of all causes. This leads us into the grossest impieties and absurdities. We have recourse to him in natural operations, and assert that matter cannot by itself communicate motion or produce thought, on the ground that there is no apparent connection between these objects. On that very same ground, I say, we must acknowledge that the deity is the author of all our volitions and perceptions. For they have no more apparent connection either with one another or with the supposed but unknown substance of the soul. We know that this agency of the supreme Being has been asserted by[20] several philosophers with respect to all the actions of the mind except volition, or rather except an insignificant part of volition. It is easy to see, though, that this exception is a mere pretext to avoid the dangerous consequences of that doctrine. If nothing is active except what has an apparent power, thought is in no case more active than matter. And if this inactivity must make us have recourse to a deity, the supreme Being is the real cause of all our actions, bad as well as good, vicious as well as virtuous.

1.4.5.32 Thus we are necessarily driven to the other horn of the dilemma: all objects found to be constantly conjoined are, for

20 HUME'S NOTE. Such as Father *Malebranche* and other *Cartesians*.

that reason alone, to be regarded as causes and effects. Now all objects that are not contrary are capable of a constant conjunction, and no real objects are contrary. It follows that, for all we can determine from the mere ideas, anything may be the cause or effect of anything. This clearly gives the materialists the advantage over their opponents.

1.4.5.33 To pronounce, then, the final verdict on the whole matter: the question about the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible. Not all our perceptions are capable of a local union, either with what is extended or with what is unextended, since some of them are of the one kind and some of the other. And since the constant conjunction of objects constitutes the very essence of cause and effect, matter and motion may often be regarded as the causes of thought, so far as we have any notion of that relation.

1.4.5.34 Philosophy's sovereign authority ought to be acknowledged everywhere. It is certainly something of an indignity to force her on every occasion to apologize for her conclusions and justify herself to every particular art and science that may be offended by her. It puts one in mind of a king put on trial for high treason against his subjects. There is only one occasion when philosophy will think it necessary, and even honorable, to justify herself: when religion may seem to be in the least offended. Religion's rights are as dear to her as her own, and are indeed the same. So if anyone should imagine that the foregoing arguments are in any way dangerous to religion, I hope the following defense will remove his fears.

1.4.5.35 There is no foundation for any conclusion a priori about either the operations or the duration of any object the human mind can form a conception of. Any object may be imagined to become entirely inactive, or to be annihilated in a moment. And it is an evident principle that whatever we can imagine is possible. Now this is no more true of matter than of spirit, or of an extended compound substance than of a simple unextended one. In both cases the metaphysical arguments for the immortality of the soul are equally inconclusive. And in both cases the

moral arguments, and those derived from the analogy of nature, are equally strong and convincing. If my philosophy, then, adds nothing to the arguments for religion, I at least have the satisfaction of thinking that it takes nothing away from them, and that everything remains exactly as before.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

Hume finds no impression of a self and concludes that the mind is a bundle of perceptions.

1.4.6.1 There are some philosophers who imagine that at every moment we are intimately conscious of what we call our *self*. They hold that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence, and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, of both its perfect identity and its simplicity. The strongest sensation, the most violent passion, they say, instead of distracting us from this view, only fix it more intensely, and make us consider their influence on self through their pain or pleasure. To attempt any further proof of this would weaken its evidence, since no proof can be derived from any fact we are so intimately conscious of. Nor is there anything we can be certain of if we doubt this.

1.4.6.2 Unfortunately all these confident assertions are contrary to the very experience that is pleaded in their favor, and we have no idea of self of the kind explained here. For from what impression could this idea be derived? It is impossible to answer this question without obvious contradiction and absurdity. Yet it is a question that must be answered if the idea of self is to pass for clear and intelligible. It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression. It is that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to refer. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must remain invariably the same throughout the whole course of our lives, since self is supposed to exist in that way. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations follow

one another, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived. Consequently there is no such idea.

1.4.6.3 But further, what must become of all our particular perceptions on this hypothesis? They are all different, distinguishable, and separable from each other. They may be considered separately and may exist separately, and they need nothing to support their existence. In what way, then, do they belong to self, and how are they connected with it? For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as in sound sleep, for that long I am unaware of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. Suppose all my perceptions were removed by death, and I could neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body. Then I would be entirely annihilated, and I cannot conceive what more is needed to make me a perfect nonentity. If anyone, on serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason with him no longer. All I can grant him is that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may perhaps perceive something simple and continuous, which he calls himself, though I am certain there is no such principle in me.

1.4.6.4 But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions. Our thought is still more variable than our sight, and all our other senses and faculties contribute to this change. There is no single power of the soul that

remains unalterably the same for perhaps even one moment. The mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity at different times, whatever natural propensity we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison with the theater must not mislead us. It is the successive perceptions alone that constitute the mind. We have not the faintest notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials it is composed of.

WHY WE ASCRIBE IDENTITY

Hume explains why related successions such as ships, plants, churches and rivers are called the same.

1.4.6.5 What, then, gives us so great a propensity to ascribe identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose that we possess an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives? To answer this question, we must distinguish between personal identity as it concerns our thought or imagination, and as it concerns our passions, or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject. To explain it fully we must go fairly deep, and account for the identity we attribute to plants and animals, since there is a great analogy between that identity and the identity of a self or person.

1.4.6.6 We have a distinct idea of an object that remains invariable and uninterrupted through a supposed variation of time. This idea we call the idea of identity or sameness. We also have a distinct idea of several different objects existing in succession and connected together by a close relation. To an accurate view, this gives as perfect a notion of diversity as if there were no relation whatever among the objects. These two ideas, of identity and of a succession of related objects, are in themselves perfectly distinct and even contrary. Yet it is certain that in our common way of thinking they are generally confused with each

other. Consider the action of the imagination by which we consider the uninterrupted and invariable object, and the action by which we reflect on the succession of related objects. The two feel almost the same, and the latter requires hardly more effort of thought than the former. The relation eases the mind's transition from one object to another, and makes its passage as smooth as if it were contemplating one continued object. This resemblance is the cause of the confusion and mistake, and makes us substitute the notion of identity for that of related objects. At one instant we may consider the related succession as variable or interrupted, but the next instant we are sure to ascribe a perfect identity to it, and to regard it as invariable and uninterrupted. The resemblance just mentioned makes our propensity to this mistake so great that we fall into it before we are aware. We constantly correct ourselves by reflection and return to a more accurate way of thinking. Yet we cannot sustain our philosophy for long, or remove this bias from the imagination. Our last resort is to give in to it, and boldly assert that these different related objects are in effect the same, however interrupted and variable. To justify this absurdity to ourselves, we often feign some new and unintelligible principle that connects the objects together and prevents their interruption or variation. Thus we feign the continued existence of the perceptions of our senses, to remove the interruption. And we resort to the notion of a soul, and self, and substance, to disguise the variation. We may further observe that even where we do not produce such a fiction, our propensity to confuse identity with relation is so great that we are apt to imagine[21] something unknown and mysterious connecting the parts, beyond their relation. This, I take it, is the case with the identity we ascribe to plants and vegetables. And even when this does not happen, we still feel a propensity to confuse these ideas, though we cannot fully

21 HUME'S NOTE. If the reader wants to see how a great genius, as well as the common run of people, may be influenced by these seemingly trivial principles of the imagination, let him read Lord *Shaftesbury's* reasonings about the uniting principle of the universe and the identity of plants and animals. See his *Moralists,* or *Philosophical Rhapsody*.

satisfy ourselves on that point, or find anything invariable and uninterrupted to justify our notion of identity.

1.4.6.7 Thus the controversy about identity is not merely a dispute about words. When we attribute identity, in an improper sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confined to the expression. It is commonly accompanied by a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least by a propensity to such fictions. To prove this hypothesis to the satisfaction of every fair inquirer, it will be enough to show from daily experience and observation that the objects which are variable or interrupted, and yet are supposed to remain the same, are only those that consist of a succession of parts connected together by resemblance, contiguity, or causation. Such a succession plainly fits our notion of diversity, so it can only be by mistake that we ascribe identity to it. And the relation of parts that leads us into this mistake is really nothing but a quality that produces an association of ideas and an easy transition of the imagination from one to another. So the error can only arise from the resemblance this act of the mind bears to the act by which we contemplate one continued object. Our chief business, then, must be to prove that all objects to which we ascribe identity, without observing their invariableness and uninterruptedness, consist of a succession of related objects.

1.4.6.8 To do this, suppose some mass of matter, whose parts are contiguous and connected, is placed before us. Clearly we must attribute a perfect identity to this mass, provided all the parts remain uninterruptedly and invariably the same, whatever motion or change of place we may observe either in the whole or in any of the parts. But suppose some very small or insignificant part is added to the mass or subtracted from it. Strictly speaking, this absolutely destroys the identity of the whole. Yet since we seldom think so precisely, we do not hesitate to call a mass of matter the same when we find so trivial an alteration. The passage of thought from the object before the change to the object after it is so smooth and easy that we hardly perceive the

transition, and are apt to imagine that it is nothing but a continued survey of the same object.

1.4.6.9 A very remarkable circumstance attends this experiment. The change of any considerable part in a mass of matter destroys the identity of the whole, yet we must measure the size of the part not absolutely but by its proportion to the whole. The addition or loss of a mountain would not be enough to produce a diversity in a planet, though the change of a very few inches would be able to destroy the identity of some bodies. The only way to account for this is to reflect that objects act on the mind, and break or interrupt the continuity of its actions, not according to their real size but according to their proportion to each other. Since this interruption makes an object cease to appear the same, it must be the uninterrupted progress of thought that constitutes the imperfect identity.

1.4.6.10 This may be confirmed by another phenomenon. A change in any considerable part of a body destroys its identity. But it is remarkable that where the change is produced gradually and imperceptibly, we are less inclined to ascribe that effect to it. The reason can plainly be only this: the mind, in following the successive changes of the body, feels an easy passage from surveying its condition at one moment to viewing it at another, and at no particular time perceives any interruption in its actions. From this continued perception, it ascribes a continued existence and identity to the object.

1.4.6.11 But whatever precautions we take in introducing the changes gradually and keeping them proportionate to the whole, it is certain that once the changes are seen to have become considerable, we hesitate to ascribe identity to such different objects. There is, however, another device by which we can induce the imagination to go a step further. We can make the parts refer to each other and combine toward some common end or purpose. A ship of which a considerable part has been replaced through frequent repairs is still considered the same, and the difference of materials does not stop us from ascribing identity to it. The common end toward which the parts work

together remains the same through all their variations, and it gives the imagination an easy transition from one state of the body to another.

1.4.6.12 But this is still more remarkable when we add to their common end a sympathy of parts, and suppose that in all their actions and operations they stand to each other in the reciprocal relation of cause and effect. This is the case with all animals and plants. In them the various parts not only refer to some general purpose but also depend on and are connected with each other. The effect of so strong a relation is this: everyone must admit that within a very few years both plants and animals undergo a total change, yet we still attribute identity to them, even while their form, size, and substance are entirely altered. An oak that grows from a small plant into a large tree is still the same oak, though not one particle of its matter, nor the shape of its parts, is the same. An infant becomes a man, and is sometimes fat, sometimes thin, without any change in his identity.

1.4.6.13 We may also consider the following two phenomena, which are remarkable in their way. The first is that, though we are usually able to distinguish fairly precisely between numerical and specific identity, we sometimes confuse them, and in our thinking and reasoning use the one for the other. Thus a man who hears a noise that is frequently interrupted and renewed says it is still the same noise. Yet it is evident that the sounds have only a specific identity, or resemblance, and that nothing is numerically the same except the cause that produced them. In the same way, it can be said without any breach of proper usage that a certain church, formerly built of brick, fell into ruin, and that the parish rebuilt the same church in freestone and in the modern style of architecture. Here neither the form nor the materials are the same, and the two objects have nothing in common except their relation to the inhabitants of the parish. Yet this alone is enough to make us call them the same. But we must observe that in these cases the first object is, in a sense, annihilated before the second comes into existence. As a result, we are never presented at any one moment with the

idea of difference and multiplicity, and for that reason we are less hesitant to call them the same.

1.4.6.14 Second, we may note the following. In a succession of related objects it is, in a sense, required that the change of parts be neither sudden nor total if identity is to be preserved. Yet where the objects are by nature changeable and inconstant, we allow a more sudden transition than would otherwise be consistent with that relation. Thus the nature of a river consists in the motion and change of its parts. So although these parts are totally replaced in less than twenty-four hours, the river still remains the same for many centuries. What is natural and essential to anything is, in a sense, expected, and what is expected makes less impression and seems of less importance than what is unusual and extraordinary. A considerable change of the first kind actually seems smaller to the imagination than the most trivial alteration of the second. And because it breaks the continuity of thought less, it does less to destroy the identity.

THE IDENTITY OF THE MIND

Personal identity is a fiction produced by resemblance and causation, with memory as its chief source.

1.4.6.15 We now proceed to explain the nature of personal identity, which has become such a great question in philosophy, especially in recent years in England, where all the more abstruse sciences are studied with particular ardor and dedication. Here it is evident that we must continue the same method of reasoning that has so successfully explained the identity of plants, animals, ships, houses, and all the compound and changeable productions of either art or nature. The identity we ascribe to the human mind is only a fictitious one, of the same kind as the identity we ascribe to plants and animal bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin. It must come from a similar operation of the imagination on similar objects.

1.4.6.16 In my opinion this argument is perfectly decisive. But in case it fails to convince the reader, let him weigh the following

reasoning, which is still tighter and more direct. It is evident that the identity we attribute to the human mind, however perfect we may imagine it to be, cannot merge the various different perceptions into one and make them lose the marks of distinction and difference that are essential to them. It remains true that every distinct perception that goes into the makeup of the mind is a distinct existence. It is different from, distinguishable from, and separable from every other perception, whether simultaneous or successive. But despite this distinctness and separability, we suppose the whole train of perceptions to be united by identity. So a question naturally arises about this relation of identity: is it something that really binds our various perceptions together, or something that only associates their ideas in the imagination? In other words, when we pronounce on the identity of a person, do we observe some real bond among his perceptions, or do we only feel one among the ideas we form of them? We could easily decide this question if we would recall what has already been proved at length. The understanding never observes any real connection among objects, and even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examined, comes down to a customary association of ideas. For it clearly follows that identity is nothing that really belongs to these different perceptions and unites them. It is merely a quality we attribute to them because of the union of their ideas in the imagination when we reflect on them. Now the only qualities that can give ideas a union in the imagination are the three relations mentioned above. These are the uniting principles in the world of ideas. Without them, the mind can separate every distinct object and consider it separately, and each object appears to have no more connection with any other than if they were divided by the greatest difference and distance. It is, therefore, on some of these three relations of resemblance, contiguity, and causation that identity depends. And since the very essence of these relations consists in their producing an easy transition of ideas, it follows that our notions of personal identity come entirely from

the smooth and uninterrupted progress of thought along a train of connected ideas, according to the principles explained above.

1.4.6.17 The only question remaining, therefore, is which relations produce this uninterrupted progress of our thought when we consider the successive existence of a mind or thinking person. Here it is evident that we must confine ourselves to resemblance and causation, and must drop contiguity, which has little or no influence in the present case.

1.4.6.18 To begin with resemblance: suppose we could see clearly into another person's breast and observe the succession of perceptions that makes up his mind or thinking principle. And suppose he always keeps the memory of a considerable part of his past perceptions. It is evident that nothing could do more to give this succession a relation amid all its variations. For what is memory but a faculty by which we call up the images of past perceptions? And since an image necessarily resembles its object, the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought must surely carry the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuation of one object. In this respect, then, memory not only discovers the identity but also helps to produce it, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others.

1.4.6.19 As for causation: we may observe that the true idea of the human mind is to consider it as a system of different perceptions, or different existences. These are linked together by the relation of cause and effect, and they mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other. Our impressions give rise to their corresponding ideas, and these ideas in turn produce other impressions. One thought chases another and draws a third after it, which in turn expels it. In this respect I can compare the soul to nothing more aptly than to a republic or commonwealth. Its various members are united by reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and they give rise to other persons, who carry on the same republic through the incessant changes of its parts. The same individual republic may change not only its

members but also its laws and constitution. In the same way, the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he undergoes, his various parts are still connected by the relation of causation. Seen this way, our identity with regard to the passions serves to reinforce our identity with regard to the imagination. It does so by making our distant perceptions influence each other and by giving us a present concern for our past or future pains or pleasures.

1.4.6.20 Memory alone acquaints us with the continuity and extent of this succession of perceptions, and chiefly for that reason it is to be regarded as the source of personal identity. If we had no memory, we would never have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects that makes up our self or person. But once we have acquired this notion of causation from memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons, beyond our memory. We can take in times, circumstances, and actions that we have entirely forgotten but suppose in general to have existed. For how few of our past actions do we remember at all? Who can tell me, for instance, what his thoughts and actions were on January 1, 1715, March 11, 1719, and August 3, 1733? Or will he claim that, because he has entirely forgotten the incidents of those days, his present self is not the same person as the self of that time, and so overturn all the most established notions of personal identity? Seen this way, then, memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity, by showing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions. Those who claim that memory entirely produces our personal identity will be obliged to explain why we can extend our identity beyond our memory in this way.

1.4.6.21 This whole doctrine leads us to a conclusion of great importance for the present matter. All the fine and subtle questions about personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded as grammatical rather than philosophical difficulties. Identity depends on the relations of ideas, and these

relations produce identity by means of the easy transition they bring about. But the relations, and the ease of the transition, can diminish by imperceptible degrees. So we have no exact standard by which to settle any dispute about the moment when they acquire or lose a claim to the name of identity. All disputes about the identity of connected objects are merely verbal, except insofar as the relation of parts gives rise to some fiction, or imaginary principle of union, as we have already observed.

1.4.6.22 What I have said about the first origin and the uncertainty of our notion of identity, as applied to the human mind, can be extended with little or no change to our notion of simplicity. Take an object whose different coexisting parts are bound together by a close relation. It acts on the imagination in much the same way as one that is perfectly simple and indivisible, and it takes hardly any greater stretch of thought to conceive it. Because of this similarity of operation, we attribute simplicity to it. We feign a principle of union as the support of this simplicity and the center of all the object's different parts and qualities.

1.4.6.23 We have thus finished our examination of the various systems of philosophy, concerning both the intellectual and the natural world. In our miscellaneous way of reasoning we have been led into several topics, which will either illustrate and confirm some earlier part of this discourse or prepare the way for the views that follow. Now that we have fully explained the nature of our judgment and understanding, it is time to return to a closer examination of our subject and to proceed with the precise anatomy of human nature.

CONCLUSION OF THIS BOOK

Hume pauses over his voyage and finds his faculties so unreliable that he nearly despairs.

1.4.7.1 But before I launch out into the immense depths of philosophy that lie before me, I feel inclined to stop for a moment where I now stand and to ponder the voyage I have undertaken, which will certainly require the utmost skill and effort to bring

to a happy end. It seems to me that I am like a man who has struck on many shoals and narrowly escaped shipwreck in crossing a small firth. Yet he still has the rashness to put out to sea in the same leaky, weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of sailing around the globe in these unfavorable circumstances. My memory of past errors and perplexities makes me distrustful of the future. The wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the faculties I must use in my inquiries increase my fears. And the impossibility of amending or correcting these faculties reduces me almost to despair. It makes me resolve to perish on the barren rock where I now am rather than venture out onto that boundless ocean that stretches away into immensity. This sudden view of my danger strikes me with melancholy. And since that passion, more than any other, tends to indulge itself, I cannot help feeding my despair with all the gloomy reflections that the present subject supplies in such abundance.

1.4.7.2 I am first frightened and bewildered by the forlorn solitude in which my philosophy has placed me. I imagine myself some strange, uncouth monster who, unable to mix and unite in society, has been expelled from all human dealings and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. I would gladly run into the crowd for shelter and warmth, but I cannot bring myself to mix with such deformity. I call on others to join me so that we can form a separate company, but no one will listen to me. Everyone keeps their distance and dreads the storm that beats on me from every side. I have exposed myself to the hostility of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians. Can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? I have declared my disapproval of their systems. Can I be surprised if they express hatred of mine and of me personally? When I look outward, I foresee on every side dispute, contradiction, anger, slander, and disparagement. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. The whole world conspires to oppose and contradict me. And yet such is my weakness that I feel all my opinions loosen and fall of their own accord when

the approval of others does not support them. Every step I take is hesitant, and every new reflection makes me fear some error and absurdity in my reasoning.

1.4.7.3 For with what confidence can I venture on such bold enterprises when, besides the countless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many that are common to human nature? Can I be sure that in leaving all established opinions I am following truth? And by what criterion shall I recognize her, even if fortune should at last guide me onto her footsteps? After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I should assent to it. I feel nothing but a strong propensity to consider objects strongly in the light in which they appear to me. Experience is a principle that instructs me in the various conjunctions of objects in the past. Habit is another principle, which determines me to expect the same in the future. The two of them, working together on the imagination, make me form certain ideas in a more intense and lively manner than others that lack the same advantages. This quality, by which the mind enlivens some ideas beyond others, seems so trivial and so little founded on reason. Yet without it we could never assent to any argument, nor carry our view beyond the few objects present to our senses. Indeed, even to these objects we could never attribute any existence except one dependent on the senses. We would have to include them entirely in the succession of perceptions that makes up our self or person. More than that: even within that succession, we could admit only the perceptions immediately present to our consciousness. The lively images that memory presents to us could never be accepted as true pictures of past perceptions. The memory, the senses, and the understanding are therefore all founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas.

1.4.7.4 No wonder a principle so inconstant and deceptive should lead us into errors when it is followed implicitly (as it must be) through all its variations. It is this principle that makes us reason from causes and effects. And it is the same principle that convinces us of the continued existence of external objects

when they are absent from the senses. But though these two operations are equally natural and necessary to the human mind, in some circumstances they are[22] directly contrary. It is not possible for us to reason soundly and regularly from causes and effects and at the same time believe in the continued existence of matter. How, then, shall we reconcile these principles? Which of them shall we prefer? Or if we prefer neither, but assent to each in turn, as philosophers usually do, with what confidence can we afterward claim that glorious title, when we thus knowingly embrace an obvious contradiction?

1.4.7.5 This contradiction[23] would be more excusable if some degree of solidity and satisfaction in the other parts of our reasoning made up for it. But the case is quite the reverse. When we trace the human understanding back to its first principles, we find that it leads us to views that seem to make a mockery of all our past labor and effort and to discourage us from further inquiries. Nothing is more eagerly sought by the human mind than the causes of every phenomenon. And we are not content with knowing the immediate causes, but push on with our inquiries until we reach the original and ultimate principle. We would not willingly stop before we become acquainted with the energy in the cause by which it operates on its effect, the tie that connects them, and the efficacious quality on which the tie depends. This is our aim in all our studies and reflections. How disappointed, then, must we be when we learn that this connection, tie, or energy lies merely in ourselves? It is nothing but the determination of the mind that is acquired by custom. That determination causes us to make a transition from an object to its usual attendant, and from the impression of one to the lively idea of the other. Such a discovery not only cuts off all hope of ever reaching satisfaction but even forestalls our very wishes. For it appears that when we say we want to know the ultimate, operating principle as something residing in the external object, we either contradict ourselves or talk without meaning.

22 HUME'S NOTE. Section 4.
23 HUME'S NOTE. Part III, Section 14.

1.4.7.6 This deficiency in our ideas is not, indeed, noticed in common life. We are not aware that in the most ordinary conjunctions of cause and effect we are as ignorant of the ultimate principle that binds them together as we are in the most unusual and extraordinary ones. But this comes merely from an illusion of the imagination, and the question is how far we ought to yield to these illusions. This question is very difficult, and it puts us in a very dangerous dilemma whichever way we answer it. Suppose we assent to every trivial suggestion of the fancy. Quite apart from the fact that these suggestions often contradict each other, they lead us into such errors, absurdities, and obscurities that we must at last become ashamed of our credulity. Nothing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of the imagination, and nothing has caused more mistakes among philosophers. Men of vivid fancy may in this respect be compared to those angels whom scripture depicts as covering their eyes with their wings. This has already appeared in so many instances that we may spare ourselves the trouble of enlarging on it further.

1.4.7.7 But on the other hand, considering these instances might lead us to resolve to reject all the trivial suggestions of the fancy and to stick to the understanding, that is, to the general and more established properties of the imagination. Even this resolution, if steadily carried out, would be dangerous and would have the most fatal consequences. For I have already shown[24] that the understanding, when it acts alone and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself. It leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, whether in philosophy or in common life. We save ourselves from this total skepticism only by means of one singular and seemingly trivial property of the fancy. It is only with difficulty that we enter into remote views of things, and we cannot accompany them with as vivid an impression as we do views that are easier and more natural. Shall we, then, lay it down as a general maxim that no refined or elaborate reasoning is ever to be accepted? Consider

24 HUME'S NOTE. Section 1.

carefully the consequences of such a principle. By this means you entirely cut off all science and philosophy. You proceed on one singular quality of the imagination, and by the same reasoning must embrace all of them. And you expressly contradict yourself, since this maxim must be built on the preceding reasoning, which everyone will admit is refined and metaphysical enough. Which side, then, shall we choose among these difficulties? If we embrace this principle and condemn all refined reasoning, we run into the most obvious absurdities. If we reject it in favor of these reasonings, we entirely subvert the human understanding. We have, therefore, no choice left but between a false reason and none at all. For my part, I do not know what ought to be done in the present case. I can only observe what is commonly done. This difficulty is seldom or never thought of, and even when it has once been present to the mind, it is quickly forgotten and leaves only a small impression behind. Very refined reflections have little or no influence on us. Yet we do not, and cannot, lay it down as a rule that they ought not to have any influence, for that implies an obvious contradiction.

1.4.7.8 But what have I just said? That very refined and metaphysical reflections have little or no influence on us? My present feeling and experience make it hard not to retract and condemn this opinion. The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so worked on me and heated my brain that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning. I cannot regard any opinion as even more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favor shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom do I have any influence, or who has any influence on me? I am bewildered by all these questions, and I begin to imagine myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, surrounded by the deepest darkness and utterly deprived of the use of every limb and faculty.

NATURE'S CURE

Dinner, backgammon and friends dispel his doubts; he returns to philosophy only from inclination and curiosity.

1.4.7.9 Most fortunately, since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself is enough for that purpose. She cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind or by some distraction and lively impression of my senses, which obliterates all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends. And when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further.

1.4.7.10 Here, then, I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. My natural propensity and the course of my animal spirits and passions reduce me to this indolent belief in the general maxims of the world. Even so, I still feel such remnants of my former disposition that I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and to resolve never again to give up the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy. For those are my sentiments in the splenetic mood that governs me at present. I may, indeed I must, yield to the current of nature in submitting to my senses and understanding. And in this blind submission I show most perfectly my skeptical disposition and principles. But does it follow that I must strive against the current of nature, which leads me to indolence and pleasure? Must I cut myself off to some extent from the company and society of men, which is so agreeable? Must I torture my brain with subtleties and sophistries at the very time when I cannot satisfy myself that so painful an effort is reasonable, and have no tolerable prospect of reaching truth and certainty by its means? What obligation am I under to abuse my time like this? And what purpose can it serve, either for the service of mankind

or for my own private interest? No: if I must be a fool, as all those who reason or believe anything certainly are, my follies shall at least be natural and agreeable. Where I strive against my inclination, I shall have a good reason for my resistance. And I will no longer be led wandering into such dreary solitudes and rough passages as I have met with so far.

1.4.7.11 These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence. And indeed I must confess that philosophy has nothing to set against them, and expects victory more from the return of a serious, good-humored disposition than from the force of reason and conviction. In all the incidents of life we ought still to preserve our skepticism. If we believe that fire warms or water refreshes, it is only because it costs us too much effort to think otherwise. Indeed, if we are philosophers, it ought only to be on skeptical principles, and from an inclination we feel to occupy ourselves in that way. Where reason is lively and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it can never have any right to operate on us.

1.4.7.12 So at times when I am tired of amusement and company, and have indulged in a reverie in my room or on a solitary walk by a river, I feel my mind all collected within itself. I am then naturally inclined to turn my view to all those subjects about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation. I cannot help being curious to learn the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of the various passions and inclinations that move and govern me. I am uneasy to think that I approve of one object and disapprove of another, call one thing beautiful and another deformed, and decide about truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing on what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies in such deplorable ignorance on all these points. I feel an ambition arise in me to contribute to the instruction of mankind and to win a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition. If I tried to banish them by attaching myself to

some other business or diversion, I feel I would lose out in point of pleasure. And this is the origin of my philosophy.

1.4.7.13 But suppose this curiosity and ambition did not carry me into speculations beyond the sphere of common life. My very weakness would still necessarily lead me into such inquiries. It is certain that superstition is much bolder in its systems and hypotheses than philosophy. Philosophy contents itself with assigning new causes and principles to the phenomena that appear in the visible world. Superstition, by contrast, opens up a world of its own and presents us with scenes, beings, and objects that are altogether new. It is almost impossible for the human mind to rest, like the minds of beasts, within the narrow circle of objects that are the subject of daily conversation and action. So we ought only to deliberate about the choice of our guide, and ought to prefer the one that is safest and most agreeable. In this respect I make bold to recommend philosophy, and I shall not hesitate to prefer it to superstition of every kind or denomination. For since superstition arises naturally and easily from the popular opinions of mankind, it seizes more strongly on the mind, and it is often able to disturb us in the conduct of our lives and actions. Philosophy, on the contrary, if it is sound, can present us only with mild and moderate sentiments. If it is false and extravagant, its opinions are merely objects of cold and general speculation, and they seldom go so far as to interrupt the course of our natural propensities. The *Cynics* are an extraordinary instance of philosophers who, from purely philosophical reasonings, ran into as great extravagances of conduct as any monk or dervish who ever lived. Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous.

1.4.7.14 I realize that these two cases, the strength and the weakness of the mind, will not cover all mankind. In England in particular there are many honest gentlemen who are always occupied with their domestic affairs or amuse themselves with ordinary recreations. Such men have carried their thoughts very little beyond the objects that are daily exposed to their senses.

And indeed, I do not claim to make philosophers of people like these, nor do I expect them either to be partners in these researches or listeners to these discoveries. They do well to stay as they are. Instead of refining them into philosophers, I wish we could give our founders of systems a share of this coarse, earthy mixture. They usually badly need it as an ingredient, and it would serve to temper the fiery particles they are made of. As long as a warm imagination is allowed into philosophy, and hypotheses are embraced merely for being plausible and agreeable, we can never have any steady principles. Nor can we have any sentiments that will fit with common practice and experience. But if these hypotheses were once removed, we might hope to establish a system or set of opinions that might at least be satisfactory to the human mind and stand the test of the most critical examination, even if it were not true (for that, perhaps, is too much to hope for). Many fanciful systems have successively arisen and decayed among men. But we should not despair of achieving this end because of them, if we would consider how short a period these questions have been the subjects of inquiry and reasoning. Two thousand years, with such long interruptions and under such powerful discouragements, is a short time in which to bring the sciences to any tolerable perfection. Perhaps we are still at too early an age of the world to discover any principles that will bear the scrutiny of the most distant posterity. For my part, my only hope is that I may contribute a little to the advancement of knowledge. I would like to give the speculations of philosophers a different turn in some particulars, and to point out to them more distinctly the only subjects in which they can expect assurance and conviction. Human nature is the only science of man, and yet it has so far been the most neglected. It will be enough for me if I can bring it a little more into fashion. The hope of this serves to calm my temper out of that spleen, and to rouse it out of that indolence, which sometimes get the better of me. If the reader finds himself in the same easy disposition, let him follow me in my future speculations. If not, let him follow his inclination and wait for application and good

humor to return. A man who studies philosophy in this carefree manner is more truly skeptical than one who feels an inclination to it but is so overwhelmed with doubts and scruples that he rejects it entirely. A true skeptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts as well as of his philosophical conviction. He will never refuse any innocent satisfaction that offers itself on account of either of them.

1.4.7.15 Despite our skeptical principles, it is proper that we should in general indulge our inclination in the most elaborate philosophical researches. But that is not all. We should also yield to the propensity that inclines us to be positive and certain on particular points, according to the light in which we survey them at any given moment. It is easier to refrain from all examination and inquiry than to check ourselves in so natural a propensity and guard against the assurance that always arises from an exact and full survey of an object. On such occasions we are apt to forget not only our skepticism but even our modesty. We then use expressions such as "it is evident," "it is certain," "it is undeniable," which proper deference to the public ought perhaps to prevent. I may have fallen into this fault following the example of others. But I here enter a caveat against any objections that may be made on that score. I declare that such expressions were forced from me by my present view of the object, and imply no dogmatic spirit or conceited idea of my own judgment. Those, I know, are sentiments that become nobody, and a skeptic less than anyone.

Book II, Part 1: Of pride and humility

Hume explains pride and humility through a double relation of impressions and ideas.

SECT. I. DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

2.1.1.1 Just as all the perceptions of the mind can be divided into impressions and ideas, so impressions admit of a further division into original and secondary. This division of impressions is the same as the one[1] I used earlier when I divided them into impressions of sensation and reflection. Original impressions, or impressions of sensation, are those that arise in the soul without any preceding perception. They come from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs. Secondary, or reflective, impressions are those that proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the intervention of their idea. Of the first kind are all the impressions of the senses and all bodily pains and pleasures. Of the second are the passions and other emotions resembling them.

2.1.1.2 It is certain that the mind, in its perceptions, must begin somewhere. And since impressions precede their corresponding ideas, there must be some impressions that make their appearance in the soul without any introduction. These depend on natural and physical causes, so examining them would lead me too far from my present subject, into the sciences of anatomy and natural philosophy. For this reason I shall here confine myself to those other impressions that I have called secondary and reflect-

1 HUME'S NOTE. Book I, Part I, Section 2.

ive, as arising either from the original impressions or from their ideas. Bodily pains and pleasures are the source of many passions, both when felt and when considered by the mind. But they arise originally in the soul, or in the body (call it whichever you prefer), without any preceding thought or perception. A fit of gout produces a long train of passions, such as grief, hope, and fear. But it does not derive immediately from any affection or idea.

2.1.1.3 The reflective impressions may be divided into two kinds: the calm and the *violent*. Of the first kind is the sense of beauty and ugliness in action, in composition, and in external objects. Of the second are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility. This division is far from exact. The raptures of poetry and music frequently rise to the greatest height. Meanwhile those other impressions, properly called *passions*, may subside into so soft an emotion as to become, in a sense, imperceptible. But since in general the passions are more violent than the emotions arising from beauty and ugliness, these impressions have commonly been distinguished from each other.[2] The subject of the human mind is so rich and varied that I shall here take advantage of this common and plausible division, so that I can proceed in better order. Having said all I thought necessary about our ideas, I shall now explain these violent emotions, or passions: their nature, origin, causes, and effects.

2.1.1.4 When we survey the passions, a division of them into *direct* and *indirect* presents itself. By direct passions I mean those that arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. By indirect, I mean those that proceed from the same principles, but through the conjunction of other qualities. I cannot at present justify or explain this distinction any further. I can only observe in general that under the indirect passions I include pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, and generosity, together with those that depend on

2 Hume's "deformity" means ugliness in general, not physical malformation; in this book it is rendered "ugliness."

them. Under the direct passions I include desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair, and security. I shall begin with the former.

PRIDE AND HUMILITY

Hume separates the object of pride and humility, the self, from their many causes.

2.1.2.1 The passions of *pride* and *humility* are simple and uniform impressions. So it is impossible for us ever to give a proper definition of them, or indeed of any of the passions, by a multitude of words. The most we can aim at is to describe them by listing the circumstances that accompany them. But these words, *pride* and humility, are in general use, and the impressions they stand for are the most common of all. So everyone will be able to form a correct idea of them for himself, without any danger of mistake. For this reason, so as not to waste time on preliminaries, I shall immediately begin examining these passions.

2.1.2.2 It is evident that pride and humility, though directly contrary, nevertheless have the same *object*. This object is the self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness. Our view always settles here when we are moved by either of these passions. As our idea of ourselves is more or less favorable, we feel one or the other of those opposite affections, and are elated by pride or dejected by humility. Whatever other objects the mind may take in, they are always considered with a view to ourselves. Otherwise they could never arouse these passions, or produce the smallest increase or diminution of them. When the self does not enter into the consideration, there is no room for either pride or humility.

2.1.2.3 But though that connected succession of perceptions we call *self* is always the object of these two passions, it cannot be their *cause*, or be enough by itself to excite them. These passions are directly contrary, and they have the same object in common.

If their object were also their cause, it could never produce any degree of the one passion without at the same time exciting an equal degree of the other. That opposition and contrariety would destroy both. A man cannot be both proud and humble at the same time. Where he has different reasons for these passions, as often happens, the passions either take turns, or, if they meet, one cancels the other as far as its strength goes, and only what remains of the stronger continues to act on the mind. But in the present case neither passion could ever become the stronger. Suppose it were only the view of ourselves that excited them. Since that view is perfectly indifferent to either passion, it would have to produce both in exactly the same proportion. In other words, it could produce neither. To excite a passion and at the same time raise an equal share of its opposite is to undo at once what was done, and must leave the mind in the end perfectly calm and indifferent.

2.1.2.4 We must therefore distinguish between the cause and the object of these passions: between the idea that excites them and the idea to which they direct their view once excited. Pride and humility, once raised, immediately turn our attention to ourselves and regard that as their ultimate and final object. But something more is needed to raise them. It must be something peculiar to one of the passions, which does not produce both in exactly the same degree. The first idea presented to the mind is that of the cause, or productive principle. This excites the passion connected with it, and that passion, once excited, turns our view to another idea, which is that of self. Here, then, is a passion placed between two ideas, one of which produces it while the other is produced by it. The first idea therefore represents the cause of the passion, the second its object.

2.1.2.5 To begin with the causes of pride and humility: their most obvious and remarkable property is the enormous variety of subjects on which they may be placed. Every valuable quality of the mind, whether of the imagination, judgment, memory, or disposition—wit, good sense, learning, courage, justice, integrity—is a cause of pride, and its opposite a cause of humility. Nor are

these passions confined to the mind. They extend their view to the body as well. A man may be proud of his beauty, strength, agility, fine bearing, his skill in dancing, riding, or fencing, and his dexterity in any manual trade or craft. But this is not all. Looking further, the passions take in any objects that are in the least allied or related to us. Our country, family, children, relatives, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, clothes: any of these may become a cause either of pride or of humility.

2.1.2.6 Considering these causes, we need to make a new distinction within the causes of the passion: between the *quality* that operates and the subject on which it is placed. A man, for instance, is vain of a beautiful house that belongs to him, or that he himself built and designed. Here the object of the passion is himself, and the cause is the beautiful house. That cause is in turn subdivided into two parts: the quality that operates on the passion, and the subject in which the quality inheres. The quality is the beauty, and the subject is the house, considered as his property or his design. Both parts are essential, and the distinction is not empty or fanciful. Beauty considered merely as beauty never produces any pride or vanity unless it is placed on something related to us. And the strongest relation alone, without beauty or something else in its place, has just as little influence on that passion. These two particulars are easily separated, yet they must be joined to produce the passion. We ought therefore to consider them as component parts of the cause, and fix an exact idea of this distinction firmly in our minds.

WHERE THE OBJECTS AND CAUSES COME FROM

The object is fixed by original instinct; the countless causes must share some common circumstances.

2.1.3.1 We have now come far enough to see a difference between the object of the passions and their cause, and to distinguish within the cause the quality that operates on the passions from the subject in which it inheres. We now go on to examine what makes each of them what it is, and what assigns such a particu-

lar object, quality, and subject to these affections. In this way we will fully understand the origin of pride and humility.

2.1.3.2 First, it is evident that these passions are determined to have self for their object not only by a natural property but also by an original one. No one can doubt that this property is natural, given how constant and steady its operation is. It is always self that is the object of pride and humility. Whenever the passions look beyond it, it is still with a view to ourselves, and no person or object could otherwise have any influence on us.

2.1.3.3 That this comes from an original quality or primary impulse will also be evident if we consider that it is the distinguishing characteristic of these passions. Unless nature had given the mind some original qualities, it could never have any secondary ones, because it would then have no foundation for action and could never begin to exert itself. Now the qualities we must consider original are those most inseparable from the soul, which cannot be resolved into any other. Such is the quality that determines the object of pride and humility.

2.1.3.4 It may perhaps be a bigger question whether the causes that produce the passion are as natural as the object to which it is directed, and whether all that vast variety comes from caprice or from the constitution of the mind. We will soon remove this doubt if we look at human nature. In all nations and ages the same objects still give rise to pride and humility, and even when we see a stranger we can know fairly closely what will increase or diminish his passions of this kind. If there is any variation in this respect, it comes only from differences in people's tempers and constitutions, and it is in any case very slight. Can we imagine that, while human nature stays the same, people will ever become entirely indifferent to their power, riches, beauty, or personal merit, and that these advantages will not affect their pride and vanity?

2.1.3.5 But though the causes of pride and humility are plainly natural, examination shows that they are not original. It is utterly impossible for each of them to be adapted to these passions by a particular provision and primary constitution of

nature. Besides their enormous number, many of them are products of art, arising partly from human industry, partly from human caprice, and partly from human good fortune. Industry produces houses, furniture, clothes. Caprice determines their particular kinds and qualities. And good fortune often contributes to all this by revealing the effects that come from different mixtures and combinations of bodies. It is absurd, therefore, to imagine that nature foresaw and provided for each of these. On that view, every new product of art that causes pride or humility would not adapt itself to the passion by sharing some general quality that naturally operates on the mind. It would instead be the object of an original principle that had lain hidden in the soul until then and was at last brought to light only by accident. The first craftsman who invented a fine writing desk would then have produced pride in its owner by principles different from those that made him proud of handsome chairs and tables. Since this is evidently ridiculous, we must conclude that each cause of pride and humility is not adapted to the passions by a distinct original quality. Instead, there are one or more circumstances common to all of them, on which their effectiveness depends.

2.1.3.6 Besides, we find in the course of nature that although the effects are many, the principles they arise from are usually few and simple. It is the sign of an unskillful student of nature to call on a different quality to explain every different operation. How much more must this be true of the human mind! It is so limited a subject that it may fairly be thought incapable of containing the monstrous heap of principles that would be needed to excite pride and humility, if each distinct cause were adapted to the passion by a distinct set of principles.

2.1.3.7 Here, then, moral philosophy is in the same condition as natural philosophy was in astronomy before the time of *Copernicus*. The ancients were aware of the maxim *that nature does nothing in vain*, yet they devised systems of the heavens so intricate that they seemed inconsistent with true philosophy, and at last gave way to something simpler and more natural. To invent a

new principle for every new phenomenon without hesitation, instead of fitting it to the old ones, and to overload our hypotheses with this sort of variety, are sure proofs that none of these principles is the right one. They show that we only want to cover our ignorance of the truth with a number of falsehoods.

ASSOCIATED IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS

Ideas associate by three relations, impressions by resemblance alone, and the two associations reinforce each other.

2.1.4.1 So we have established two truths without any obstacle or difficulty: that *it is from natural principles that this variety of causes excites pride and humility*, and that *it is not by a different principle that each different cause is adapted to its passion*. We will now ask how we can reduce these principles to a smaller number and find among the causes something common on which their influence depends.

2.1.4.2 To do this we must reflect on certain properties of human nature. They have a powerful influence on every operation of both the understanding and the passions, yet philosophers do not usually dwell on them. The first is the association of ideas, which I have so often noted and explained. The mind cannot fix itself steadily on one idea for any considerable time, and it can never achieve such constancy even by its utmost efforts. But however changeable our thoughts may be, their changes are not entirely without rule and method. The rule they follow is to pass from one object to what resembles it, is contiguous to it, or is produced by it. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other idea united to it by these relations naturally follows, and enters more easily because of that introduction.

2.1.4.3 The second property I will note in the human mind is a similar association of impressions. All resembling impressions are connected together, and as soon as one arises the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, until the whole circle is complete. In the same way, when our temper

is lifted by joy, it naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections. When the mind is moved by any passion, it is hard for it to confine itself to that passion alone without any change or variation. Human nature is too inconstant to allow any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it. And what could it change to more naturally than affections or emotions that suit its temper and agree with the set of passions then prevailing? It is evident, then, that there is an attraction or association among impressions as well as among ideas. There is one remarkable difference, though: ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation, and impressions only by resemblance.

2.1.4.4 In the *third* place, these two kinds of association greatly assist and advance each other, and the transition is made more easily where both converge on the same object. Take a man who has been badly upset and ruffled in temper by some injury from another person. He is apt to find a hundred subjects of discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions, especially if he can find them in or near the person who caused his first passion. Here the principles that advance the transition of ideas converge with those that operate on the passions. The two unite in one action and give the mind a double impulse. The new passion must therefore arise with that much greater violence, and the transition to it must be that much easier and more natural.

2.1.4.5 On this point I may cite the authority of an elegant writer, who puts it this way: "As the imagination delights in everything that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more pleased the more of these perfections it finds in the same object, so it is capable of receiving a new satisfaction with the help of another sense. Thus any continued sound, like the music of birds or a waterfall, awakens the mind of the observer at every moment, and makes him more attentive to the various beauties of the place that lie before him.[3] Thus if a fragrance of scents or perfumes arises, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination and make even the colors and greenery of the landscape seem more

3 The "elegant writer" is Joseph Addison, *Spectator* no. 412 (1712).

agreeable. The ideas of both senses recommend each other and are more pleasant together than when they enter the mind separately—just as the different colors of a painting, when well arranged, set each other off and gain an additional beauty from where they are placed." In this phenomenon we may note the association both of impressions and of ideas, as well as the help they give each other.

THE DOUBLE RELATION

Causes of pride give a separate pleasure and relate to self; this double relation produces the passion.

2.1.5.1 With these principles established on unquestionable experience, I begin to consider how to apply them by going over all the causes of pride and humility, whether we regard these causes as the qualities that operate or as the subjects on which the qualities are placed. In examining these qualities I immediately find that many of them combine to produce the sensation of pain and pleasure, independently of the affections I am trying to explain here. Thus the beauty of our person, of itself and by its mere appearance, gives pleasure as well as pride, and its ugliness gives pain as well as humility. A magnificent feast delights us, and a shabby one displeases us. What I find to be true in some instances I suppose to be true in all. For now I take it for granted, without further proof, that every cause of pride produces a separate pleasure by its particular qualities, and every cause of humility a separate uneasiness.

2.1.5.2 Again, in considering the subjects to which these qualities adhere, I make a new supposition, which also seems probable from many obvious instances: that these subjects are either parts of ourselves or something closely related to us. Thus the good and bad qualities of our actions and manners constitute virtue and vice and determine our personal character, and nothing acts more strongly on these passions. In the same way, it is the beauty or ugliness of our person, houses, carriages, or furniture that makes us either vain or humble. The same qualities,

transferred to subjects that have no relation to us, do not influence either of these affections in the slightest degree.

2.1.5.3 In this way I have supposed two properties of the causes of these affections: that the qualities produce a separate pain or pleasure, and that the subjects on which the qualities are placed are related to self. I now go on to examine the passions themselves, to find something in them that corresponds to these supposed properties of their causes. First, I find that the particular object of pride and humility is determined by an original and natural instinct. The primary constitution of the mind makes it absolutely impossible for these passions ever to look beyond self, that individual person of whose actions and feelings each of us is intimately conscious. Here the view always comes to rest at last when we are moved by either of these passions, and in that state of mind we can never lose sight of this object. I do not claim to give any reason for this. I consider such a particular direction of thought an original quality.

2.1.5.4 The *second* quality I find in these passions, which I likewise consider an original quality, is their sensations: the particular emotions they excite in the soul, which constitute their very being and essence. Thus pride is a pleasant sensation and humility a painful one. Remove the pleasure and pain, and there is in reality no pride or humility. Our very feeling convinces us of this, and beyond our feeling it is useless here to reason or argue.

2.1.5.5 Let me compare these two established properties of the passions—their object, which is self, and their sensation, which is either pleasant or painful—with the two supposed properties of the causes—their relation to self, and their tendency to produce a pain or pleasure independent of the passion. I immediately find that, if these suppositions are right, the true system bursts upon me with irresistible evidence. The cause that excites the passion is related to the object nature has assigned to the passion. The sensation the cause produces separately is related to the sensation of the passion. From this double relation of ideas and impressions the passion is derived. The one idea is

easily converted into its correlative, and the one impression into the impression that resembles and corresponds to it. How much more easily must this transition be made where these movements assist each other, and the mind receives a double impulse from the relations of both its impressions and its ideas?

2.1.5.6 To understand this better, we must suppose that nature has given the organs of the human mind a certain disposition fitted to produce a particular impression or emotion, which we call pride. To this emotion she has assigned a certain idea, that of self, which it never fails to produce. This arrangement of nature is easy to conceive, and we have many examples of such a state of affairs. The nerves of the nose and palate are so disposed as to convey particular sensations to the mind in certain circumstances. The sensations of lust and hunger always produce in us the idea of the particular objects suited to each appetite. These two circumstances are united in pride. The organs are so disposed as to produce the passion, and the passion, once produced, naturally produces a certain idea. None of this needs proof. It is evident that we would never have that passion if there were no disposition of mind suited to it. It is just as evident that the passion always turns our view to ourselves and makes us think of our own qualities and circumstances.

2.1.5.7 Once this is fully understood, we may ask *whether nature produces the passion immediately, by herself, or whether she must be helped by the cooperation of other causes*. Her conduct in this respect differs among the different passions and sensations. The palate must be stimulated by an external object in order to produce any taste, but hunger arises internally, without any external object. However it may be with other passions and impressions, pride certainly requires the help of some outside object. The organs that produce it do not set themselves going by an original internal movement, as the heart and arteries do. For first, daily experience convinces us that pride requires certain causes to excite it, and languishes when it is not supported by some excellence in character, bodily accomplishments, clothes, carriage, or fortune. *Secondly*, pride would evidently be

perpetual if it arose immediately from nature, since its object is always the same, and there is no bodily disposition peculiar to pride as there is to thirst and hunger. Thirdly, humility is in exactly the same situation as pride. So on this supposition humility too must either be perpetual, or must destroy the contrary passion from the very first moment, and neither of them could ever make its appearance. On the whole, we may rest content with the foregoing conclusion: pride must have a cause as well as an object, and the one has no influence without the other.

2.1.5.8 The difficulty, then, is only to discover this cause: to find out what gives pride its first motion and sets in action the organs naturally fitted to produce that emotion. When I consult experience to resolve this difficulty, I immediately find a hundred different causes that produce pride. On examining them, I suppose, as I at first perceive to be probable, that they all share two circumstances. Of themselves they produce an impression allied to the passion, and they are placed on a subject allied to the object of the passion. When I then consider the nature of relation, and its effects on both the passions and the ideas, I can no longer doubt, on these suppositions, that relation is the very principle that gives rise to pride. It is what sets in motion the organs that are naturally disposed to produce that affection and need only a first impulse or start to their action. Anything that gives a pleasant sensation and is related to self excites the passion of pride, which is also agreeable and has self for its object.

2.1.5.9 What I have said of pride is equally true of humility. The sensation of humility is uneasy, as that of pride is agreeable. So the separate sensation arising from the causes must be reversed, while the relation to self stays the same. Pride and humility are directly contrary in their effects and in their sensations, yet they have the same object. So we need only change the relation of impressions, without making any change in the relation of ideas. Accordingly, we find that a beautiful house belonging to us produces pride. The same house, still belonging to us, produces humility when some accident changes its beauty into

ugliness. The sensation of pleasure that corresponded to pride is then transformed into a pain related to humility. The double relation between the ideas and impressions holds in both cases, and it produces an easy transition from the one emotion to the other.

2.1.5.10 In a word, nature has given certain impressions and ideas a kind of attraction, by which one of them, on appearing, naturally introduces its correlative. If these two attractions or associations, of impressions and of ideas, converge on the same object, they assist each other, and the affections and the imagination pass along with the greatest ease. Suppose an idea produces an impression, and that impression is related to a second impression, which is connected with an idea related to the first idea. These two impressions must then be more or less inseparable, and neither will ever occur without the other. This is how the particular causes of pride and humility are determined. The quality that operates on the passion produces, separately, an impression resembling it. The subject to which the quality adheres is related to self, the object of the passion. No wonder the whole cause, consisting of a quality and a subject, gives rise to the passion so unavoidably.

2.1.5.11 To illustrate this hypothesis, we may compare it with the one by which I have already explained the belief that accompanies the judgments we form from causation. I have observed that in all judgments of this kind there is always a present impression and a related idea. The present impression gives vivacity to the imagination, and the relation conveys this vivacity, by an easy transition, to the related idea. Without the present impression, attention is not fixed and the spirits are not excited. Without the relation, this attention stays on its first object and has no further consequence. There is evidently a great analogy between that hypothesis and our present one, in which an impression and an idea flow over into another impression and idea by means of their double relation. This analogy must be granted to be no contemptible proof of both hypotheses.

LIMITS OF THE SYSTEM

Hume adds five limitations: close relation, rarity, visibility, durability, and the influence of general rules.

2.1.6.1 But before we go further into this subject and examine all the causes of pride and humility in detail, it will be proper to place some limitations on the general system *that all agreeable objects related to ourselves by an association of ideas and of impressions produce pride, and disagreeable ones humility*. These limitations come from the very nature of the subject.

2.1.6.2 I. Suppose an agreeable object acquires a relation to self. The first passion that appears on this occasion is joy, and joy shows itself on a slighter relation than pride and vainglory do. We may feel joy at being present at a feast where our senses are treated to delicacies of every kind. But only the host has, in addition to the same joy, the further passion of self-applause and vanity. It is true that people sometimes boast of a great entertainment at which they were merely present, and by so small a relation convert their pleasure into pride. But in general it must be admitted that joy arises from a slighter relation than vanity, and that many things too remote to produce pride can still give us delight and pleasure. The reason for the difference may be explained as follows. Joy requires a relation in order to bring the object close to us and make it give us any satisfaction. Both passions share that requirement. But pride needs the relation for a further purpose as well: to produce a transition from one passion to another and convert the satisfaction into vanity. Since the relation has a double task to perform, it must have double force and energy. We may add that where agreeable objects do not bear a very close relation to ourselves, they usually bear one to some other person. This latter relation not only outweighs the former but even diminishes it, and sometimes destroys it, as we will see later.[4]

2.1.6.3 Here, then, is the first limitation we must make to our general position that everything related to us that produces pleasure or pain also produces pride or humility. Not only is a relation required, but a close one—closer than joy requires.

2.1.6.4 II. The second limitation is that the agreeable or disagreeable object must be not only closely related but also peculiar to ourselves, or at least shared with only a few people. It is an observable quality of human nature, which we will try to explain later, that everything often presented to us, and to which we have long been accustomed, loses its value in our eyes and is soon despised and neglected. We also judge objects more by comparison than by their real and intrinsic merit. Where we cannot heighten their value by some contrast, we are apt to overlook even what is essentially good in them. These qualities of the mind affect joy as well as pride. Goods that are common to all mankind and have become familiar to us by custom give us remarkably little satisfaction. This holds even when they are of a more excellent kind than the goods we value much more highly for their rarity. But though this circumstance works on both passions, it has a much greater influence on vanity. We rejoice at many goods that give us no pride because they are so common. Health, when it returns after a long absence, gives us a very keen satisfaction. But it is seldom regarded as a subject of vanity, because it is shared with such vast numbers of people.

2.1.6.5 The reason pride is so much more sensitive on this point than joy is, I take it, as follows. To excite pride there are always two objects we must contemplate: the cause, or the object that produces pleasure; and self, which is the real object of the passion. But joy needs only one object to produce it, namely what gives pleasure. That object must bear some relation to self, but only in order to make it agreeable. Self is not, strictly speaking, the object of this passion. Since pride, then, has in a way two objects to which it directs our view, it follows that where neither of them is distinctive, the passion must be weakened more on that account than a passion with only one object. When we com-

4 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 4.

pare ourselves with others, as we are apt to do every moment, we find that we are not distinguished in the least. When we compare the object we possess, we find the same unlucky circumstance again. Two comparisons so unfavorable must destroy the passion entirely.

2.1.6.6 III. The third limitation is that the pleasant or painful object must be very noticeable and obvious, not only to ourselves but to others too. This circumstance, like the two before it, affects joy as well as pride. We imagine ourselves happier, as well as more virtuous or beautiful, when we appear so to others. But we are still more ostentatious about our virtues than about our pleasures. This comes from causes I will try to explain later.

2.1.6.7 IV. The fourth limitation comes from the inconstancy of the cause of these passions and the short duration of its connection with ourselves. What happens by chance and does not last gives only a little joy, and still less pride. We are not much satisfied with the thing itself, and are even less apt to feel any new degree of self-satisfaction on its account. We foresee and anticipate its change in imagination, which leaves us little satisfied with the thing. We also compare it with ourselves, whose existence lasts longer, and this makes its inconstancy appear still greater. It seems ridiculous to infer some excellence in ourselves from an object that lasts so much less time than we do and accompanies us for so small a part of our existence. It is easy to understand why this cause does not operate with the same force in joy as in pride: the idea of self is not as essential to joy as it is to pride.

2.1.6.8 V. I may add as a fifth limitation, or rather an extension of this system, that general rules have a great influence on pride and humility, as they do on all the other passions. This is why we form a notion of different ranks of people according to the power or riches they possess. We do not change this notion because of any peculiarities of health or temper that may deprive these people of all enjoyment of their possessions. This may be explained by the same principles that explained the

influence of general rules on the understanding. Custom easily carries us beyond the proper bounds in our passions, as it does in our reasonings.

2.1.6.9 It may not be out of place to observe here that the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions does a great deal to smooth the effects of all the principles we will explain as this treatise goes on. Suppose a fully grown person of the same nature as ourselves were suddenly transported into our world. He would evidently be at a loss before every object, and would not easily find out what degree of love or hatred, pride or humility, or any other passion he ought to attach to it. The passions are often varied by very slight principles, and these do not always work with perfect regularity, especially the first time. But custom and practice have brought all these principles to light and settled the proper value of everything. This must certainly help the passions to arise easily, and it guides us, by means of general established maxims, in the proportions we ought to observe in preferring one object to another. This remark may perhaps help to head off difficulties about some causes I will later ascribe to particular passions. These causes may be thought too subtle to operate as universally and reliably as they are found to do.

2.1.6.10 I will close this subject with a reflection drawn from these five limitations. The people who are proudest, and who in the eyes of the world have most reason for their pride, are not always the happiest. Nor are the most humble always the most miserable, as one might at first imagine from this system. An evil may be real though its cause has no relation to us. It may be real without being peculiar to us. It may be real without showing itself to others. It may be real without being constant. And it may be real without falling under the general rules. Evils like these will not fail to make us miserable, though they have little tendency to diminish our pride. Perhaps the most real and solid evils of life will be found to be of this kind.

VIRTUE AND VICE

On either theory of morals, virtue pleases and vice pains, so both fit the system.

2.1.7.1 Taking these limitations with us, let us go on to examine the causes of pride and humility, and see whether in every case we can discover the double relations by which they operate on the passions. If we find that all these causes are related to self and produce a pleasure or uneasiness separate from the passion, no doubt about the present system will remain. We will chiefly try to prove the latter point, since the former is more or less self-evident.

2.1.7.2 To begin with vice and virtue, which are the most obvious causes of these passions. It would be entirely beside my present purpose to enter into the controversy that has so excited public curiosity in recent years: *whether these moral distinctions are founded on natural and original principles, or arise from interest and education*. I reserve that examination for the following book. In the meantime I will try to show that my system holds its ground on either of these hypotheses, which will be a strong proof of its soundness.

2.1.7.3 Even granting that morality had no foundation in nature, it must still be admitted that vice and virtue produce a real pain and pleasure in us, whether through self-interest or the prejudices of education. The defenders of that hypothesis insist on this strenuously. Every passion, habit, or turn of character (they say) that tends to our advantage or harm gives delight or uneasiness, and this is where approval or disapproval comes from. We easily gain from the generosity of others, but are always in danger of losing by their greed. Courage defends us, but cowardice lays us open to every attack. Justice is the support of society, but injustice, unless checked, would quickly prove its ruin. Humility exalts us, but pride mortifies us. For these reasons the former qualities are considered virtues and the latter vices. Now since it is granted that delight or uneasiness always accompan-

ies merit or demerit of every kind, this is all my purpose requires.

2.1.7.4 But I go further. This moral hypothesis and my present system not only agree; if the former is right, it is an absolute and unanswerable proof of the latter. Suppose all morality is founded on the pain or pleasure that arises from the prospect of some loss or advantage resulting from our own characters or those of others. Then all the effects of morality must be derived from the same pain or pleasure, the passions of pride and humility among them. According to this hypothesis, the very essence of virtue is to produce pleasure, and that of vice to give pain. The virtue and vice must be part of our own character in order to excite pride or humility. What further proof could we want of the double relation of impressions and ideas?

2.1.7.5 The same unquestionable argument may be drawn from the opinion of those who hold that morality is something real, essential, and founded on nature. The most probable hypothesis yet put forward to explain the distinction between vice and virtue, and the origin of moral rights and obligations, runs as follows. By a primary constitution of nature, certain characters and passions produce a pain by the mere view and contemplation of them, and others in the same way excite a pleasure. The uneasiness and satisfaction are not only inseparable from vice and virtue but constitute their very nature and essence. To approve of a character is to feel an original delight when it appears. To disapprove of it is to feel an uneasiness. Since the pain and pleasure are the primary causes of vice and virtue, they must also be the causes of all their effects, and therefore of pride and humility, which unavoidably accompany that distinction.

2.1.7.6 But even if this hypothesis of moral philosophy were granted to be false, it is still evident that pain and pleasure, if not the causes of vice and virtue, are at least inseparable from them. A generous and noble character gives satisfaction merely to look at. When it is presented to us, even only in a poem or story, it never fails to charm and delight us. On the other hand,

cruelty and treachery displease by their very nature, and we can never be reconciled to these qualities, whether in ourselves or in others. So one hypothesis of morality is an undeniable proof of the foregoing system, and the other at worst agrees with it.

2.1.7.7 But pride and humility do not arise only from the qualities of mind that the popular systems of ethics count as parts of moral duty. They arise from any other quality connected with pleasure and uneasiness. Nothing flatters our vanity more than a talent for pleasing by our wit, good humor, or some other accomplishment, and nothing mortifies us more keenly than failure in any attempt of that kind. No one has ever been able to say what wit is, or to show why one system of thought must be accepted under that name and another rejected. Only taste can decide about it, and we have no other standard by which to judge a matter of this kind. Now what is this taste, from which true and false wit in a sense get their being, and without which no thought can claim either name? It is plainly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of uneasiness from false wit, without our being able to give the reasons for that pleasure or uneasiness. The power of producing these opposite sensations is therefore the very essence of true and false wit. It is consequently the cause of the pride or humility that arises from them.

2.1.7.8 Some readers may be used to the style of the schools and the pulpit, and may never have considered human nature in any light but the one they place it in. They may be surprised here to hear me speak of virtue as exciting pride, which they regard as a vice, and of vice as producing humility, which they have been taught to consider a virtue. But I do not want to argue about words. By pride I mean the agreeable impression that arises in the mind when the view of our virtue, beauty, riches, or power makes us satisfied with ourselves. By humility I mean the opposite impression. It is evident that the former impression is not always vicious, nor the latter always virtuous. The strictest morality allows us to take pleasure in reflecting on a generous action, and no one considers it a virtue to feel fruitless remorse

at the thought of past villainy and baseness. Let us therefore examine these impressions as they are in themselves, and inquire into their causes, whether these lie in the mind or in the body. For now we need not trouble ourselves about the merit or blame that may attend them.

BEAUTY AND UGLINESS

Beauty and ugliness are powers of giving pleasure and pain, and so cause pride and humility.

2.1.8.1 We may consider the body a part of ourselves, or agree with the philosophers who regard it as something external. Either way, it must be granted to be connected closely enough with us to form one of the double relations I have claimed are necessary to the causes of pride and humility. Wherever we can find the other relation, of impressions, to join to this relation of ideas, we may confidently expect one or the other of these passions, depending on whether the impression is pleasant or uneasy. And beauty of every kind gives us a particular delight and satisfaction, just as ugliness produces pain, whatever subject it is placed on, and whether we see it in a living or a lifeless object. If the beauty or ugliness is placed on our own bodies, then, this pleasure or uneasiness must be converted into pride or humility, since in this case it has all the circumstances needed to produce a perfect transition of impressions and ideas. These opposite sensations are related to the opposite passions. The beauty or ugliness is closely related to self, the object of both these passions. No wonder, then, that our own beauty becomes an object of pride, and our ugliness an object of humility.

2.1.8.2 This effect of personal and bodily qualities does more than show that the passions do not arise here without all the circumstances I have required. It can also serve as a stronger and more convincing argument for the present system. Consider all the hypotheses that philosophy or common reason has formed to explain the difference between beauty and ugliness. We will find that they all come down to this: beauty is an order and con-

struction of parts fitted to give pleasure and satisfaction to the soul, whether by the primary constitution of our nature, by custom, or by caprice. This is the distinguishing character of beauty, and it makes the whole difference between beauty and ugliness, whose natural tendency is to produce uneasiness. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are not only necessary companions of beauty and ugliness but constitute their very essence. A large part of the beauty we admire in animals or other objects is derived from the idea of convenience and usefulness, and once we see this we will not hesitate to accept this opinion. In one animal the shape that produces strength is beautiful, and in another the shape that signals agility. The order and convenience of a palace are no less essential to its beauty than its mere shape and appearance. In the same way, the rules of architecture require the top of a pillar to be more slender than its base. The reason is that such a shape conveys the idea of security, which is pleasant, whereas the opposite form gives us the apprehension of danger, which is uneasy. Countless instances of this kind show it, and so does the fact that beauty, like wit, cannot be defined but is discerned only by a taste or sensation. From these we may conclude that beauty is nothing but a form that produces pleasure, as ugliness is a structure of parts that conveys pain. And since the power of producing pain and pleasure in this way makes up the essence of beauty and ugliness, all the effects of these qualities must be derived from the sensation. Among these effects are pride and humility, the most common and remarkable of them all.

2.1.8.3 I consider this argument sound and decisive. But to give the present reasoning more authority, let us suppose for a moment that it is false, and see what follows. It is certain, then, that if the power of producing pleasure and pain does not form the essence of beauty and ugliness, the sensations are at least inseparable from the qualities, and it is hard even to consider them apart. Now natural and moral beauty (both of which cause pride) have nothing in common except this power of producing pleasure. And since a common effect always presupposes a com-

mon cause, it is plain that in both cases the pleasure must be the real and operative cause of the passion. Again, the only original difference between the beauty of our bodies and the beauty of external, foreign objects is that the one has a close relation to ourselves, which the other lacks. This original difference, then, must be the cause of all their other differences. Among them is their different effect on the passion of pride, which is aroused by the beauty of our own person but not affected in the least by that of foreign, external objects. Putting these two conclusions together, we find that between them they make up the system proposed above: namely, that pleasure, as a related or resembling impression, when placed on a related object by a natural transition, produces pride, and that its contrary produces humility. This system, then, already seems sufficiently confirmed by experience, though we have not yet exhausted all our arguments.

2.1.8.4 It is not only the beauty of the body that produces pride, but also its strength and force. Strength is a kind of power, so the desire to excel in strength should be regarded as a lower species of ambition. For this reason, the present phenomenon will be adequately accounted for when we explain that passion.

2.1.8.5 As for all other bodily accomplishments, we may observe in general that whatever in ourselves is useful, beautiful, or surprising is an object of pride, and its contrary an object of humility. Now it is obvious that everything useful, beautiful, or surprising agrees in producing a separate pleasure, and agrees in nothing else. The pleasure, then, together with the relation to self, must be the cause of the passion.

2.1.8.6 Someone may question whether beauty is something real, distinct from the power of producing pleasure. But no one can ever dispute that surprise, being nothing but a pleasure arising from novelty, is not, properly speaking, a quality in any object. It is merely a passion or impression in the soul. It must, then, be from that impression that pride arises by a natural transition. And it arises so naturally that nothing in us or belonging to us that produces surprise fails at the same time to

arouse that other passion. So we are vain of the surprising adventures we have had, the escapes we have made, and the dangers we have been exposed to. Hence the origin of common lying. People with nothing to gain, purely out of vanity, pile up a number of extraordinary events. These are either fictions of their own brains or, if true, have at least no connection with themselves. Their fertile invention supplies them with a variety of adventures; and where that talent is lacking, they appropriate adventures that belong to others, in order to satisfy their vanity.

2.1.8.7 This phenomenon contains two curious experiments. If we compare them according to the known rules by which we judge of cause and effect in anatomy, natural philosophy, and other sciences, they will be an undeniable argument for the influence of the double relations mentioned above. From one of these experiments we find that an object produces pride merely through the intervention of pleasure, because the quality by which it produces pride is in reality nothing but the power of producing pleasure. From the other we find that the pleasure produces the pride by a transition along related ideas, because when we cut off that relation the passion is immediately destroyed. A surprising adventure in which we ourselves took part is related to us, and so produces pride. But the adventures of others, though they may give pleasure, never arouse that passion, for lack of this relation of ideas. What further proof could anyone want for the present system?

2.1.8.8 There is only one objection to this system as regards our body. Although nothing is more agreeable than health and nothing more painful than sickness, people are usually neither proud of the one nor mortified by the other. This is easily accounted for if we consider the second and fourth limitations proposed to our general system. It was observed that no object ever produces pride or humility unless it has something peculiar to ourselves. It was also observed that every cause of that passion must be to some degree constant, and bear some proportion to the duration of the self, which is its object. Now since health and sickness vary constantly for everyone, and no one is

solely or securely fixed in either, these accidental blessings and calamities are in a way separated from us, and are never considered as connected with our being and existence. That this account is correct appears from the following: whenever a disease of any kind is so rooted in our constitution that we no longer have any hope of recovery, from that moment it becomes an object of humility. This is evident in old people, whom nothing mortifies more than thinking about their age and infirmities. They try as long as possible to hide their blindness and deafness, their catarrhs and gout, and they never admit to them without reluctance and uneasiness. And though young people are not ashamed of every headache or cold they come down with, no topic is better suited to mortify human pride, and make us hold a low opinion of our nature, than this: that at every moment of our lives we are subject to such infirmities. This sufficiently proves that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility. But the custom of judging everything by comparison more than by its intrinsic worth and value makes us overlook these calamities, which we find everyone is liable to, and leads us to form an idea of our merit and character independent of them.

2.1.8.9 We are ashamed of diseases that affect other people and are either dangerous or unpleasant to them. We are ashamed of epilepsy, because it horrifies everyone present; of scabies, because it is contagious; of scrofula, because it is commonly passed down to descendants. People always take the sentiments of others into account when they judge themselves. This has clearly appeared in some of the foregoing reasonings, and it will appear still more clearly, and be more fully explained, later on.[5]

5 Hume's "the itch" is scabies; his "king's evil" is scrofula, once believed curable by the royal touch.

EXTERNAL ADVANTAGES

Country, family and ancestry cause pride through the relations of contiguity and causation.

2.1.9.1 Pride and humility have for their natural and more immediate causes the qualities of our mind and body, that is, of the self. But we find by experience that many other objects produce these affections, and that the primary cause is to some extent obscured and lost amid the multitude of foreign and extrinsic ones. We find vanity about houses, gardens, and carriages, as well as about personal merit and accomplishments. These external advantages are in themselves far removed from thought or from a person, yet they considerably influence even a passion that is directed to the person as its ultimate object. This happens when external objects acquire some particular relation to ourselves, and are associated or connected with us. A beautiful fish in the ocean, an animal in a desert, and indeed anything that neither belongs nor is related to us, has no influence whatever on our vanity. That holds whatever extraordinary qualities it may have, and however much surprise and admiration it may naturally cause. It must be associated with us in some way in order to touch our pride. Its idea must, so to speak, hang upon the idea of ourselves, and the transition from the one to the other must be easy and natural.

2.1.9.2 But it is remarkable here that the relation of resemblance, though it acts on the mind in the same way as contiguity and causation in carrying us from one idea to another, is seldom a basis for either pride or humility. If we resemble someone in any of the valuable parts of his character, we must to some degree possess the quality in which we resemble him. And when we want to base any degree of vanity on this quality, we always choose to survey it directly in ourselves rather than by reflection in another person. So although a likeness may occasionally produce that passion by suggesting a more advantageous idea of

ourselves, it is on ourselves that the view finally settles, and there that the passion finds its ultimate and final cause.

2.1.9.3 There are cases, indeed, in which people show vanity at resembling a great man in his face, figure, bearing, or other minor details that contribute nothing to his reputation. But it must be admitted that this does not go very far, and is of no great importance in these affections. I give the following reason for this. We can never be vain of resembling someone in trifles unless he has very brilliant qualities that give us respect and veneration for him. These qualities, then, are properly speaking the causes of our vanity, by means of their relation to ourselves. Now in what way are they related to ourselves? They are parts of the person we value, and so they are connected with these trifles, which are also supposed to be parts of him. These trifles are connected with the resembling qualities in us. And these qualities in us, being parts, are connected with the whole. In this way they form a chain of several links to the person we resemble. But besides the fact that this multitude of relations must weaken the connection, it is evident that the mind, in passing from the brilliant qualities to the trivial ones, must through that contrast perceive all the better how trivial the latter are, and be somewhat ashamed of the comparison and resemblance.

2.1.9.4 The relation of contiguity, then, or that of causation, between the cause and object of pride and humility, is all that is required to give rise to these passions. And these relations are nothing but qualities by which the imagination is carried from one idea to another. Now let us consider what effect these could possibly have on the mind, and how they come to be so necessary for producing the passions. It is evident that the association of ideas works so silently and imperceptibly that we are scarcely aware of it, and discover it more by its effects than by any immediate feeling or perception. It produces no emotion and gives rise to no new impression of any kind. It only modifies the ideas the mind already had and could recall when needed. From this reasoning, as well as from unquestionable experience, we

may conclude that an association of ideas, however necessary, is not by itself enough to give rise to any passion.

2.1.9.5 It is evident, then, that when the mind feels the passion of pride or humility on the appearance of a related object, there is, besides the relation or transition of thought, an emotion or original impression produced by some other principle. The question is whether the emotion first produced is the passion itself, or some other impression related to it. We cannot take long deciding this question. This subject is full of other arguments, but one thing must plainly appear. Experience shows that the relation of ideas is a necessary circumstance for producing the passion, yet it would be entirely superfluous if it did not serve to second a relation of affections and ease the transition from one impression to another. If nature produced the passion of pride or humility immediately, it would be complete in itself, and would need no further addition or increase from any other affection. But if we suppose the first emotion to be only related to pride or humility, it is easy to conceive what purpose the relation of objects may serve, and how the two different associations, of impressions and of ideas, may combine their forces and assist each other's operation. This is not only easily conceived; I will venture to affirm that it is the only way we can conceive the matter. An easy transition of ideas, which by itself causes no emotion, can never be necessary or even useful to the passions, except by furthering the transition between some related impressions. Not to mention that the same object causes a greater or smaller degree of pride not only in proportion to the increase or decrease of its qualities, but also in proportion to the distance or closeness of the relation. This is a clear argument for the transition of affections along the relation of ideas, since every change in the relation produces a proportional change in the passion. So one part of the preceding system, concerning the relations of ideas, is sufficient proof of the other part, concerning the relation of impressions. And that first part is itself so evidently founded on experience that it would be a waste of time to try to prove it further.

2.1.9.6 This will appear still more clearly in particular cases. People are vain of the beauty of their country, their county, their parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure. This pleasure is related to pride. The object or cause of this pleasure is, by hypothesis, related to self, the object of pride. Through this double relation of impressions and ideas, a transition is made from the one impression to the other.

2.1.9.7 People are also vain of the mildness of the climate they were born in; of the fertility of their native soil; of the quality of the wines, fruits, or food it produces; of the softness or strength of their language; and of other particulars of that kind. These objects plainly relate to the pleasures of the senses, and are originally regarded as agreeable to touch, taste, or hearing. How could they ever become objects of pride except by means of the transition explained above?

2.1.9.8 Some people show a vanity of the opposite kind, and make a point of disparaging their own country compared with the countries they have traveled to. When they are at home surrounded by their compatriots, these people find that the strong relation between them and their own nation is shared with so many others that it is more or less lost to them. Their distant relation to a foreign country, by contrast, formed by their having seen it and lived in it, is heightened by the thought of how few others have done the same. For this reason they always admire the beauty, usefulness, and rarity of what is abroad over what is at home.

2.1.9.9 Since we can be vain of a country, a climate, or any inanimate object that bears a relation to us, it is no wonder we are vain of the qualities of those connected with us by blood or friendship. And indeed we find that the very same qualities that produce pride in ourselves also produce the same affection, in a lesser degree, when found in people related to us. The proud carefully display the beauty, adroitness, merit, reputation, and honors of their relatives as some of the most considerable sources of their vanity.

2.1.9.10 Just as we are proud of riches in ourselves, so, to satisfy our vanity, we want everyone connected with us to have them too, and we are ashamed of anyone among our friends and relatives who is lowly or poor. For this reason we keep the poor as far from us as possible. We cannot prevent poverty among some distant collateral relatives, but our forefathers are regarded as our nearest relations. So everyone makes a show of coming from a good family, descended from a long line of rich and honorable ancestors.

2.1.9.11 I have often noticed that those who boast of the antiquity of their families are glad when they can add one further circumstance: that their ancestors have for many generations been the uninterrupted owners of the same piece of land, and that their family has never changed its possessions or been transplanted to any other county or province. I have also noticed that it is an additional subject of vanity when they can boast that these possessions have been passed down through a line made up entirely of males, and that the honor and fortune have never passed through any female. Let us try to explain these phenomena by the system laid out above.

2.1.9.12 When someone boasts of the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are evidently not merely the length of time and the number of ancestors. They also include the ancestors' riches and reputation, which are supposed to reflect luster on him because of his relation to them. He first considers these objects, and is affected by them agreeably. Then, returning to himself through the relation of parent and child, he is elevated with the passion of pride by means of the double relation of impressions and ideas. Since the passion depends on these relations, whatever strengthens any of the relations must also increase the passion, and whatever weakens the relations must diminish it. Now it is certain that the sameness of the possession strengthens the relation of ideas arising from blood and kinship. It carries the fancy more easily from one generation to the next, from the remote ancestors to their posterity, who are both their heirs and their descendants. Because of this ease, the

impression is transmitted more fully intact, and arouses a greater degree of pride and vanity.

2.1.9.13 The same holds for the transmission of honors and fortune through a line of males without passing through any female. It is a quality of human nature, which we shall consider[6] later, that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable. Where two objects are presented to it, a small one and a great one, it usually leaves the former and dwells entirely on the latter. Since in the society of marriage the male sex has the advantage over the female, the husband first catches our attention. Whether we consider him directly or reach him by passing through related objects, the thought both rests on him with greater satisfaction and arrives at him more easily than at his wife. It is easy to see that this property must strengthen the child's relation to the father and weaken the relation to the mother. All relations are nothing but a propensity to pass from one idea to another, so whatever strengthens the propensity strengthens the relation. And since we have a stronger propensity to pass from the idea of the children to that of the father than from the same idea to that of the mother, we should regard the former relation as the closer and more considerable. This is why children usually bear their father's name, and are thought to be of nobler or baser birth according to his family. And even if the mother has a superior spirit and genius to the father's, as often happens, the general rule prevails despite the exception, according to the doctrine explained earlier. Indeed, a superiority of some kind may be so great, or other reasons may have such an effect, that the children represent the mother's family rather than the father's. Even then the general rule keeps enough force to weaken the relation and make a kind of break in the line of ancestors. The imagination does not run easily along them. Nor can it transfer the honor and reputation of the ancestors to their posterity of the same name and family as readily as when the transition conforms to the general rules and passes from father to son, or from brother to brother.

6 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 2.

PROPERTY AND RICHES

Property is the closest relation, and riches please as the power of acquiring pleasures.

2.1.10.1 But the relation considered the closest, and the one that more commonly than any other produces the passion of pride, is that of property. I will not be able to explain this relation fully until I come to treat of justice and the other moral virtues. It is enough to observe here that property may be defined as a relation between a person and an object that permits him, but forbids anyone else, the free use and possession of it, without violating the laws of justice and moral equity. If justice, then, is a virtue with a natural and original influence on the human mind, property may be regarded as a particular species of causation. This holds whether we consider the liberty it gives the owner to act on the object as he pleases, or the advantages he reaps from it. It is the same if justice, as certain philosophers hold, should be considered an artificial rather than a natural virtue. For then honor, custom, and civil laws take the place of natural conscience and produce, to some degree, the same effects.[7] Meanwhile, this much is certain: the mention of the property naturally carries our thought to the owner, and the mention of the owner to the property. Since this is proof of a perfect relation of ideas, it is all our present purpose requires. A relation of ideas joined to a relation of impressions always produces a transition of affections. So whenever any pleasure or pain arises from an object connected with us by property, we can be sure that either pride or humility must arise from this conjunction of relations, if the foregoing system is solid and satisfactory. And whether it is or not, we can soon satisfy ourselves by the most cursory look at human life.

2.1.10.2 Everything belonging to a vain man is the best to be found anywhere. His houses, carriages, furniture, clothes, horses, and hounds excel all others in his own estimation. And it

7 Hume himself defends the view that justice is an artificial virtue in Book 3.

is easy to see that from the slightest advantage in any of these he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you believe him, has a finer flavor than any other; his cooking is more exquisite; his table better ordered; his servants more expert; the air he lives in healthier; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier and more perfectly. This thing is remarkable for its novelty, that one for its antiquity. This is the work of a famous artist; that once belonged to such-and-such a prince or great man. In a word, all objects that are useful, beautiful, or surprising, or are related to such objects, may give rise to this passion by means of property. These agree in giving pleasure, and agree in nothing else. This alone they have in common, and so it must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect. Every new instance is a new argument, and here the instances are countless. So I may venture to affirm that hardly any system was ever so fully proved by experience as the one I have advanced here.

2.1.10.3 Suppose the property of anything that gives pleasure by its utility, beauty, or novelty also produces pride by a double relation of impressions and ideas. Then we need not be surprised that the power of acquiring this property should have the same effect. Now riches are to be regarded as the power of acquiring the property of what pleases, and it is only in this light that they have any influence on the passions. Paper will in many cases be considered riches, because it can convey the power of acquiring money. And money is not riches insofar as it is a metal with certain qualities of solidity, weight, and fusibility, but only insofar as it has a relation to the pleasures and conveniences of life. Taking this for granted, then, since it is so evident in itself, we can draw from it one of the strongest arguments I have yet used to prove the influence of the double relations on pride and humility.

2.1.10.4 It was observed in treating of the understanding that the distinction we sometimes make between a power and its exercise is entirely frivolous. Neither a human being nor any other being should ever be thought to possess an ability unless it is

exerted and put into action. But though this is strictly true in an accurate and philosophical way of thinking, it is certainly not the philosophy of our passions. Many things act on the passions through the idea and supposition of power, independent of its actual exercise. We are pleased when we acquire an ability to procure pleasure, and displeased when someone else acquires a power of causing pain. This is evident from experience. But to give a proper explanation of the matter and account for this satisfaction and uneasiness, we must weigh the following reflections.

2.1.10.5 It is evident that the error of distinguishing power from its exercise does not come entirely from the scholastic doctrine of free will. In fact that doctrine plays very little part in ordinary life, and has little influence on our common, popular ways of thinking. According to that doctrine, motives do not deprive us of free will, nor take away our power of doing or refraining from any action. But according to common notions, a person has no power when very considerable motives stand between him and the satisfaction of his desires, and determine him to refrain from what he wants to do. I do not think I have fallen into my enemy's power when I see him pass me in the street with a sword at his side while I have no weapon. I know that fear of the civil magistrate is as strong a restraint as any made of iron, and that I am as perfectly safe as if he were chained or imprisoned. But suppose someone acquires such authority over me that there is no external obstacle to his actions, and he can also punish or reward me as he pleases without any fear of punishment in turn. Then I attribute full power to him, and regard myself as his subject or vassal.

2.1.10.6 Now let us compare these two cases: that of a person who has very strong motives of interest or safety to refrain from some action, and that of another who is under no such obligation. We shall find, according to the philosophy explained in the preceding book, that the only known difference between them is this. In the first case we conclude from past experience that the person never will perform that action; in the second, that he

possibly or probably will. On many occasions nothing is more fluctuating and inconstant than the human will, and nothing but strong motives can give us absolute certainty in pronouncing on any of a person's future actions. When we see someone free from such motives, we suppose it possible that he will either act or refrain. We may conclude in general that he is determined by motives and causes, but this does not remove the uncertainty of our judgment about these causes, nor the influence of that uncertainty on the passions. We ascribe a power of performing an action to everyone who has no very powerful motive to refrain from it, and we deny it to those who do. We may rightly conclude, then, that power always refers to its exercise, actual or probable. We regard a person as having an ability when we find from past experience that it is probable, or at least possible, that he may exert it. And indeed, our passions always concern the real existence of objects, and we always judge of this reality from past instances. So nothing could be more likely in itself, without any further reasoning, than that power consists in the possibility or probability of an action, as discovered by experience and the practice of the world.

2.1.10.7 Now suppose someone stands in such a situation toward me that no very powerful motive deters him from injuring me, so that it is uncertain whether he will injure me or not. Evidently I must be uneasy in that situation, and cannot consider the possibility or probability of that injury without a sensible concern. The passions are affected not only by events that are certain and infallible, but also, to a lesser degree, by those that are possible and contingent. Perhaps I never actually suffer any harm, and discover by the outcome that, philosophically speaking, the person never had any power to harm me, since he did not exert any. Even so, this does not prevent the uneasiness that came from the earlier uncertainty. The agreeable passions may operate here as well as the uneasy ones. They convey a pleasure when I perceive some good becoming possible or probable through the possibility or probability that another person will

bestow it on me, once any strong motives that might previously have hindered him are removed.

2.1.10.8 But we may further observe that this satisfaction increases when a good comes near in such a way that it is in one's own power to take it or leave it, and there is neither any physical impediment nor any very strong motive to hinder our enjoyment. Since everyone desires pleasure, nothing can be more probable than its existence when there is no external obstacle to producing it and people see no danger in following their inclinations. In that case their imagination easily anticipates the satisfaction, and conveys the same joy as if they were convinced of its real and actual existence.

2.1.10.9 But this does not sufficiently account for the satisfaction that comes with riches. A miser takes delight in his money, that is, in the power it gives him of procuring all the pleasures and conveniences of life. Yet he knows he has possessed his riches for forty years without ever using them. So he cannot conclude by any kind of reasoning that the real existence of these pleasures is any nearer than if he were entirely stripped of all his possessions. He cannot reach any such conclusion about the pleasure's nearer approach by way of reasoning. But he certainly imagines it to come nearer whenever all external obstacles are removed, along with the more powerful motives of interest and danger that oppose it. For more on this point I must refer to my account of the will, where I shall[8] explain that false sensation of liberty which makes us imagine we can do anything that is not very dangerous or destructive. Whenever someone else is under no strong obligations of interest to refrain from a pleasure, we judge from experience that the pleasure will exist, and that he will probably obtain it. But when we ourselves are in that situation, we judge, from an illusion of the fancy, that the pleasure is still closer and more immediate. The will seems to move easily in every direction, and casts a shadow or image of itself even toward the side where it did not settle. By means of this image the enjoyment seems to come nearer to us, and gives us the

8 HUME'S NOTE. Part III, Section 2.

same lively satisfaction as if it were perfectly certain and unavoidable.

2.1.10.10 It will now be easy to bring this whole reasoning to a point. Riches never fail to produce pride or vanity in those who possess them, and I can now prove that they do so only by means of a double relation of impressions and ideas. The very essence of riches consists in the power of procuring the pleasures and conveniences of life. The very essence of this power consists in the probability of its exercise, and in its leading us to anticipate, by a true or false reasoning, the real existence of the pleasure. This anticipation of pleasure is in itself a very considerable pleasure. Its cause is some possession or property we enjoy, which is thereby related to us. So here we clearly see all the parts of the foregoing system laid out before us, exactly and distinctly.

2.1.10.11 For the same reason that riches cause pleasure and pride, and poverty arouses uneasiness and humility, power must produce the former emotions and slavery the latter. Power, or authority over others, makes us able to satisfy all our desires; slavery, by subjecting us to the will of others, exposes us to a thousand wants and mortifications.

2.1.10.12 It is worth noting here that the vanity of power, or the shame of slavery, is greatly increased when we consider the persons over whom we exercise our authority, or who exercise it over us. Suppose it were possible to make statues of such admirable mechanism that they could move and act in obedience to the will. Owning them would evidently give pleasure and pride, but not to the same degree as the same authority exerted over sentient, rational creatures. Their condition, compared with our own, makes ours seem more agreeable and honorable. Comparison is in every case a sure method of increasing our esteem for anything. A rich man feels the happiness of his condition better by setting it against that of a beggar. But power has a peculiar advantage in the contrast it, as it were, presents to us between ourselves and the person we command. The comparison is obvious and natural: the imagination finds it in the very subject, and

the passage of thought to conceiving it is smooth and easy. That this circumstance has a considerable effect in increasing its influence will appear later, when we examine the nature of malice and envy.

THE LOVE OF FAME

Hume explains sympathy and shows how the opinions of others feed our pride.

2.1.11.1 But besides these original causes of pride and humility, there is a secondary one in the opinions of others, which has an equal influence on the affections. Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance. Even the other causes of pride (virtue, beauty, and riches) have little influence when they are not backed up by the opinions and sentiments of others. To account for this phenomenon we will need to take a longer route, and first explain the nature of sympathy.

2.1.11.2 No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than our propensity to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from our own or even contrary to them. This is conspicuous not only in children, who unquestioningly embrace every opinion put to them. It is conspicuous also in people of the greatest judgment and understanding, who find it very hard to follow their own reason or inclination against that of their friends and daily companions. To this principle we should ascribe the great uniformity we can observe in the temperament and turn of mind of people of the same nation. It is much more probable that this resemblance comes from sympathy than from any influence of soil and climate, which, though they remain invariably the same, cannot keep the character of a nation the same for a whole century. A good-natured man instantly finds himself in the same mood as his company, and even the proudest and surliest people take on a tinge from their compatriots and acquaintances. A cheerful

face infuses a sensible contentment and serenity into my mind, just as an angry or sorrowful one casts a sudden gloom over me. Hatred, resentment, esteem, love, courage, mirth, and melancholy: I feel all these passions more through communication than from my own natural temper and disposition. So remarkable a phenomenon deserves our attention, and must be traced back to its first principles.

2.1.11.3 When any affection is infused by sympathy, it is known at first only by its effects, and by the external signs in the face and conversation that convey an idea of it. This idea is immediately converted into an impression. It acquires such a degree of force and vivacity that it becomes the very passion itself, and produces as great an emotion as any original affection. However instantaneous this change of the idea into an impression may be, it comes from certain views and reflections. These will not escape the strict scrutiny of a philosopher, though they may escape the person who makes them.

2.1.11.4 It is evident that the idea, or rather the impression, of ourselves is always intimately present to us. Our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person that it is impossible to imagine anything going beyond it in this respect. Whatever object is related to ourselves, then, must be conceived with a like vivacity of conception, according to the foregoing principles. And though this relation may not be as strong as that of causation, it must still have a considerable influence. Resemblance and contiguity are relations not to be neglected, especially when an inference from cause and effect, together with the observation of external signs, informs us of the real existence of the object that is resembling or contiguous.

2.1.11.5 Now it is obvious that nature has preserved a great resemblance among all human creatures. We never notice any passion or principle in others without being able to find some parallel to it, in some degree or other, in ourselves. The fabric of the mind is like that of the body in this respect: however the parts may differ in shape or size, their structure and composition are in general the same. A very remarkable resemblance

holds amid all their variety, and this resemblance must contribute a great deal to making us enter into the sentiments of others and embrace them with ease and pleasure. Accordingly we find that where, besides the general resemblance of our natures, there is some particular similarity in our manners, or character, or country, or language, it makes the sympathy easier. The stronger the relation between ourselves and any object, the more easily the imagination makes the transition, and conveys to the related idea the vivacity of conception with which we always form the idea of our own person.

2.1.11.6 Nor is resemblance the only relation that has this effect; it gains new force from other relations that may accompany it. The sentiments of others have little influence when they are far removed from us, and need the relation of contiguity to communicate themselves fully. Relations of blood, being a species of causation, may sometimes contribute to the same effect. So may acquaintance, which works in the same way as education and custom, as we shall see more fully[9] later. All these relations, when united, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others, and make us conceive those sentiments and passions in the strongest and most lively manner.

2.1.11.7 It was remarked at the beginning of this treatise that all ideas are borrowed from impressions, and that these two kinds of perceptions differ only in the degree of force and vivacity with which they strike the soul. The component parts of ideas and impressions are exactly alike, and the manner and order of their appearance may be the same. So the different degrees of their force and vivacity are the only things that distinguish them. And since this difference can be removed to some extent by a relation between the impressions and ideas, it is no wonder that an idea of a sentiment or passion can in this way be so enlivened as to become the very sentiment or passion. The lively idea of any object always approaches its impression. We can certainly feel sickness and pain from the mere force of ima-

9 HUME'S NOTE. Part II, Section 4.

gination, and make a disease real by thinking about it often. But this is most remarkable in opinions and affections; it is there above all that a lively idea is converted into an impression. Our affections depend more than any other impressions on ourselves and on the internal operations of the mind. For that reason they arise more naturally from the imagination, and from every lively idea we form of them. This is the nature and cause of sympathy, and this is how we enter so deeply into the opinions and affections of others whenever we discover them.

2.1.11.8 What is chiefly remarkable in this whole affair is the strong confirmation these phenomena give to the foregoing system concerning the understanding, and so to the present one concerning the passions, since the two are analogous. When we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements evidently appear at first in our mind as mere ideas. They are conceived to belong to another person, just as we conceive any other matter of fact. It is also evident that the ideas of others' affections are converted into the very impressions they represent, and that the passions arise in conformity with the images we form of them. All this is a matter of the plainest experience, and does not depend on any philosophical hypothesis. Philosophy can be brought in only to explain the phenomena, though it must be admitted that they are so clear in themselves that there is little need to use it. For besides the relation of cause and effect, which convinces us of the reality of the passion we sympathize with—besides this, I say, we must be helped by the relations of resemblance and contiguity in order to feel the sympathy in its full perfection. These relations can entirely convert an idea into an impression, and convey the vivacity of the latter into the former so perfectly that none of it is lost in the transition. So we can easily conceive how the relation of cause and effect alone may serve to strengthen and enliven an idea. In sympathy there is an evident conversion of an idea into an impression. This conversion arises from the relation of objects to ourselves. Our self is always intimately present to us. Let us compare all these circumstances, and we shall find

that sympathy corresponds exactly to the operations of our understanding, and even contains something more surprising and extraordinary.

2.1.11.9 It is now time to turn from sympathy in general to its influence on pride and humility, when these passions arise from praise and blame, from reputation and infamy. We may observe that no one is ever praised by another for any quality that would not, if real, produce by itself a pride in the person who has it. The praise turns on his power, or riches, or family, or virtue, all of which are subjects of vanity that we have already explained and accounted for. It is certain, then, that if a person regarded himself in the same light in which he appears to his admirer, he would first receive a separate pleasure, and afterwards a pride or self-satisfaction, according to the hypothesis explained above. Now nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others on this point. We do so from sympathy, which makes all their sentiments intimately present to us, and from reasoning, which makes us regard their judgment as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles, authority and sympathy, influence almost all our opinions, but they must have a special influence when we judge of our own worth and character. Such judgments are always accompanied by passion;[10] and nothing does more to disturb our understanding and rush us into opinions, however unreasonable, than their connection with passion, which spreads itself over the imagination and gives additional force to every related idea. We may add that, being conscious of a great partiality in our own favor, we are especially pleased with anything that confirms our good opinion of ourselves, and are easily shocked by whatever opposes it.

2.1.11.10 All this seems very probable in theory. But to give this reasoning full certainty, we must examine the phenomena of the passions and see whether they agree with it.

2.1.11.11 Among these phenomena, one we may count as very favorable to our present purpose is this. Although fame in gen-

10 HUME'S NOTE. Book I, Part III, Section 10.

eral is agreeable, we get much greater satisfaction from the approval of those we ourselves esteem and approve of than from the approval of those we hate and despise. In the same way, we are chiefly mortified by the contempt of people whose judgment we set some value on, and are largely indifferent to the opinions of the rest of mankind. But if the mind received a desire for fame and an aversion to infamy from some original instinct, fame and infamy would influence us without distinction. Every opinion would then excite that desire or aversion equally, according to whether it was favorable or unfavorable. The judgment of a fool is the judgment of another person just as much as a wise man's is; it is only inferior in its influence on our own judgment.

2.1.11.12 We are not only better pleased by the approval of a wise man than by that of a fool. We also get additional satisfaction from the wise man's approval when it comes after a long and intimate acquaintance. This is explained in the same way.

2.1.11.13 The praise of others never gives us much pleasure unless it agrees with our own opinion and extols us for the qualities in which we chiefly excel. A mere soldier cares little for a reputation for eloquence; a lawyer or scholar, for courage; a bishop, for humor; a merchant, for learning. Whatever esteem a man may have for a quality considered in the abstract, when he knows he does not possess it, the opinions of the whole world will give him little pleasure on that score. The reason is that they will never be able to carry his own opinion along with them.

2.1.11.14 Nothing is more common than for men of good family but narrow means to leave their friends and country. They would rather earn their living by lowly manual work among strangers than among people who know their birth and upbringing. "We shall be unknown where we go," they say. "Nobody will suspect what family we come from. We shall be far from all our friends and acquaintances, and so our poverty and low station will sit more easily on us." On examining these senti-

ments, I find they provide many very convincing arguments for my present purpose.

2.1.11.15 First, we can infer from them that the uneasiness of being held in contempt depends on sympathy, and that sympathy depends on the relation of objects to ourselves. We are most uneasy under the contempt of people who are both related to us by blood and contiguous to us in place. So we try to diminish this sympathy and uneasiness by separating these relations, placing ourselves in contiguity with strangers and at a distance from our relatives.

2.1.11.16 Second, we may conclude that relations are required for sympathy. They are required not simply as relations, but through their influence in converting our ideas of other people's sentiments into those very sentiments, by means of the association between the idea of their persons and the idea of our own. For here the relations of kinship and contiguity both remain. But since they are not united in the same persons, they contribute less to the sympathy.

2.1.11.17 Third, this very circumstance deserves our attention: sympathy is diminished when the relations are separated. Suppose I am in poor circumstances among strangers and am consequently treated with little regard. I still find myself more at ease in that situation than when I was exposed every day to the contempt of my kin and countrymen. Here I feel a double contempt. It comes from my relatives, but they are absent; and from those around me, but they are strangers. This double contempt is also strengthened by the two relations of kinship and contiguity. But the persons connected with me by those two relations are not the same. This difference of ideas separates the impressions arising from the contempt and keeps them from running into each other. The contempt of my neighbors has a certain influence, and so does that of my kin. But these influences are distinct and never unite, as they do when the contempt comes from people who are at once both my neighbors and my kin. This phenomenon is analogous to the system of pride and

humility explained above, which may seem so extraordinary to common ways of thinking.

2.1.11.18 Fourth, a person in these circumstances naturally hides his birth from the people he lives among. He is very uneasy if anyone suspects him of coming from a family far above his present fortune and way of life. Everything in this world is judged by comparison. What is an immense fortune for a private gentleman is beggary for a prince. A peasant would think himself happy with what cannot provide the necessities of a gentleman. Suppose a man has either been used to a grander way of living or thinks himself entitled to it by his birth and rank. Then everything below it is disagreeable and even shameful, and he takes the greatest pains to conceal his claims to a better fortune. Here he himself knows his misfortunes. But the people he lives with do not know them, so the disagreeable reflection and comparison is suggested only by his own thoughts and never reaches him through sympathy with others. This must contribute a great deal to his ease and satisfaction.

2.1.11.19 There may be objections to this hypothesis, *that the pleasure we receive from praise arises from a communication of sentiments*. If so, we shall find on examination that these objections, seen in the proper light, serve to confirm it. Popular fame may be agreeable even to a man who despises the common people, but that is because their numbers give them additional weight and authority. Plagiarists are delighted with praise they know they do not deserve. But this is a kind of castle-building, in which the imagination amuses itself with its own fictions and tries to make them firm and stable through sympathy with the sentiments of others. Proud men are most shocked by contempt, though they are not the quickest to agree with it. But that is because of the opposition between the passion that is natural to them and the one they receive by sympathy. In the same way, a passionate lover is very displeased when you blame and condemn his love. Yet clearly your opposition can have no influence except through the hold it takes on him and through his sym-

pathy with you. If he despises you, or sees that you are joking, nothing you say has any effect on him.

PRIDE IN ANIMALS

Animals feel pride and humility from bodily qualities, by the same principles as humans.

2.1.12.1 Thus, from whatever angle we consider this subject, we still find that the causes of pride and humility correspond exactly to our hypothesis. Nothing can excite either of these passions unless it is both related to ourselves and produces a pleasure or pain independent of the passion. We have proved not only that a tendency to produce pleasure or pain is common to all the causes of pride or humility, but also that it is the only thing they have in common. Consequently it is the quality by which they operate. We have further proved that the most considerable causes of these passions are really nothing but the power of producing either agreeable or uneasy sensations. Therefore all their effects, pride and humility among them, derive solely from that origin. Such simple and natural principles, founded on such solid proofs, cannot fail to be accepted by philosophers, unless someone raises objections that have escaped me.

2.1.12.2 Anatomists commonly join their observations and experiments on human bodies to those on animals. From the agreement of these experiments they derive an additional argument for a particular hypothesis. It is indeed certain that where the structure of the parts in animals is the same as in humans, and those parts also operate in the same way, the causes of that operation cannot be different. Whatever we find to be true of the one species may then be concluded without hesitation to hold for the other. We may fairly presume that the mixture of humors and the composition of minute parts are somewhat different in humans than in mere animals. So any experiment we make on one concerning the effects of medicines will not always apply to the other. Yet the structure of the veins and muscles, and the

makeup and position of the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the liver, and other parts, are the same or nearly the same in all animals. So the very same hypothesis that explains muscular motion, the progress of the chyle, and the circulation of the blood in one species must apply to every one. And according to whether it agrees or disagrees with the experiments we make on any species of creature, we may draw a proof of its truth or falsehood as a whole. Let us, then, apply this method of inquiry, which proves so sound and useful in reasoning about the body, to our present anatomy of the mind, and see what discoveries we can make with it.

2.1.12.3 To do this, we must first show the correspondence between the passions in humans and in animals, and then compare the causes that produce these passions.

2.1.12.4 It is plain that in almost every species of creature, especially the nobler kinds, there are many evident marks of pride and humility. The very bearing and gait of a swan, a turkey, or a peacock show the high idea he has of himself and his contempt for all others. This is all the more remarkable because in the last two species the pride always goes along with the beauty and is found in the male only. The vanity and rivalry of nightingales in singing have often been remarked. So has that of horses in swiftness, of hounds in sagacity and scent, of the bull and the cock in strength, and of every other animal in its particular excellence. Add to this that every species of creature that comes near enough to humans to grow familiar with them shows an evident pride in their approval. These animals are pleased by human praise and caresses, independent of any other consideration. Nor is it the caresses of just anyone that give them this vanity. It is chiefly the caresses of the persons they know and love, in the same way that the passion is excited in humankind. All these are evident proofs that pride and humility are not merely human passions but extend over the whole animal creation.

2.1.12.5 The *causes* of these passions are also much the same in animals as in us, making fair allowance for our superior knowledge and understanding. Animals have little or no sense of vir-

tue or vice. They quickly lose sight of the relations of blood, and they are incapable of the relation of right and property. For this reason the causes of their pride and humility must lie solely in the body, and can never be placed either in the mind or in external objects. But as far as the body is concerned, the same qualities cause pride in animals as in humans. This passion is always founded on beauty, strength, swiftness, or some other useful or agreeable quality.

2.1.12.6 These passions are the same, and arise from the same causes, throughout creation. The next question is whether the manner in which those causes operate is also the same. By all the rules of analogy, this is rightly to be expected. If we find on trial that the explanation of these phenomena we use for one species will not apply to the rest, we may presume that the explanation, however plausible, is in reality without foundation.

2.1.12.7 To decide this question, let us consider that the minds of animals evidently have the same relation of ideas as the minds of humans, derived from the same causes. A dog that has hidden a bone often forgets the place. But when he is brought to it, his thought passes easily to what he hid before, by means of the contiguity that produces a relation among his ideas. Likewise, when he has been soundly beaten in some place, he will tremble as he approaches it, even though he sees no sign of any present danger. The effects of resemblance are not so striking. But that relation is a considerable ingredient in causation, and all animals show such evident judgment about causation. So we may conclude that the three relations of resemblance, contiguity, and causation operate on animals in the same way as on human beings.

2.1.12.8 There are also instances of the relation of impressions in the lower species of creatures, as well as in the higher. They are sufficient to convince us that certain affections are united with each other in animals too, and that their minds are often carried through a series of connected emotions. A dog lifted up with joy passes naturally into love and kindness, whether toward his master or toward the opposite sex. In the same way, when he is

full of pain and sorrow, he becomes quarrelsome and ill-natured, and the passion that was at first grief is turned into anger on the slightest occasion.

2.1.12.9 Thus all the internal principles that are needed in us to produce pride or humility are common to all creatures. And since the causes that excite these passions are also the same, we may rightly conclude that these causes operate in the same way throughout the whole animal creation. My hypothesis is so simple, and assumes so little reflection and judgment, that it applies to every sentient creature. This must be granted to be a convincing proof of its truth, and, I am confident, will be found to be an objection to every other system.

Book II, Part 2: Of love and hatred

Hume extends his system to love and hatred, and to compassion, malice, envy, respect and contempt.

SECT. I. OF THE OBJECT AND CAUSES OF LOVE AND HATRED

2.2.1.1 It is altogether impossible to give any definition of the passions of love and hatred, because they produce merely a simple impression, without any mixture or composition. It would be just as unnecessary to attempt a description of them drawn from their nature, origin, causes, and objects. These are the very subjects of our present inquiry, and the passions themselves are well enough known from our common feeling and experience. We have already observed this about pride and humility, and we repeat it here about love and hatred. Indeed, there is so great a resemblance between these two sets of passions that we will have to begin with a kind of abridged review of our reasoning about the former in order to explain the latter.

2.2.1.2 The immediate object of pride and humility is the self, that identical person whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious of. In the same way, the object of love and hatred is some other person, whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious of. This is clear enough from experience. Our love and hatred are always directed at some sentient being outside us. When we talk of self-love, it is not in a proper sense, and the sensation it produces has nothing in common with the tender emotion excited by a friend or a lover. It is the same with hatred. We may be mortified by our own faults and follies, but we never feel anger or hatred except from injuries done us by others.

2.2.1.3 But although the object of love and hatred is always some other person, it is plain that the object is not, strictly speaking, the cause of these passions, nor is it enough by itself to excite them. Love and hatred are directly contrary in their sensation and have the same object in common. If that object were also their cause, it would produce these opposite passions in equal degree. They would then destroy each other from the very first moment, and neither of them could ever appear. There must, therefore, be some cause different from the object.

2.2.1.4 If we consider the causes of love and hatred, we find they are very varied and have few things in common. A person's virtue, knowledge, wit, good sense, and good humor produce love and esteem, as the opposite qualities produce hatred and contempt. The same passions arise from bodily accomplishments such as beauty, strength, swiftness, and dexterity, and from their contraries. They also arise from the external advantages and disadvantages of family, possessions, clothes, nation, and climate. Every one of these objects can produce love and esteem, or hatred and contempt, through its different qualities.

2.2.1.5 Looking at these causes, we may draw a new distinction between the quality that operates and the subject in which it is placed. A prince who owns a stately palace commands the esteem of the people on that account. He does so first by the beauty of the palace, and second by the relation of property that connects it with him. Removing either of these destroys the passion, which clearly proves that the cause is a compound one.

2.2.1.6 It would be tedious to trace the passions of love and hatred through all the observations we have made about pride and humility, which apply equally to both sets of passions. It will be enough to remark in general that the object of love and hatred is evidently some thinking person, and that the sensation of the former passion is always agreeable and that of the latter uneasy. We may also suppose, with some appearance of probability, *that the cause of both these passions is always related to a thinking being, and that the cause of the former produces a separate pleasure, and of the latter a separate uneasiness*.

2.2.1.7 One of these suppositions is not only probable but too evident to be disputed: that the cause of love and hatred must be related to a person or thinking being in order to produce these passions. Consider virtue and vice in the abstract, beauty and ugliness in inanimate objects, and poverty and riches when they belong to a third person. None of these excites any degree of love or hatred, esteem or contempt, toward people who have no relation to them. A person looking out of a window sees me in the street, and beyond me a beautiful palace with which I have nothing to do. I do not think anyone will claim that this person will pay me the same respect as if I owned the palace.

2.2.1.8 It is not so evident at first sight that a relation of impressions is required for these passions. In the transition the one impression is so blended with the other that they become more or less indistinguishable. With pride and humility, however, we were easily able to separate them and to prove that every cause of these passions produces a separate pain or pleasure. I could follow the same method here with the same success, by examining the various causes of love and hatred in detail. But since I am hurrying on to a full and decisive proof of these systems, I will put off this examination for a moment. In the meantime I will try to turn all my reasoning about pride and humility to my present purpose, by an argument founded on unquestionable experience.

2.2.1.9 Few people who are satisfied with their own character, talents, or fortune are not eager to show themselves to the world and win the love and approval of mankind. Now it is evident that the very same qualities and circumstances that cause pride or self-esteem also cause vanity, or the desire for reputation. We always put on display the particulars we are most satisfied with in ourselves. Suppose love and esteem were not produced by the same qualities as pride, depending on whether these qualities are related to ourselves or to others. Then this way of proceeding would be quite absurd, and people could not expect everyone else's sentiments to match their own. It is true that few can form exact systems of the passions or reflect on their general

nature and resemblances. But even without such progress in philosophy, we are not liable to many mistakes here. We are guided well enough by common experience, and by a kind of presentiment that tells us what will work on others from what we feel immediately in ourselves. Since, then, the same qualities that produce pride or humility cause love or hatred, the arguments used to prove that the causes of the former passions excite a pain or pleasure independent of the passion will all apply with equal force to the causes of the latter.

EIGHT EXPERIMENTS

Experiments with pride, humility, love and hatred confirm the double relation of impressions and ideas.

2.2.2.1 Once these arguments have been duly weighed, no one will hesitate to accept the conclusion I draw from them about the transition along related impressions and ideas, especially since it is so easy and natural a principle in itself. But I want to put this system beyond doubt with regard to love and hatred as well as pride and humility. To do so, it will be proper to make some new experiments on all these passions, and also to recall a few of the observations I touched on earlier.

2.2.2.2 To make these experiments, let us suppose I am in the company of a person whom I previously regarded without any sentiment of either friendship or enmity. Here I have the natural and ultimate objects of all four of these passions before me. I myself am the proper object of pride or humility; the other person is the proper object of love or hatred.

2.2.2.3 Now consider carefully the nature of these passions and their position relative to each other. Evidently there are four affections here, arranged, as it were, in a square, with a regular connection to and distance from one another. The passions of pride and humility, like those of love and hatred, are connected together by the identity of their object. For the first pair that object is the self; for the second it is some other person. These two lines of communication or connection form two opposite

sides of the square. Again, pride and love are agreeable passions; hatred and humility are uneasy ones. This similarity of sensation between pride and love, and between humility and hatred, forms a new connection, and may be regarded as the other two sides of the square. In sum, pride is connected with humility, and love with hatred, by their objects or ideas. Pride is connected with love, and humility with hatred, by their sensations or impressions.

2.2.2.4 I say, then, that nothing can produce any of these passions without bearing a double relation to it: a relation of ideas to the object of the passion, and a relation of sensation to the passion itself. This we must prove by our experiments.

2.2.2.5 First Experiment. To proceed in these experiments with greater order, let us first suppose that I am in the situation just described, in company with some other person. An object is presented that has no relation of either impressions or ideas to any of these passions. Suppose we are looking together at an ordinary stone or other common object that belongs to neither of us and causes, of itself, no emotion and no independent pain or pleasure. Clearly such an object will produce none of these four passions. Let us try it on each of them in turn: on love, on hatred, on humility, on pride. None of them ever arises in the smallest degree imaginable. Let us change the object as often as we like, provided we always choose one that has neither of these two relations. Let us repeat the experiment in every disposition the mind is capable of. No object in the vast variety of nature, in any disposition, will produce any passion without these relations.

2.2.2.6 Second Experiment. Since an object that lacks both these relations can never produce any passion, let us give it just one of them and see what follows. Suppose I look at a stone or any common object that belongs either to me or to my companion, and so acquires a relation of ideas to the object of the passions. It is plain that, considering the matter a priori, no emotion of any kind can reasonably be expected. For one thing, a relation of ideas operates quietly and calmly on the mind. For another, it

gives an equal push toward the opposite passions of pride and humility, love and hatred, depending on whether the object belongs to ourselves or to others. This opposition of the passions must destroy both, and leave the mind entirely free of any affection or emotion. This a priori reasoning is confirmed by experience. Take any trivial or ordinary object that does not cause a pain or pleasure independent of the passion. It will never be able to produce the affections of pride or humility, love or hatred, whether by being our property or by other relations either to ourselves or to others.

2.2.2.7 Third Experiment. It is evident, then, that a relation of ideas cannot by itself give rise to these affections. Let us now remove this relation and put a relation of impressions in its place. We present an object that is agreeable or disagreeable but has no relation to either me or my companion, and we observe the consequences. Considering the matter first a priori, as in the preceding experiment, we may conclude that the object will have a slight but uncertain connection with these passions. For this relation is not a cold and imperceptible one. Besides, it lacks the drawback of the relation of ideas: it does not direct us with equal force toward two contrary passions that destroy each other by their opposition. But consider the other side. This transition from the sensation to the affection is not helped along by any principle that produces a transition of ideas. On the contrary, although the one impression passes easily into the other, the change of objects is supposed to go against all the principles that cause a transition of that kind. From this we may infer that anything connected with a passion merely by a relation of impressions will never be a steady or lasting cause of it. After weighing these arguments, our reason would conclude by analogy as follows. An object that produces pleasure or uneasiness, but has no connection whatever with ourselves or others, may give such a turn to our disposition that it naturally slides into pride or love, humility or hatred. It then looks for other objects on which, by a double relation, it can found these affections. But an object that has only one of these relations, even the most

favorable one, can never give rise to any constant and settled passion.

2.2.2.8 Most fortunately, all this reasoning turns out to agree exactly with experience and with the phenomena of the passions. Suppose I were traveling with a companion through a country where we are both complete strangers. Clearly, if the views are beautiful, the roads pleasant, and the inns comfortable, this may put me in a good humor both with myself and with my fellow traveler. But we are supposing that this country has no relation to either me or my friend, so it can never be the immediate cause of pride or love. Unless I found the passion on some other object that bears a closer relation to one of us, my emotions should be regarded as the overflow of an elevated or kindly disposition rather than as a settled passion. The case is the same where the object produces uneasiness.

2.2.2.9 Fourth Experiment. We have found that neither an object without any relation of ideas or impressions, nor an object with only one relation, can ever cause pride or humility, love or hatred. Reason alone may then convince us, without any further experiment, that whatever has a double relation must necessarily excite these passions, since evidently they must have some cause. But to leave as little room for doubt as possible, let us renew our experiments and see whether the outcome in this case meets our expectation. I choose an object, such as virtue, that causes a separate satisfaction. To this object I give a relation to the self, and I find that from this arrangement a passion immediately arises. But what passion? Precisely the passion of pride, to which this object bears a double relation. Its idea is related to the idea of the self, the object of the passion; the sensation it causes resembles the sensation of the passion. To make sure I am not mistaken in this experiment, I remove first one relation, then the other. I find that each removal destroys the passion and leaves the object perfectly indifferent. But I am not content with this. I make a further trial: instead of removing the relation, I simply exchange it for one of a different kind. I suppose the virtue belongs to my companion, not to me, and

observe what follows from this change. I immediately see the affections wheel around. They leave pride, where there is only one relation (of impressions), and fall to the side of love, where they are drawn by a double relation of impressions and ideas. By repeating the same experiment and changing the relation of ideas again, I bring the affections back to pride. By another repetition I put them back at love or kindness. Fully convinced of the influence of this relation, I try the effects of the other. By exchanging virtue for vice, I convert the pleasant impression that arises from the former into the disagreeable one that comes from the latter. The effect still meets expectation. Vice, when placed in another person, excites the passion of hatred by means of its double relations, in place of the love that virtue produces for the same reason. To continue the experiment, I change the relation of ideas again and suppose the vice belongs to me. What follows? The usual thing: the passion changes from hatred to humility. This humility I convert into pride by a new change of the impression. In the end I find that I have completed the circuit, and by these changes have brought the passion back to the very position in which I first found it.

2.2.2.10 But to make the matter still more certain, I change the object. Instead of vice and virtue, I make the trial on beauty and ugliness, riches and poverty, power and servitude. Each of these objects runs around the circle of the passions in the same way, through a change in their relations. In whatever order we proceed, whether through pride, love, hatred, humility, or through humility, hatred, love, pride, the experiment does not vary in the least. Esteem and contempt, it is true, arise on some occasions instead of love and hatred. But these are basically the same passions, only varied by certain causes that we shall explain later.

2.2.2.11 Fifth Experiment. To give these experiments greater authority, let us change the situation as much as possible and place the passions and objects in all the different positions they admit of. In addition to the relations mentioned above, let us suppose that the person with whom I make all these experi-

ments is closely connected with me, either by blood or by friendship. He is, let us say, my son or my brother, or is united to me by a long and familiar acquaintance. Next, let us suppose that the cause of the passion acquires a double relation of impressions and ideas to this person. Then let us see what effects all these complicated attractions and relations have.

2.2.2.12 Before considering what the effects actually are, let us determine what they ought to be according to my hypothesis. It is plain that the passion of love or hatred must arise toward this person, depending on whether the impression is pleasant or uneasy. For the person is connected to the cause of the impression by the double relations I have required all along. A brother's virtue must make me love him, as his vice or infamy must excite the contrary passion. But judging only from the situation, I would not expect the affections to stop there and never pass into any other impression. Here there is a person who, by means of a double relation, is the object of my passion. The very same reasoning therefore leads me to think the passion will be carried further. By our supposition, the person has a relation of ideas to me. And the passion of which he is the object, by being either agreeable or uneasy, has a relation of impressions to pride or humility. Evidently, then, one of these passions must arise from the love or hatred.

2.2.2.13 This is the reasoning I form in keeping with my hypothesis, and I am pleased to find on trial that everything meets my expectation exactly. The virtue or vice of a son or brother not only excites love or hatred. By a new transition from similar causes, it also gives rise to pride or humility. Nothing causes greater vanity than some shining quality in our relatives, just as nothing mortifies us more than their vice or infamy. This exact agreement of experience with our reasoning is a convincing proof of the solidity of the hypothesis on which we reason.

2.2.2.14 Sixth Experiment. This evidence will be further increased if we reverse the experiment, keeping the same relations but simply beginning with a different passion. The virtue or vice of a son or brother first causes love or hatred, and after-

ward pride or humility. Suppose that instead we place these good or bad qualities in ourselves, without any immediate connection with the person related to us. Experience shows us that this change of situation breaks the whole chain, and the mind is not carried from one passion to another as in the previous case. We never love or hate a son or brother for the virtue or vice we discern in ourselves, even though the same qualities in him evidently give us a very noticeable pride or humility. The transition from pride or humility to love or hatred is not as natural as the transition from love or hatred to pride or humility. At first sight this may be thought contrary to my hypothesis, since the relations of impressions and ideas are precisely the same in both cases. Pride and humility are impressions related to love and hatred. I myself am related to the person. One should therefore expect like causes to produce like effects, and a complete transition to arise from the double relation, as in all other cases. We can easily resolve this difficulty by the following reflections.

2.2.2.15 We are at all times intimately conscious of ourselves and of our sentiments and passions. It is evident, then, that their ideas must strike us with greater vivacity than the ideas of any other person's sentiments and passions. But everything that strikes us with vivacity and appears in a full and strong light forces itself, so to speak, into our consideration. It becomes present to the mind at the slightest hint and through the most trivial relation. For the same reason, once it is present, it holds our attention and keeps it from wandering to other objects, however strongly they are related to our first object. The imagination passes easily from dim ideas to lively ones, but with difficulty from lively ideas to dim ones. In the one case the relation is aided by another principle; in the other it is opposed by it.

2.2.2.16 Now, I have observed that two faculties of the mind, the imagination and the passions, assist each other in their operations when their tendencies are similar and when they act on the same object. The mind always has a tendency to pass from one passion to any other passion related to it. This tendency is furthered when the object of the one passion is related to the

object of the other. The two impulses work together and make the whole transition smoother and easier. But suppose the relation of ideas remains, strictly speaking, the same, while its influence in causing a transition of the imagination no longer operates. Then clearly its influence on the passions must also cease, since that influence depends entirely on the transition. This is why pride or humility does not pass into love or hatred as easily as the latter passions change into the former. If a person is my brother, I am his brother too. But though the relations are reciprocal, they have very different effects on the imagination. The passage is smooth and open from thinking about any person related to us to thinking about ourselves, of whom we are conscious every moment. But once the affections are directed toward ourselves, the fancy does not pass with the same ease from that object to any other person, however closely connected with us. This easy or difficult transition of the imagination acts on the passions, and speeds or slows their transition. That is a clear proof that these two faculties, the passions and the imagination, are connected together, and that the relations of ideas have an influence on the affections. Countless experiments prove this. And here we also find that even when the relation remains, some particular circumstance may prevent its usual effect on the fancy of producing an association or transition of ideas. When it does, its usual effect on the passions, of carrying us from one to another, is likewise prevented.

2.2.2.17 Some may perhaps find a contradiction between this phenomenon and that of sympathy, where the mind passes easily from the idea of ourselves to the idea of any other object related to us. But this difficulty will vanish if we consider that in sympathy our own person is not the object of any passion. Nothing fixes our attention on ourselves, as something does in the present case, where we are supposed to be moved by pride or humility. Our self, apart from the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing. For this reason we must turn our view to external objects, and it is natural for us to attend most to those that are contiguous to us or resemble us. But when the self

is the object of a passion, it is not natural to leave off considering it until the passion is exhausted, and in that case the double relations of impressions and ideas can no longer operate.

2.2.2.18 Seventh Experiment. To put this whole line of reasoning to a further test, let us make a new experiment. We have already seen the effects of related passions and ideas. Let us now suppose an identity of passions together with a relation of ideas, and consider the effects of this new situation. Clearly, by every reasonable standard, we should expect a transition of the passions from the one object to the other here. The relation of ideas is supposed still to continue, and an identity of impressions must produce a stronger connection than the most perfect resemblance imaginable. If a double relation of impressions and ideas can produce a transition from one to the other, then an identity of impressions with a relation of ideas can do so all the more. And indeed we find that when we love or hate any person, the passions seldom stay within their original bounds. They extend toward all the contiguous objects and take in the friends and relatives of the one we love or hate. Nothing is more natural than to feel kindly toward one brother because of our friendship with another, without examining his character any further. A quarrel with one person gives us a hatred of the whole family, though they are entirely innocent of what displeases us. Instances of this kind are found everywhere.

2.2.2.19 There is just one difficulty in this experiment that must be accounted for before we go any further. All passions pass easily from one object to another related to it. Yet the transition is evidently easier when the more considerable object is presented first and the lesser follows, than when the order is reversed and the lesser comes first. Thus it is more natural for us to love the son for the father's sake than the father for the son's; the servant for the master than the master for the servant; the subject for the prince than the prince for the subject. Likewise, we more readily develop a hatred for a whole family when our first quarrel is with its head than when we are displeased with a son, a

servant, or some other lesser member. In short, our passions, like other objects, descend more easily than they ascend.

2.2.2.20 To understand where the difficulty of explaining this phenomenon lies, we must consider that the very same reason that makes the imagination pass more easily from remote to contiguous objects than from contiguous to remote also makes it exchange the lesser for the greater more easily than the greater for the lesser. Whatever has the greatest influence is most noticed, and whatever is most noticed presents itself most readily to the imagination. In any subject we are more apt to overlook what is trivial than what seems of considerable importance, especially if the important thing comes first and engages our attention first. Thus if some accident makes us consider the satellites of *Jupiter*, our fancy is naturally led to form the idea of that planet. But if we first reflect on the principal planet, we more naturally overlook its attendants. Mentioning the provinces of an empire carries our thought to its capital, but the fancy does not return as easily to consider the provinces. The idea of the servant makes us think of the master, and that of the subject turns our view to the prince. But the same relation does not have an equal influence in carrying us back again. This is the basis of Cornelia's reproach to her sons: they ought to be ashamed that she was better known as the daughter of Scipio than as the mother of the Gracchi. In other words, she was urging them to make themselves as illustrious and famous as their grandfather. Otherwise the people's imagination would pass from her, who stood between them and was equally related to both, and would always leave the sons behind and name her by what was more considerable and of greater importance.[1] The same principle underlies the common custom of having wives take their husbands' names rather than husbands their wives'. It also underlies the ceremony of giving precedence to those we honor and respect. We could find many other instances to confirm this principle, if it were not already evident enough.

1 Cornelia (second century BC) was the daughter of Scipio Africanus and the mother of the reformers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.

2.2.2.21 Now, since the fancy passes as easily from the lesser to the greater as from remote to contiguous, why does this easy transition of ideas not assist the transition of passions in the first case as it does in the second? The virtues of a friend or brother produce first love and then pride, because here the imagination passes from remote to contiguous, in line with its propensity. Our own virtues do not produce first pride and then love for a friend or brother, because the passage here would be from contiguous to remote, against its propensity. But love or hatred of an inferior does not readily produce any passion toward the superior, though that is the imagination's natural propensity. Meanwhile love or hatred of a superior does produce a passion toward the inferior, against its propensity. In short, the same ease of transition does not work in the same way on superior and inferior as on contiguous and remote. These two phenomena seem contradictory, and it takes some attention to reconcile them.

2.2.2.22 Since the transition of ideas here runs against the natural propensity of the imagination, that faculty must be overpowered by some stronger principle of another kind. And since nothing is ever present to the mind but impressions and ideas, this principle must lie in the impressions. Now, it has been observed that impressions or passions are connected only by resemblance, and that where two passions put the mind in the same or similar dispositions, it passes very naturally from one to the other. A clash in the dispositions, by contrast, makes the transition between the passions difficult. But notice that this clash can arise from a difference in degree as well as in kind. We find it no harder to pass suddenly from a small degree of love to a small degree of hatred than from a small to a great degree of either affection. A man who is calm or only moderately agitated is so different in every respect from himself when shaken by a violent passion that no two persons could be more unlike. Nor is it easy to pass from one extreme to the other without a considerable interval between them.

2.2.2.23 The difficulty is no less, and if anything greater, in passing from the strong passion to the weak than from the weak to the strong, provided that one passion destroys the other when it appears and they do not both exist at once. But the case is entirely different when the passions unite and move the mind at the same time. A weak passion added to a strong one does not change the disposition as much as a strong one added to a weak one. For this reason there is a closer connection between the great degree and the small than between the small degree and the great.

2.2.2.24 The degree of any passion depends on the nature of its object. An affection directed at a person who is important in our eyes fills and possesses the mind much more than one whose object is a person we think of less consequence. Here, then, the contradiction between the propensities of the imagination and of passion shows itself. When we turn our thought to a great object and a small one, the imagination finds it easier to pass from the small to the great than from the great to the small, but the affections find it harder. And since the affections are a more powerful principle than the imagination, no wonder they prevail over it and draw the mind to their side. Despite the difficulty of passing from the idea of the great to that of the little, a passion directed at the great always produces a similar passion toward the little, when the two are related. The idea of the servant carries our thought most readily to the master, but hatred or love of the master more easily produces anger or goodwill toward the servant. The strongest passion here comes first. Since adding the weaker makes no considerable change in the disposition, the passage between them is made easier and more natural.

2.2.2.25 In the previous experiment we found that when some particular circumstance stops a relation of ideas from easing the transition of ideas, as it usually does, that relation also stops acting on the passions. In the present experiment we find the same property in the impressions. Two different degrees of the same passion are certainly related. But if the smaller comes first, it

has little or no tendency to introduce the greater, because adding the great to the little makes a more noticeable change in the temper than adding the little to the great. These phenomena, properly weighed, will prove convincing evidence for this hypothesis.

2.2.2.26 These proofs will be confirmed if we consider how the mind here reconciles the contradiction I have pointed out between the passions and the imagination. The fancy passes more easily from the less to the greater than from the greater to the less. A violent passion, on the contrary, more easily produces a feeble one than a feeble one does a violent one. In this conflict the passion in the end prevails over the imagination. But it usually does so by going along with it, and by looking for another quality that may counterbalance the principle the conflict arises from. When we love the father or master of a family, we give little thought to his children or servants. But when they are present with us, or when it is in any way in our power to serve them, their nearness and contiguity increase their magnitude, or at least remove the resistance the fancy puts up to the transition of the affections. If the imagination finds it hard to pass from greater to less, it finds it equally easy to pass from remote to contiguous. This evens things out and leaves the way open from one passion to the other.

2.2.2.27 Eighth Experiment. I have observed that the transition from love or hatred to pride or humility is easier than from pride or humility to love or hatred. I have also observed that the difficulty the imagination finds in passing from contiguous to remote is why we hardly have any instance of the latter transition of the affections. I must, however, make one exception: when the very cause of the pride or humility lies in some other person. For in that case the imagination is forced to consider that person, and cannot possibly confine its view to ourselves. Thus nothing more readily produces kindness and affection toward someone than his approval of our conduct and character. On the other hand, nothing inspires stronger hatred in us than his blame or contempt. Here it is evident that the original

passion is pride or humility, whose object is the self, and that this passion is transfused into love or hatred, whose object is some other person. This happens despite the rule I have already established, *that the imagination passes with difficulty from contiguous to remote*. But the transition in this case is not made merely because of the relation between ourselves and the person. It is made because that very person is the real cause of our first passion, and is consequently intimately connected with it. It is his approval that produces pride, and his disapproval, humility. No wonder, then, that the imagination returns accompanied by the related passions of love and hatred. This is not a contradiction of the rule but an exception to it, and an exception that arises from the same reason as the rule itself.

2.2.2.28 Such an exception, therefore, rather confirms the rule. And indeed, if we consider all eight experiments I have explained, we will find the same principle at work in all of them: pride and humility, love and hatred are produced by means of a transition arising from a double relation of impressions and ideas. An object without[2] a relation, or[3] with only one, never produces any of these passions, and it is[4] found that the passion always varies in step with the relation. Indeed, we may observe that where some particular circumstance keeps the relation from producing its usual transition of either[5] ideas or impressions, it stops acting on the passions, and gives rise neither to pride nor love, humility nor hatred. We find this rule still holds good[6] even where it appears to be contradicted. Relation is often found to have no effect, and on examination this turns out to come from some particular circumstance that prevents the transition. So too, where that circumstance is present yet does not prevent the transition, this is found to arise from some other circumstance that counterbalances it. Thus not only the vari-

2 HUME'S NOTE. First Experiment.
3 HUME'S NOTE. Second and Third Experiments.
4 HUME'S NOTE. Fourth Experiment.
5 HUME'S NOTE. Sixth Experiment.
6 HUME'S NOTE. Seventh and Eighth Experiments.

ations resolve themselves into the general principle, but even the variations of these variations.

DIFFICULTIES SOLVED

Hume explains why accident, necessity and justice lessen our love or hatred for those who affect us.

2.2.3.1 After so many undeniable proofs drawn from daily experience and observation, it may seem superfluous to examine in detail all the causes of love and hatred. I will therefore spend the rest of this part, first, in removing some difficulties about particular causes of these passions, and second, in examining the compound affections that arise from mixing love and hatred with other emotions.

2.2.3.2 Nothing is more evident than that a person wins our kindness, or is exposed to our ill will, in proportion to the pleasure or uneasiness we receive from him, and that the passions keep exact pace with the sensations through all their changes and variations. Whoever can find a way to make himself useful or agreeable to us, whether by his services, his beauty, or his flattery, is sure of our affection. On the other hand, whoever harms or displeases us never fails to arouse our anger or hatred. When our own nation is at war with another, we detest the enemy as cruel, treacherous, unjust, and violent. Yet we always consider ourselves and our allies fair, moderate, and merciful. If the enemy's general is successful, we can hardly bring ourselves to grant him the shape and character of a man. He is a sorcerer. He is in communication with demons, as was reported of *Oliver Cromwell* and the *Duke of Luxembourg*. He is bloodthirsty and takes pleasure in death and destruction. But if success is on our side, our commander has all the opposite good qualities and is a model of virtue, as well as of courage and conduct. His treachery we call policy, and his cruelty is an evil inseparable from war. In short, we either try to excuse every one of his faults or

dignify it with the name of the virtue nearest to it.[7] Clearly the same way of thinking runs through common life.

2.2.3.3 Some people add another condition. They require not only that the pain and pleasure come from the person, but that they come knowingly, with a particular design and intention. A man who wounds and harms us by accident does not become our enemy on that account. Nor do we think ourselves bound by any ties of gratitude to someone who does us a service in the same accidental way. We judge actions by the intention, and according as that is good or bad, they become causes of love or hatred.

2.2.3.4 But here we must draw a distinction. If the quality in another that pleases or displeases is constant and inherent in his person and character, it will cause love or hatred regardless of intention. Otherwise, knowledge and design are needed to give rise to these passions. Someone who is disagreeable because of his ugliness or folly is an object of our aversion, though nothing is more certain than that he has not the slightest intention of displeasing us by these qualities. Suppose, though, that the uneasiness comes not from a quality but from an action, which comes into being and is gone in a moment. Then, to produce some relation and connect the action firmly enough with the person, the action must come from a particular forethought and design. It is not enough that it comes from the person and has him as its immediate cause and author. This relation alone is too feeble and fleeting to be a foundation for these passions. It does not reach the feeling and thinking part of him. It neither proceeds from anything lasting in him nor leaves anything behind, but passes in a moment and is as if it had never been. An intention, on the other hand, shows certain qualities that remain after the action is performed. These connect the action with the person and ease the transition of ideas from one to the other. We can never think of him without reflecting on these qualities, unless repentance and a change of life have altered

7 The Duke of Luxembourg (1628–95) was a French marshal who repeatedly defeated the armies of William III.

them, and in that case the passion is altered too. This, then, is one reason why an intention is needed to arouse either love or hatred.

2.2.3.5 But we must further consider that an intention, besides strengthening the relation of ideas, is often necessary to produce a relation of impressions and give rise to pleasure and uneasiness. For notice that the main part of an injury is the contempt and hatred it shows in the person who injures us. Without that, the mere harm causes us a less noticeable uneasiness. Likewise, a good turn is agreeable chiefly because it flatters our vanity and is proof of the kindness and esteem of the person who does it. Take away the intention, and you take away the mortification in the one case and the vanity in the other. This must naturally cause a marked decrease in the passions of love and hatred.

2.2.3.6 I grant that removing design does not diminish the relations of impressions and ideas completely, and cannot remove every degree of them. But then I ask whether removing design can entirely remove the passion of love or hatred. Experience, I am sure, tells us the opposite. Nothing is more certain than that people often fly into a violent rage over injuries that they themselves must admit were entirely involuntary and accidental. This emotion, admittedly, cannot last long. But it is still enough to show that there is a natural connection between uneasiness and anger, and that the relation of impressions will operate on a very slight relation of ideas. Once the violence of the impression has abated a little, the weakness of the relation starts to be felt more. And since a person's character is in no way involved in injuries that are due to chance and involuntary, we seldom harbor a lasting hostility on their account.

2.2.3.7 To illustrate this doctrine with a parallel case, we may observe that uneasiness another person causes us by accident has little force to arouse our passion. The same is true of uneasiness that arises from an acknowledged necessity and duty. Someone who really intends to harm us, not out of hatred and ill will but from justice and fairness, does not draw our anger, if we

are at all reasonable. This holds even though he is both the cause, and the knowing cause, of our suffering. Let us examine this phenomenon a little.

2.2.3.8 It is evident, first, that this circumstance is not decisive. Though it may diminish the passions, it can seldom remove them entirely. How few criminals bear no ill will toward the person who accuses them or the judge who condemns them, even when they know they deserve it? Likewise, our opponent in a lawsuit and our rival for an office are commonly regarded as enemies. Yet if we reflected for a moment, we would have to admit that their motive is every bit as justifiable as our own.

2.2.3.9 Besides, we may note that when someone harms us, we are apt to imagine him guilty, and we find it extremely difficult to grant that he is just and innocent. This is clear proof that any harm or uneasiness naturally tends to arouse our hatred, independently of any opinion that we have been wronged, and that afterward we look for reasons to justify and establish the passion. Here the idea of injury does not produce the passion but arises from it.

2.2.3.10 Nor is it any wonder that passion should produce the opinion of injury. Otherwise the passion would have to be considerably diminished, and all the passions avoid that as much as possible. Removing the injury may remove the anger without proving that the anger arises only from the injury. The harm and the justice are two contrary objects, one tending to produce hatred and the other love. Depending on their degrees and our particular way of thinking, one or the other prevails and arouses its proper passion.

THE LOVE OF RELATIVES

Relation and acquaintance produce love by enlivening our ideas of other people.

2.2.4.1 I have explained why several actions that cause real pleasure or uneasiness arouse little or no love or hatred toward those who perform them. Next I must show what the pleasure or

uneasiness consists in for many objects that we find by experience do produce these passions.

2.2.4.2 According to the preceding system, producing either love or hatred always requires a double relation of impressions and ideas between the cause and effect. But though this is universally true, it is remarkable that the passion of love can be aroused by only one relation of a different kind, namely the relation between ourselves and the object. More properly speaking, this relation is always accompanied by both the others. Anyone united to us by any connection is always sure of a share of our love, proportioned to the connection, without our inquiring into his other qualities. Thus the relation of blood produces, in the love of parents for their children, the strongest tie the mind is capable of, and a lesser degree of the same affection as the relation weakens. Nor does kinship alone have this effect. Any other relation does, without exception. We love our compatriots, our neighbors, those of the same trade or profession, and even those with the same name as ourselves. Each of these relations is considered some sort of tie, and gives a claim to a share of our affection.

2.2.4.3 There is another, parallel phenomenon: acquaintance, without any kind of relation, gives rise to love and kindness. Suppose we have grown used to someone and become intimate with him. Even if, in keeping company with him, we have not been able to discover any very valuable quality in him, we still cannot help preferring him to strangers whose superior merit we are fully convinced of. These two phenomena, the effects of relation and of acquaintance, will shed light on each other, and can both be explained by the same principle.

2.2.4.4 Those who enjoy declaiming against human nature have observed that man is wholly unable to sustain himself. When you loosen all his holds on external objects, they say, he immediately sinks into the deepest melancholy and despair. From this, they say, comes that constant search for amusement in gambling, in hunting, and in business. By it we try to forget ourselves and rouse our spirits from the listless state they fall

into when not sustained by some brisk and lively emotion. I agree with this way of thinking to the extent of admitting that the mind cannot entertain itself by its own resources, and that it naturally looks for outside objects that can produce a lively sensation and stir the spirits. When such an object appears, the mind wakes, as it were, from a dream. The blood flows with a new tide, the heart is lifted, and the whole man acquires a vigor he cannot command in his solitary and calm moments. Hence company is naturally so cheering, since it presents the liveliest of all objects: a rational, thinking being like ourselves. He communicates all the actions of his mind to us, lets us in on his inmost sentiments and affections, and lets us see all the emotions any object causes in him at the very instant they arise. Every lively idea is agreeable, but especially the idea of a passion. Such an idea becomes a kind of passion, and stirs the mind more noticeably than any other image or conception.

2.2.4.5 Once this is admitted, all the rest is easy. The company of strangers is agreeable to us for a short time because it enlivens our thought. The company of our relatives and acquaintances, then, must be especially agreeable, because it has this effect to a greater degree and for longer. Whatever is related to us is conceived in a lively manner, through the easy transition from ourselves to the related object. Custom, or acquaintance, also eases the entry of any object and strengthens its conception. The first case parallels our reasonings from cause and effect, and the second parallels education. Reasoning and education agree only in producing a lively and strong idea of an object, and this is likewise the only feature common to relation and acquaintance. It must therefore be the quality through which they produce all their common effects. Since love or kindness is one of these effects, the passion must derive from the force and liveliness of the conception. Such a conception is especially agreeable, and makes us regard with affection everything that produces it, when that thing is the proper object of kindness and goodwill.

2.2.4.6 It is obvious that people associate according to their particular tempers and dispositions: cheerful people naturally love the cheerful, just as the serious are fond of the serious. This happens not only where they notice this resemblance between themselves and others, but also through the natural course of the disposition, and through a certain sympathy that always arises between similar characters. Where they notice the resemblance, it works in the manner of a relation, by producing a connection of ideas. Where they do not notice it, it works by some other principle. If this latter principle is similar to the former, we must accept it as confirming the preceding reasoning.

2.2.4.7 The idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us, and conveys a noticeable degree of vivacity to the idea of any other object we are related to. This lively idea gradually changes into a real impression, since these two kinds of perception are largely the same and differ only in their degrees of force and vivacity. This change must happen all the more easily when our natural temper inclines us toward the same impression we observe in others, and makes it arise on the slightest occasion. In that case resemblance converts the idea into an impression in two ways. It does so by means of the relation, transfusing the original vivacity into the related idea. It also supplies material that catches fire from the smallest spark. And since in both cases love or affection arises from the resemblance, we can learn that sympathy with others is agreeable only because it stirs the spirits. For an easy sympathy and corresponding emotions are all that *relation, acquaintance,* and *resemblance* have in common.

2.2.4.8 Men's great propensity to pride may be considered another similar phenomenon. Say we have lived a good while in some city that we found disagreeable at first. As we grow familiar with its objects and become acquainted with it, if only with the streets and buildings, our aversion often diminishes by degrees and finally turns into the opposite passion. The mind finds satisfaction and ease in viewing objects it is used to. It nat-

urally prefers them to others that are less known to it, though these may be more valuable in themselves. By the same quality of mind we are seduced into a good opinion of ourselves and of all objects that belong to us. They appear in a stronger light and are more agreeable, and consequently are fitter subjects of pride and vanity than any others.

2.2.4.9 In discussing the affection we have for our acquaintances and relatives, it may not be amiss to note some rather curious phenomena that accompany it. It is easy to see in common life that children consider their relation to their mother largely weakened by her second marriage. They no longer regard her in the same way as if she had remained a widow. This happens not only when they have suffered some inconvenience from her second marriage, or when her husband is far beneath her. It happens even without any such considerations, merely because she has become part of another family. The same thing happens with a father's second marriage, but to a much lesser degree. Certainly a father's marriage does not loosen the ties of blood as much as a mother's does. These two phenomena are remarkable in themselves, but much more so when compared.

2.2.4.10 To produce a perfect relation between two objects, it is not enough for the imagination to be carried from one to the other by resemblance, contiguity, or causation. It must also return from the second to the first with the same ease. At first sight this may seem a necessary and unavoidable consequence. If one object resembles another, the second must resemble the first. If one object is the cause of another, the second is the effect of its cause. The same holds for contiguity. So since the relation is always reciprocal, one might think that the imagination's return from the second to the first must in every case be as natural as its passage from the first to the second. But on further examination we will easily discover our mistake. Suppose the second object, besides its reciprocal relation to the first, also has a strong relation to a third object. The thought passes from the first object to the second, but it does not return as easily, though the relation stays the same. Instead it is readily carried on to the

third object by means of the new relation, which presents itself and gives the imagination a new push. This new relation therefore weakens the tie between the first and second objects. The fancy is by its very nature wavering and inconstant. Where it finds the passage equally easy going and returning, it always considers two objects more strongly related than where the transition is easy in only one direction. The double motion is a kind of double tie, and binds the objects together in the closest and most intimate way.

2.2.4.11 A mother's second marriage does not break the relation of child and parent, and that relation is enough to carry my imagination from myself to her with the greatest ease. But once the imagination has arrived at this point, it finds its object surrounded by so many other relations demanding its attention that it does not know which to prefer. It is at a loss what new object to settle on. The ties of interest and duty bind her to another family, and prevent that return of the fancy from her to myself which is needed to sustain the union. The thought no longer has the back-and-forth vibration it needs to be perfectly at ease and to indulge its inclination to change. It goes easily but returns with difficulty. That interruption makes it find the relation much weaker than it would be if the passage were open and easy both ways.

2.2.4.12 Why does this effect not follow to the same degree from a father's second marriage? To explain this, we may recall what has already been proved: the imagination passes easily from the view of a lesser object to that of a greater, but it does not return as easily from the greater to the lesser. When my imagination goes from myself to my father, it does not pass so readily from him to his second wife. Nor does it think of him as entering a different family. It thinks of him as remaining the head of the family of which I am myself a part. His superiority blocks an easy transition of the thought from him to his wife, but keeps the passage open for a return to myself along the same relation of child and parent. He is not swallowed up in the new relation he acquires, so the double motion or vibration of thought is still

easy and natural. Because the fancy is thus indulged in its inconstancy, the tie of child and parent keeps its full force and influence.

2.2.4.13 A mother does not think her tie to a son weakened because it is shared with her husband. Nor does a son think his tie to a parent weakened because it is shared with a brother. The third object here is related to the first as well as to the second, so the imagination goes back and forth among all of them with the greatest ease.

ESTEEM FOR THE RICH

Hume argues that we esteem the rich and powerful chiefly through sympathy with their pleasure.

2.2.5.1 Nothing is more apt to give us esteem for someone than his power and riches, or contempt than his poverty and lowly station. And since esteem and contempt are to be considered species of love and hatred, it is appropriate to explain these phenomena here.

2.2.5.2 Here, most fortunately, the greatest difficulty is not to discover a principle capable of producing such an effect. It is to choose the chief and predominant one among several that present themselves. The satisfaction we take in the riches of others, and the esteem we have for those who possess them, may be ascribed to three different causes. *First*, to the objects they possess, such as houses, gardens, and carriages. Being agreeable in themselves, these necessarily produce a feeling of pleasure in everyone who considers or looks at them. *Secondly*, to the expectation of advantage from the rich and powerful through sharing their possessions. *Thirdly*, to sympathy, which makes us share in the satisfaction of everyone who comes near us. All these principles may work together to produce the present phenomenon. The question is which of them we should chiefly credit with it.

2.2.5.3 It is certain that the first principle, reflection on agreeable objects, has greater influence than we might be inclined to

think at first. We seldom reflect on what is beautiful or ugly, agreeable or disagreeable, without some feeling of pleasure or uneasiness. These sensations do not show much in our ordinary lazy way of thinking, but they are easy to detect in reading or conversation. Witty people always steer the conversation to subjects that entertain the imagination, and poets never present any objects but those of the same kind. Mr. Philips chose *Cyder* as the subject of an excellent poem.[8] Beer would not have been as fitting, being less pleasant both to the taste and to the eye. But he would surely have preferred wine to either, if his native country could have supplied him with so agreeable a drink. We may learn from this that everything agreeable to the senses is also to some degree agreeable to the fancy. It conveys to the thought an image of the satisfaction it gives when actually applied to the bodily organs.

2.2.5.4 These reasons may lead us to count this delicacy of the imagination among the causes of the respect we pay the rich and powerful. But there are many other reasons that may keep us from regarding it as the only or the principal cause. Ideas of pleasure can have an influence only through their vivacity, which brings them close to impressions. So it is most natural that the ideas to have that influence should be the ones favored by the most circumstances and naturally tending to become strong and lively. Our ideas of the passions and sensations of any human being are of this kind. Every human being resembles ourselves, and thereby has an advantage over any other object in acting on the imagination.

2.2.5.5 Besides, consider the nature of that faculty and the great influence all relations have on it. We will easily be persuaded that the ideas of the pleasant wines, music, or gardens the rich man enjoys may become as lively and agreeable as you like, yet the fancy will not confine itself to them. It will extend its view to the related objects, and in particular to the person who possesses them. This is all the more natural because the pleasant

8 John Philips (1676–1709) published *Cyder*, a poem on English cider-making, in 1708.

idea or image here produces a passion toward the person by means of his relation to the object. He therefore inevitably enters into the original conception, since he is the object of the derived passion. But if he enters into the original conception, and is considered as enjoying these agreeable objects, then it is sympathy that is properly the cause of the affection. The third principle, then, is more powerful and universal than the first.

2.2.5.6 Add to this that riches and power alone, even unused, naturally cause esteem and respect. Consequently these passions do not arise from the idea of any beautiful or agreeable objects. True, money implies a kind of representation of such objects, through the power it gives of obtaining them. For that reason it may still be thought fit to convey those agreeable images that can give rise to the passion. But since this prospect is very distant, it is more natural for us to take a contiguous object: the satisfaction this power gives the person who possesses it. We will be further convinced of this if we consider that riches represent the goods of life only by means of the will that employs them. Therefore they imply, in their very nature, an idea of the person, and cannot be considered without a kind of sympathy with his sensations and enjoyments.

2.2.5.7 We can confirm this with a reflection that some may find too subtle and refined. I have already observed that power, as distinguished from its exercise, either has no meaning at all or is nothing but a possibility or probability of existence. Through it an object approaches reality and has a noticeable influence on the mind. I have also observed that, through an illusion of the fancy, this approach seems much greater when we ourselves have the power than when another has it. In the former case the objects seem to touch the very edge of reality, and give almost as much satisfaction as if they were actually in our possession. Now I maintain that where we esteem a person because of his riches, we must enter into this sentiment of the owner. Without such sympathy, the idea of the agreeable objects his riches give him the power to produce would have only a feeble influence on us. A miser is respected for his money, though he scarcely has

any power. That is, there is scarcely a probability, or even a possibility, of his using it to acquire the pleasures and conveniences of life. To him alone this power seems perfect and complete. Therefore we must take on his sentiments by sympathy before we can have a strong, intense idea of these enjoyments, or esteem him on their account.

2.2.5.8 Thus we have found that the first principle, the agreeable idea of the objects that riches allow one to enjoy, largely resolves itself into the third, and becomes a sympathy with the person we esteem or love. Let us now examine the second principle, the agreeable expectation of advantage, and see how much force we can fairly attribute to it.

2.2.5.9 Riches and authority undoubtedly give their owner a power to do us service. But this power is obviously not on the same footing as the power they give him to please himself and satisfy his own appetites. In the latter case self-love brings the power and its exercise very close together. To produce a similar effect in the former case, we must suppose friendship and goodwill joined with the riches. Without that circumstance it is hard to see what we could base our hope of advantage from others' riches on. Yet nothing is more certain than that we naturally esteem and respect the rich even before we discover any such favorable disposition toward us in them.

2.2.5.10 But I take this further. We respect the rich and powerful not only where they show no inclination to serve us, but also when we are so far outside the sphere of their activity that they cannot even be supposed to have that power. Prisoners of war are always treated with a respect suited to their rank, and riches certainly go a long way toward fixing anyone's rank. If birth and social standing play a part, this still gives us an argument of the same kind. For what do we mean by a man of birth but one descended from a long line of rich and powerful ancestors, who gains our esteem by his relation to persons we esteem? His ancestors, then, though dead, are respected to some degree because of their riches, and consequently without any kind of expectation.

2.2.5.11 But we do not need to go as far as prisoners of war and the dead to find examples of this disinterested esteem for riches. Let us look with a little attention at the phenomena we meet in ordinary life and conversation. A man who is himself reasonably well off, on coming into a company of strangers, naturally treats them with different degrees of respect and deference as he learns of their different fortunes and stations. He does this even though he cannot possibly expect, and perhaps would not accept, any advantage from them. A traveler is always admitted into company, and meets with civility, in proportion as his retinue and equipment mark him as a man of great or moderate fortune. In short, the different ranks of people are largely regulated by riches, and this holds for superiors as well as inferiors, strangers as well as acquaintances.

2.2.5.12 There is, admittedly, an answer to these arguments, drawn from the influence of general rules. It might be claimed that, being accustomed to expect help and protection from the rich and powerful, and to esteem them on that account, we extend the same sentiments to those who resemble them in fortune but from whom we can never hope for any advantage. The general rule still prevails, and by giving a bent to the imagination it draws the passion along with it, just as if the passion's proper object were real and existing.

2.2.5.13 But it will easily be seen that this principle is not at work here. To establish a general rule, and extend it beyond its proper bounds, we need a certain uniformity in our experience and a great preponderance of the instances that fit the rule over those that go against it. Here the case is quite otherwise. Of a hundred men of credit and fortune I meet, there is perhaps not one from whom I can expect any advantage. So no custom could ever take hold in this case.

2.2.5.14 All things considered, only one thing is left that could give us an esteem for power and riches and a contempt for meanness and poverty. That is the principle of sympathy, by which we enter into the sentiments of the rich and the poor and share in their pleasure and uneasiness. Riches give satisfaction

to their possessor, and this satisfaction is conveyed to the beholder by the imagination, which produces an idea resembling the original impression in force and vivacity. This agreeable idea or impression is connected with love, which is an agreeable passion. It comes from a thinking, conscious being, which is the very object of love. From this relation of impressions and identity of ideas, the passion arises, according to my hypothesis.

2.2.5.15 The best way to reconcile ourselves to this view is to take a general survey of the universe. There we can observe the force of sympathy throughout the whole animal creation, and the easy communication of sentiments from one thinking being to another. In all creatures that do not prey on others and are not stirred by violent passions, there appears a remarkable desire for company. This desire brings them together without any advantage they could ever expect to gain from their union. It is still more conspicuous in man, since he is the creature in the universe with the most ardent desire for society, and the one fitted for it by the most advantages. We can form no wish that does not have some reference to society. Perfect solitude is perhaps the greatest punishment we can suffer. Every pleasure languishes when enjoyed apart from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable. Whatever other passions may move us—pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge or lust—the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy. They would have no force at all if we set aside entirely the thoughts and sentiments of others. Let all the powers and elements of nature conspire to serve and obey one man. Let the sun rise and set at his command, the sea and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth supply of its own accord whatever may be useful or agreeable to him. He will still be miserable until you give him at least one person with whom he can share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he can enjoy.

2.2.5.16 We can confirm this conclusion, drawn from a general view of human nature, by particular instances in which the force of sympathy is very remarkable. Most kinds of beauty

come from this source. Our first object may be some senseless, inanimate piece of matter, but we seldom stop there without carrying our view on to its influence on sentient and rational creatures. A man who shows us a house or building takes particular care, among other things, to point out the convenience of the rooms, the advantages of their position, and how little space is lost in the stairs, anterooms and passages. And indeed it is evident that the chief part of the beauty consists in these particulars. Observing convenience gives pleasure, since convenience is a beauty. But in what way does it give pleasure? Certainly our own interest is not in the least involved. And since this is a beauty of interest, not of form, so to speak, it must delight us merely by communication, through our sympathizing with the owner of the house. We enter into his interest by the force of imagination, and feel the same satisfaction that these objects naturally produce in him.

2.2.5.17 This observation extends to tables, chairs, writing desks, fireplaces, coaches, saddles, plows, and indeed to every work of art. It is a universal rule that their beauty comes chiefly from their utility, and from their fitness for the purpose they are meant for. But this is an advantage that concerns only the owner, and nothing but sympathy can make the spectator take an interest in it.

2.2.5.18 It is evident that nothing makes a field more agreeable than its fertility, and that hardly any advantages of ornament or position can equal this beauty. The same holds for particular trees and plants as for the field they grow in. For all I know, a plain overgrown with gorse and broom may be in itself as beautiful as a hill covered with vines or olive trees. But it will never seem so to someone who knows the value of each. This is a beauty merely of the imagination, and has no foundation in what appears to the senses. Fertility and value obviously refer to use, and use to riches, joy and plenty. We have no hope of sharing in these, yet we enter into them through the vivacity of the fancy, and share them to some extent with the owner.

2.2.5.19 There is no rule in painting more reasonable than that of balancing the figures and placing them with the greatest exactness on their proper centers of gravity. A figure that is not properly balanced is disagreeable. This is because it conveys the ideas of its falling, of harm, and of pain—ideas that are painful when, by sympathy, they acquire any degree of force and vivacity.

2.2.5.20 Add to this that the principal part of personal beauty is an air of health and vigor, and a build of the limbs that promises strength and activity. This idea of beauty cannot be accounted for except by sympathy.

2.2.5.21 In general we may remark that the minds of men are mirrors to one another. This is not only because they reflect each other's emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may often be reflected back again, and may fade away by imperceptible degrees. Thus the pleasure a rich man gets from his possessions, being cast upon the beholder, causes pleasure and esteem. These sentiments in turn, being perceived and sympathized with, increase the pleasure of the possessor. And being reflected once more, they become a new foundation for pleasure and esteem in the beholder. There is certainly an original satisfaction in riches, derived from the power they give of enjoying all the pleasures of life. Since this is their very nature and essence, it must be the first source of all the passions that arise from them. One of the most considerable of these passions is the love or esteem of others, which therefore comes from a sympathy with the pleasure of the possessor. But the possessor also has a secondary satisfaction in riches, arising from the love and esteem he gains by them. This satisfaction is nothing but a second reflection of the original pleasure that came from himself. This secondary satisfaction, or vanity, becomes one of the principal attractions of riches, and is the chief reason why we either desire them for ourselves or esteem them in others. Here, then, is a third rebound of the original pleasure. After this it is hard to distinguish the images and reflections, because of their faintness and confusion.

BENEVOLENCE AND ANGER

Nature joins love and hatred to desires for the other person's happiness or misery.

2.2.6.1 Ideas may be compared to the extension and solidity of matter, and impressions—especially impressions of reflection—to colors, tastes, smells and other sensible qualities. Ideas never admit of a total union. They have a kind of impenetrability by which they exclude each other, and they can form a compound by being joined together, not by being mixed. Impressions and passions, on the other hand, are capable of an entire union. Like colors, they can be blended so perfectly that each of them loses itself and contributes only to varying the uniform impression that arises from the whole. Some of the most curious phenomena of the human mind come from this property of the passions.

2.2.6.2 In examining the ingredients that can unite with love and hatred, I begin to feel, to some extent, a misfortune that has attended every system of philosophy the world has yet known. We commonly find this when we account for the operations of nature by some particular hypothesis. Among a number of experiments that fit exactly with the principles we are trying to establish, there is always some phenomenon that is more stubborn and will not bend so easily to our purpose. We need not be surprised that this happens in natural philosophy. The essence and composition of external bodies are so obscure that in our reasonings—or rather conjectures—about them we are bound to entangle ourselves in contradictions and absurdities. But the perceptions of the mind are perfectly known, and I have used every imaginable caution in drawing conclusions about them. So I have always hoped to keep clear of the contradictions that have attended every other system. And indeed the difficulty I now have in view is in no way contrary to my system. It only departs a little from the simplicity that has so far been its principal strength and beauty.

2.2.6.3 The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather joined with, benevolence and anger. It is chiefly this conjunction that distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unaccompanied by any desire and not directly prompting us to action. But love and hatred are not complete in themselves, nor do they rest in the emotion they produce; they carry the mind on to something further. Love is always followed by a desire for the happiness of the person loved and an aversion to his misery. In the same way, hatred produces a desire for the misery of the person hated and an aversion to his happiness. These two sets of passions—pride and humility, love and hatred—correspond to each other in so many other respects. So remarkable a difference between them deserves our attention.

2.2.6.4 The conjunction of this desire and aversion with love and hatred can be explained by two different hypotheses. The first is that love and hatred have three things. They have a cause that excites them, namely pleasure and pain. They have an object to which they are directed, namely a person or thinking being. And they also have an end they try to attain, namely the happiness or misery of the person loved or hated. On this view, all these mix together and make only one passion. Love is nothing but the desire of happiness for another person, and hatred the desire of misery. The desire and aversion make up the very nature of love and hatred. They are not only inseparable but the same.

2.2.6.5 But this is plainly contrary to experience. It is certain that we never love anyone without desiring his happiness, nor hate anyone without wishing his misery. Still, these desires arise only when the imagination presents the ideas of our friend's or enemy's happiness or misery, and they are not absolutely essential to love and hatred. They are the most obvious and natural sentiments of these affections, but not the only ones. The passions may express themselves in a hundred ways, and may last a considerable time without our reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects. This clearly proves that

these desires are not the same as love and hatred, and are no essential part of them.

2.2.6.6 We may therefore infer that benevolence and anger are passions distinct from love and hatred, and are only joined with them by the original constitution of the mind. Nature has given the body certain appetites and inclinations, which she increases, diminishes or changes according to the condition of its fluids and solids. She has proceeded in the same way with the mind. As we are possessed by love or hatred, the corresponding desire for the happiness or misery of the person who is the object of these passions arises in the mind. This desire varies with every variation of these opposite passions. This order of things, considered in the abstract, is not necessary. Love and hatred might have come without any such desires, or their particular connection might have been completely reversed. If nature had so pleased, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire to produce misery attached to love, and a desire to produce happiness attached to hatred. If the sensation of the passion and that of the desire were opposite, nature could have altered the sensation without altering the tendency of the desire. In that way she could have made them compatible with each other.

COMPASSION

Pity arises from sympathy and depends on the imagination.

2.2.7.1 The desire for the happiness or misery of others, according to the love or hatred we bear them, is an arbitrary and original instinct implanted in our nature. But we find that it can be imitated on many occasions and can arise from secondary principles. Pity is a concern for, and malice a joy in, the misery of others, without any friendship or enmity to give rise to that concern or joy. We pity even strangers, and people who are perfectly indifferent to us. And if our ill will toward another comes from some harm or injury, it is not, properly speaking, malice

but revenge. But if we examine these affections of pity and malice, we will find them to be secondary ones. They arise from original affections that are altered by some particular turn of thought and imagination.

2.2.7.2 It will be easy to explain the passion of pity from the preceding reasoning about sympathy. We have a lively idea of everything related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains and pleasures must strike us in a lively way and produce an emotion similar to the original one, since a lively idea is easily converted into an impression. If this is true in general, it must be even more so of affliction and sorrow. These always have a stronger and more lasting influence than any pleasure or enjoyment.

2.2.7.3 A spectator at a tragedy passes through a long series of grief, terror, indignation and other affections, which the poet represents in the characters he brings on stage. Many tragedies end happily, and no excellent one can be written without some reversals of fortune. So the spectator must sympathize with all these changes, and take on the fictitious joy as well as every other passion. Someone might claim that each distinct passion is communicated by a distinct original quality, and is not derived from the general principle of sympathy explained above. Unless that is claimed, it must be granted that all of them arise from that principle. To make an exception of any particular one must seem highly unreasonable. They are all first present in one person's mind and afterward appear in another's. And the manner of their appearing—first as an idea, then as an impression—is the same in every case. So the transition must arise from the same principle. At least I am sure that this way of reasoning would be considered certain, whether in natural philosophy or in ordinary life.

2.2.7.4 Add to this that pity depends to a great extent on the contiguity, and even the sight, of its object—which is a proof that it comes from the imagination. Not to mention that women and children are most prone to pity, being most guided by that fac-

ulty. The same weakness that makes them faint at the sight of a drawn sword, even in the hands of their best friend, makes them pity extremely anyone they find in grief or affliction. Some philosophers derive this passion from I do not know what subtle reflections on the instability of fortune, and on our being liable to the same miseries we see. They will find this observation against them, along with a great many others that could easily be produced.

2.2.7.5 It remains only to take notice of a rather remarkable phenomenon of this passion. The passion communicated by sympathy sometimes gains strength from the weakness of its original, and even arises by a transition from affections that do not exist. Thus someone may obtain an honorable office or inherit a great fortune. We always rejoice the more at his prosperity the less he seems to feel it, and the greater the equanimity and indifference he shows in enjoying it. In the same way, a man who is not cast down by misfortunes is the more lamented for his patience. And if that virtue goes so far as to remove all sense of uneasiness completely, it increases our compassion still further. Suppose a person of merit falls into what is commonly considered a great misfortune. We form a notion of his condition, and carry our fancy from the cause to its usual effect. We first conceive a lively idea of his sorrow and then feel an impression of it. We entirely overlook the greatness of mind that raises him above such emotions, or consider it only so far as to increase our admiration, love and tenderness for him. We find from experience that such a degree of passion is usually connected with such a misfortune. There is an exception in this case, but the imagination is still affected by the general rule. It makes us conceive a lively idea of the passion—or rather feel the passion itself—just as if the person were really moved by it. From the same principles we blush for the conduct of those who behave foolishly in front of us. We do so even though they show no sense of shame and do not seem in the least aware of their folly. All this comes from sympathy; but it is sympathy of a partial kind. It views its objects from one side only, without considering

the other side, which has a contrary effect and would entirely destroy the emotion arising from the first appearance.

2.2.7.6 We also have cases in which indifference and insensibility under misfortune increase our concern for the unfortunate, even when the indifference does not come from any virtue or magnanimity. It aggravates a murder that it was committed on people asleep and in perfect security. Likewise, historians readily observe of any infant prince held captive by his enemies that he is the more deserving of compassion the less aware he is of his miserable condition. In these cases we ourselves know the wretched situation of the person. This gives us a lively idea and sensation of sorrow, which is the passion that generally accompanies such a situation. The idea becomes still more lively, and the sensation more violent, by contrast with the security and indifference we observe in the person himself. A contrast of any kind never fails to affect the imagination, especially when the subject itself presents it. And it is on the imagination that pity entirely depends.[9]

MALICE AND ENVY

Comparing others' condition with our own produces malice and envy.

2.2.8.1 We must now go on to account for the passion of malice. It imitates the effects of hatred, as pity does those of love, and gives us a joy in the sufferings and miseries of others without any offense or injury on their part.

2.2.8.2 So little are men governed by reason in their sentiments and opinions that they always judge objects more by comparison than by their intrinsic worth and value. Suppose the mind considers, or is used to, some degree of perfection. Then whatever falls short of it, though really worthy of esteem, nonetheless has the same effect on the passions as what is defective

9 HUME'S NOTE. To prevent any ambiguity, I should point out that where I oppose the imagination to the memory, I mean in general the faculty that presents our fainter ideas. Everywhere else, and particularly when it is opposed to the understanding, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings.

and bad. This is an original quality of the soul, similar to what we experience every day in our bodies. Let a man heat one hand and cool the other: the same water will, at the same time, seem both hot and cold, depending on the condition of the different organs. A small degree of any quality, following a greater one, produces the same sensation as if it were less than it really is, and sometimes even as if it were the opposite quality. Any mild pain that follows a violent one seems like nothing, or rather becomes a pleasure. On the other hand, a violent pain following a mild one is doubly grievous and uncomfortable.

2.2.8.3 No one can doubt this with regard to our passions and sensations. But some difficulty may arise with regard to our ideas and objects. An object may grow or shrink to the eye or imagination by comparison with others. Yet the image and idea of the object remain the same, and are equally extended on the retina and in the brain or organ of perception. The eyes refract the rays of light, and the optic nerves convey the images to the brain, in exactly the same way whether a large or a small object came before. Nor does even the imagination alter the dimensions of its object because of a comparison with others. The question, then, is how we can form such different judgments about the same object from the same impression and the same idea. At one time we admire its bulk and at another despise its smallness. This variation in our judgments must certainly come from a variation in some perception. But the variation does not lie in the immediate impression or idea of the object. So it must lie in some other impression that accompanies it.

2.2.8.4 To explain this matter, I shall just touch on two principles. One of them will be more fully explained as this treatise proceeds; the other has already been accounted for. I think it can safely be established as a general maxim that no object is presented to the senses, and no image formed in the fancy, without being accompanied by some emotion or movement of the spirits proportioned to it. Custom may make us insensible of this sensation and lead us to confuse it with the object or idea. But however much it does so, it will be easy to separate and dis-

tinguish them by careful and exact experiments. To take only the cases of extension and number, it is evident that any very large object excites a noticeable emotion in the mind—such as the ocean, a broad plain, a vast chain of mountains, a wide forest. So does any very numerous collection of objects—such as an army, a fleet, a crowd. And the admiration arising at the sight of such objects is one of the most lively pleasures human nature is capable of enjoying. Now this admiration increases or diminishes as the objects increase or diminish. So we may conclude, according to our earlier[10] principles, that it is a compound effect. It arises from the combination of the several effects that come from each part of the cause. Every part of extension, then, and every unit of number has a separate emotion attending it. That emotion is not always agreeable. Still, by its combination with others and by stirring the spirits to the right pitch, it contributes to producing admiration, which is always agreeable. If this is granted for extension and number, we can have no difficulty about virtue and vice, wit and folly, riches and poverty, happiness and misery, and other objects of that kind, which are always accompanied by an evident emotion.

2.2.8.5 The second principle I shall take notice of is our adherence to general rules. This has such a mighty influence on our actions and understanding that it can impose even on the senses. Suppose experience shows an object to be always accompanied by another. Then whenever the first object appears, even if changed in very material circumstances, we naturally leap to the conception of the second. We form an idea of it as lively and strong as if we had inferred its existence by the soundest and most authoritative conclusion of our understanding. Nothing can undeceive us—not even our senses. Instead of correcting this false judgment, they are often distorted by it and seem to authorize its errors.

2.2.8.6 The conclusion I draw from these two principles, together with the influence of comparison mentioned above, is very short and decisive. Every object is accompanied by some

10 HUME'S NOTE. Book I, Part III, Section 15.

emotion proportioned to it: a great object by a great emotion, a small object by a small emotion. A great object following a small one therefore makes a great emotion follow a small one. Now a great emotion following a small one becomes greater still, and rises beyond its usual proportion. But there is a certain degree of emotion that commonly accompanies each size of object. So when the emotion increases, we naturally imagine that the object has increased as well. The effect carries our view to its usual cause—a certain degree of emotion to a certain size of object. We do not consider that comparison may change the emotion without changing anything in the object. Those who are familiar with the metaphysical part of optics, and know how we transfer the judgments and conclusions of the understanding to the senses, will easily understand this whole operation.

2.2.8.7 But let us set aside this new discovery of an impression that secretly accompanies every idea. We must at least accept the principle from which the discovery arose: that objects appear greater or smaller by comparison with others. We have so many instances of this that we cannot possibly dispute its truth. And it is from this principle that I derive the passions of malice and envy.

2.2.8.8 It is evident that we must get more or less satisfaction or uneasiness from reflecting on our own condition and circumstances, according as they appear more or less fortunate or unhappy. This depends on the degrees of riches, power, merit and reputation we think we possess. Now we seldom judge objects by their intrinsic value, but form our notions of them by comparison with other objects. It follows that we must estimate our own happiness or misery according as we observe a greater or smaller share of it in others, and feel a resulting pain or pleasure. The misery of another gives us a more lively idea of our own happiness, and his happiness a more lively idea of our misery. The first therefore produces delight, and the second uneasiness.

2.2.8.9 Here, then, is a kind of pity in reverse: sensations arise in the beholder contrary to those felt by the person he is consider-

ing. In general we may observe this about every kind of comparison. An object always makes us receive, from another object it is compared with, a sensation contrary to what arises from that object itself when viewed directly and immediately. A small object makes a great one appear greater still. A great object makes a small one appear smaller. Ugliness in itself produces uneasiness. But it gives us new pleasure by its contrast with a beautiful object, whose beauty it enhances. On the other hand, beauty, which in itself produces pleasure, gives us a new pain by contrast with anything ugly, whose ugliness it heightens. It must be the same, then, with happiness and misery. The direct view of another's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and therefore produces pain when compared with our own. His pain, considered in itself, is painful to us. But it heightens the idea of our own happiness and gives us pleasure.

2.2.8.10 Nor will it seem strange that we can feel a reversed sensation from the happiness and misery of others. We find that the same comparison can give us a kind of malice against ourselves, and make us rejoice at our pains and grieve at our pleasures. Thus the prospect of past pain is agreeable when we are satisfied with our present condition. On the other hand, our past pleasures make us uneasy when we enjoy nothing at present equal to them. The comparison is the same as when we reflect on the sentiments of others, so it must have the same effects.

2.2.8.11 Indeed, a person may extend this malice against himself even to his present fortune. He may carry it so far as deliberately to seek affliction and increase his pains and sorrows. This can happen on two occasions. First, upon the distress and misfortune of a friend or someone dear to him. Second, upon feeling remorse for a crime he has committed. Both these irregular appetites for evil arise from the principle of comparison. Take a person who indulges in some pleasure while his friend is in affliction. He feels the uneasiness reflected from his friend more keenly by comparison with the original pleasure he himself is enjoying. This contrast, admittedly, ought also to enliven the present pleasure. But grief is here supposed to be the dominant

passion. So every addition goes to that side and is swallowed up in it, without having the least effect on the contrary affection. The same goes for the penances men inflict on themselves for their past sins and failings. When a criminal reflects on the punishment he deserves, the idea of it is magnified by comparison with his present ease and satisfaction. This forces him, in a way, to seek uneasiness in order to avoid so disagreeable a contrast.

2.2.8.12 This reasoning will account for the origin of envy as well as of malice. The only difference between these passions is this. Envy is excited by some present enjoyment of another, which by comparison diminishes our idea of our own. Malice, by contrast, is the unprovoked desire to bring harm on another in order to get pleasure from the comparison. The enjoyment that is the object of envy is usually greater than our own. A superiority naturally seems to overshadow us and presents a disagreeable comparison. But even when the other is inferior, we still desire a greater distance, in order to enlarge the idea of ourselves still more. When this distance shrinks, the comparison is less to our advantage. So it gives us less pleasure, and is even disagreeable. Hence arises the kind of envy people feel when they see their inferiors approaching or overtaking them in the pursuit of glory or happiness. In this envy we can see the effects of comparison repeated twice over. A man who compares himself with his inferior gets pleasure from the comparison. Then the inferiority decreases through the rise of the inferior. What should have been only a decrease of pleasure becomes a real pain, through a new comparison with its previous condition.

2.2.8.13 Take the envy that arises from others' superiority. It is worth noting that it is not a great disproportion between ourselves and another that produces it, but, on the contrary, our nearness. A common soldier does not envy his general as much as his sergeant or corporal. Nor does an eminent writer meet with as much jealousy from ordinary hack scribblers as from authors who come nearer to him. It might, admittedly, be thought that the greater the disproportion, the greater the

uneasiness from the comparison must be. But we should consider, on the other hand, that a great disproportion cuts off the relation. It either keeps us from comparing ourselves with what is remote from us or lessens the effects of the comparison. Resemblance and proximity always produce a relation of ideas. Where you destroy these ties, other accidents may still bring two ideas together. But since they have no bond or connecting quality to join them in the imagination, they cannot possibly stay united long or have any considerable influence on each other.

2.2.8.14 I observed, in considering the nature of ambition, that the great feel a double pleasure in authority from comparing their own condition with that of their slaves. This comparison has a double influence, because it is natural and presented by the subject. Sometimes, in comparing objects, the fancy does not pass easily from one object to the other. Then the action of the mind is largely broken off, and the fancy, in considering the second object, begins, as it were, on a new footing. In that case the impression that accompanies each object does not seem greater by following a smaller one of the same kind. Rather, these two impressions are distinct, and produce their distinct effects without any communication between them. The lack of relation in the ideas breaks the relation of the impressions. By this separation it prevents their acting on and influencing each other.

2.2.8.15 To confirm this, we may observe that nearness in degree of merit is not enough by itself to give rise to envy, but must be assisted by other relations. A poet is not apt to envy a philosopher, or a poet of a different kind, a different nation, or a different age. All these differences prevent or weaken the comparison, and consequently the passion.

2.2.8.16 This, too, is why all objects appear great or small merely by comparison with those of the same species. A mountain neither enlarges nor shrinks a horse in our eyes. But when a Flemish horse and a Welsh horse are seen together, the one

appears bigger and the other smaller than when each is viewed on its own.

2.2.8.17 The same principle accounts for a remark of historians: any party in a civil war will always choose to call in a foreign enemy, at whatever risk, rather than submit to their fellow citizens. Guicciardini applies this remark to the wars in Italy. There the relations between the different states are, strictly speaking, only those of name, language and contiguity. Yet even these relations, when joined with superiority, make the comparison more natural, and so also more galling. They lead men to look for some other superiority that may come without any relation, and so may have a less noticeable influence on the imagination.[11] The mind quickly perceives its various advantages and disadvantages. It finds its situation most uneasy where superiority is joined with other relations. So it seeks relief as far as possible by separating them, and by breaking the association of ideas that makes the comparison so much more natural and effective. When it cannot break the association, it feels a stronger desire to remove the superiority. This is why travelers are commonly so lavish in their praise of the Chinese and Persians. At the same time they run down the neighboring nations that might stand on a footing of rivalry with their native country.

2.2.8.18 These examples from history and common experience are rich and curious, but we can find parallel ones in the arts that are no less remarkable. Suppose an author wrote a treatise one part of which was serious and profound and another light and humorous. Everyone would condemn so strange a mixture and accuse him of neglecting all the rules of art and criticism. These rules of art are founded on the qualities of human nature. The quality of human nature that requires consistency in every work is the one that makes the mind incapable of passing in a moment from one passion and disposition to a quite different one. Yet this does not make us blame Mr. Prior for putting his Alma and his Solomon in the same volume. That admirable poet

11 Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), Florentine historian of the Italian wars.

has succeeded perfectly well in the gaiety of the one as well as in the melancholy of the other. Suppose the reader were to read these two compositions with no interval between them. Even then he would feel little or no difficulty in the change of passions. And why is that? Is it not because he regards these works as entirely different? By this break in the ideas he breaks the progress of the affections, and keeps the one from influencing or contradicting the other.[12]

2.2.8.19 A heroic and a burlesque design united in one picture would be monstrous. Yet we hang two pictures of such opposite character in the same room, even right next to each other, without any scruple or difficulty.

2.2.8.20 In a word, no ideas can affect each other, either by comparison or by the passions they separately produce, unless they are united by some relation. That relation must be able to cause an easy transition of the ideas, and consequently of the emotions or impressions accompanying the ideas. It must also be able to preserve the one impression while the imagination passes to the object of the other. This principle is very remarkable, because it is analogous to what we have observed about both the understanding and the passions. Suppose two objects are presented to me that are not connected by any kind of relation. Suppose that each of these objects separately produces a passion, and that these two passions are in themselves contrary. We find from experience that the lack of relation in the objects or ideas blocks the natural contrariety of the passions. The break in the transition of thought moves the affections apart and prevents their opposition. The same holds for comparison. From both these phenomena we may safely conclude that the relation of ideas must promote the transition of impressions. Its absence alone is able to prevent that transition, and to keep apart what naturally would have acted on each other. When the absence of an object or quality removes some usual or natural effect, we can certainly conclude that its presence contributes to producing the effect.

12 Matthew Prior (1664–1721): *Alma* is a light comic poem, *Solomon* a grave one.

PITY, MALICE AND THEIR MIXTURES

A parallel direction of desires links pity to love and malice to hatred.

2.2.9.1 We have now tried to account for pity and malice. Both these affections arise from the imagination, according to the light in which it places its object. When our fancy considers the sentiments of others directly and enters deeply into them, it makes us feel all the passions it surveys, but grief or sorrow in particular. On the other hand, when we compare the sentiments of others with our own, we feel a sensation directly opposite to the original one: a joy from the grief of others, and a grief from their joy. But these are only the first foundations of the affections of pity and malice. Other passions later become mixed up with them. There is always a mixture of love or tenderness with pity, and of hatred or anger with malice. But it must be admitted that this mixture seems at first sight to contradict my system. Pity is an uneasiness, and malice a joy, arising from the misery of others. So pity should naturally, as in all other cases, produce hatred, and malice should produce love. I try to resolve this contradiction in the following way.

2.2.9.2 To cause a transition of passions, a double relation of impressions and ideas is required; one relation is not enough to produce this effect. But to understand the full force of this double relation, we must consider what determines the character of a passion. It is not the present sensation alone, or the momentary pain or pleasure, but its whole bent or tendency from beginning to end. One impression may be related to another when their sensations resemble each other, as we have assumed all along in the preceding cases. But it may also be related when their impulses or directions are similar and corresponding. This cannot happen with pride and humility, because these are only pure sensations, without any direction or tendency to action. So we must look for instances of this peculiar relation of impressions only in affections that are accompanied by some appetite or desire, such as love and hatred.

2.2.9.3 Benevolence, or the appetite that accompanies love, is a desire for the happiness of the person loved and an aversion to his misery. In the same way, anger, or the appetite that accompanies hatred, is a desire for the misery of the person hated and an aversion to his happiness. A desire for another's happiness and an aversion to his misery are therefore similar to benevolence. A desire for his misery and an aversion to his happiness correspond to anger. Now pity is a desire for another's happiness and an aversion to his misery, just as malice is the contrary appetite. Pity, then, is related to benevolence, and malice to anger. Benevolence has already been found to be connected with love by a natural and original quality, and anger with hatred. So it is by this chain that the passions of pity and malice are connected with love and hatred.

2.2.9.4 This hypothesis is founded on sufficient experience. Suppose a man, from whatever motives, has resolved to perform an action. He naturally seizes on every other view or motive that may strengthen that resolution and give it authority and influence over the mind. To confirm ourselves in any plan, we look for motives drawn from interest, from honor, from duty. What wonder, then, that pity and benevolence, malice and anger, should mix so completely as to be indistinguishable? They are the same desires arising from different principles. As for the connection between benevolence and love, and between anger and hatred, it is original and primary, so it presents no difficulty.

2.2.9.5 We may add another experiment to this. Benevolence and anger, and consequently love and hatred, arise whenever our happiness or misery depends in any way on the happiness or misery of another person, even without any further relation. I expect this experiment will seem so unusual that we may be excused for pausing a moment to consider it.

2.2.9.6 Suppose two people in the same trade look for work in a town that cannot support both. Clearly the success of one is entirely incompatible with the success of the other: whatever serves the interest of either works against that of his rival, and

vice versa. Suppose again that two merchants, though living in different parts of the world, go into partnership together. The gain or loss of one immediately becomes the gain or loss of his partner, and the same fortune necessarily attends both. Now it is evident that in the first case hatred always follows from the opposition of interests, just as in the second love arises from their union. Let us consider what principle we can attribute these passions to.

2.2.9.7 Clearly they do not arise from the double relation of impressions and ideas, if we look only at the present sensation. Take the first case, rivalry. My antagonist's pleasure and advantage necessarily cause my pain and loss. But this is counterbalanced by the fact that his pain and loss cause my pleasure and advantage. If he turns out to be unsuccessful, I may in this way get a greater degree of satisfaction from him. In the same way, a partner's success makes me glad, but his misfortunes afflict me in equal proportion, and it is easy to imagine that the latter feeling may in many cases outweigh the former. Yet whether the fortune of a rival or a partner is good or bad, I always hate the one and love the other.

2.2.9.8 This love of a partner cannot come from the relation or connection between us, in the way I love a brother or a fellow countryman. A rival is related to me almost as closely as a partner. Just as the partner's pleasure causes my pleasure and his pain my pain, so the rival's pleasure causes my pain and his pain my pleasure. The connection of cause and effect, then, is the same in both cases. In the one case the cause and effect have the further relation of resemblance, but in the other they have that of contrariety. Since contrariety is also a kind of resemblance, this leaves things fairly even.

2.2.9.9 The only explanation we can give of this phenomenon, then, comes from the principle of a parallel direction mentioned above. Our concern for our own interest makes us take pleasure in a partner's pleasure and pain in his pain. This works in the same way as sympathy, by which we feel a sensation corresponding to those that appear in anyone who is present with

us. On the other hand, the same concern for our interest makes us feel pain at a rival's pleasure and pleasure at his pain. In short, it produces the same contrariety of feelings that arises from comparison and malice. Since, then, a parallel direction of the affections arising from interest can give rise to benevolence or anger, it is no wonder that the same parallel direction, arising from sympathy and from comparison, should have the same effect.

2.2.9.10 In general we may observe that it is impossible to do good to others, whatever our motive, without feeling some touches of kindness and good will toward them. In the same way, the injuries we do cause hatred not only in the person who suffers them but even in ourselves. These phenomena, admittedly, can partly be accounted for by other principles.

2.2.9.11 But here a considerable objection arises, which we must examine before going any further. Power and riches, or poverty and lowliness, give rise to love or hatred without producing any original pleasure or uneasiness. I have tried to prove that they act on us by means of a secondary sensation. This sensation comes from a sympathy with the pain or satisfaction they produce in the person who has them. From sympathy with his pleasure arises love; from sympathy with his uneasiness, hatred. But I have just established a maxim, one that is absolutely necessary for explaining the phenomena of pity and malice. What determines the character of a passion is not the present sensation, or the momentary pain or pleasure, but its general bent or tendency from beginning to end. For this reason pity, or sympathy with pain, produces love. It interests us in the fortunes of others, good or bad, and gives us a secondary sensation corresponding to the primary one, and in this respect it has the same influence as love and benevolence. Since this rule holds good in one case, why does it not hold throughout? Why does sympathy with uneasiness ever produce any passion besides good will and kindness? Is it fitting for a philosopher to change his method of reasoning, and jump from one principle to

its opposite, depending on the particular phenomenon he wants to explain?

2.2.9.12 I have mentioned two different causes that can produce a transition of passion. The first is a double relation of ideas and impressions. The second, which is similar to it, is a conformity in the tendency and direction of two desires that arise from different principles. Now I claim that when sympathy with uneasiness is weak, it produces hatred or contempt by the first cause; when it is strong, it produces love or tenderness by the second. This is the solution to the difficulty just raised, which seems so pressing. And the principle rests on arguments so evident that we ought to have established it even if it were not needed to explain any phenomenon.

2.2.9.13 It is certain that sympathy is not always confined to the present moment. We often feel, by communication, the pains and pleasures of others that do not yet exist and that we only anticipate by the force of imagination. Suppose I saw a complete stranger asleep in a field, in danger of being trampled by horses. I would immediately run to help him, and in doing so I would be moved by the same principle of sympathy that makes me concerned about the present sorrows of a stranger. Merely mentioning this is enough. Sympathy is nothing but a lively idea converted into an impression. So it is evident that, in considering the possible or probable future condition of any person, we may enter into it with so vivid a conception as to make it our own concern. In that way we may feel pains and pleasures that neither belong to us nor have any real existence at the present moment.

2.2.9.14 But however far we may look ahead in sympathizing with someone, how far our sympathy extends depends largely on our sense of his present condition. It takes a great effort of imagination to form ideas even of the present feelings of others that are lively enough to make us feel those very feelings. And we could not possibly extend this sympathy to the future without the help of some present circumstance that strikes us in a lively way. When another's present misery has a strong influ-

ence on me, the vivacity of the conception is not confined to its immediate object. It spreads its influence over all the related ideas and gives me a lively notion of all that person's circumstances, whether past, present, or future; possible, probable, or certain. Through this lively notion I become interested in them and take part in them. I feel a sympathetic motion in my own breast that matches whatever I imagine in his. If I diminish the vivacity of the first conception, I diminish that of the related ideas too, just as pipes can carry no more water than rises at the spring. This diminution destroys the view of the future that is needed to interest me fully in another's fortune. I may feel the present impression, but I carry my sympathy no further and never pass the force of the first conception on to my ideas of the related objects. Suppose it is another's misery that is presented to me in this feeble way. I receive it by communication and am affected by all the passions related to it. But since I am not interested enough to concern myself with his good fortune as well as his bad, I never feel the extensive sympathy, nor the passions related to it.

2.2.9.15 Now, to know which passions are related to these different kinds of sympathy, we must consider what benevolence is. It is an original pleasure arising from the pleasure of the person loved, and a pain arising from his pain. This correspondence of impressions then gives rise to a desire for his pleasure and an aversion to his pain. To make a passion run parallel with benevolence, then, we must feel both of these impressions, corresponding to those of the person we are considering. Neither one alone is enough for that purpose. When we sympathize with only one impression, and a painful one, this sympathy is related to anger and hatred because of the uneasiness it conveys to us. But whether sympathy is extensive or limited depends on the force of the first sympathy. It follows that the passion of love or hatred depends on the same principle. A strong impression, when communicated, gives the passions a double tendency, however painful the first impression may have been. That double tendency is related to benevolence and love by a similar-

ity of direction. A weak impression that is painful is related to anger and hatred by the resemblance of the sensations. Benevolence, therefore, arises from a great degree of misery, or from any degree that is strongly sympathized with. Hatred or contempt arises from a small degree, or from one weakly sympathized with. This is the principle I set out to prove and explain.

2.2.9.16 And we do not have only our reason to rely on for this principle, but experience as well. A certain degree of poverty produces contempt, but a degree beyond it produces compassion and good will. We may look down on a peasant or a servant. But when a beggar's misery appears very great, or is painted in very lively colors, we sympathize with him in his afflictions and feel clear touches of pity and benevolence in our hearts. The same object causes opposite passions according to its different degrees. The passions, therefore, must depend on principles that operate in such definite degrees, as my hypothesis holds. Increasing the sympathy clearly has the same effect as increasing the misery.

2.2.9.17 A barren or desolate country always seems ugly and unpleasant, and usually makes us feel contempt for its inhabitants. This ugliness, however, comes largely from a sympathy with the inhabitants, as I have already noted. But it is only a weak sympathy, reaching no further than the immediate sensation, which is unpleasant. The sight of a city in ashes produces benevolent feelings. There we enter so deeply into the interests of the wretched inhabitants that we wish for their prosperity as well as feel their adversity.

2.2.9.18 Although the force of the impression generally produces pity and benevolence, it is certain that when carried too far it ceases to have that effect. This may be worth noting. When the uneasiness is either small in itself or remote from us, it does not engage the imagination. It cannot make us as concerned for the future and uncertain good as for the present and real evil. When it acquires greater force, we become so interested in the person's concerns that we feel both his good and his bad fortune. From that complete sympathy arise pity and benevolence. But it

is easy to see that where the present evil strikes with more than ordinary force, it may absorb our attention entirely and prevent the double sympathy I have described. Everyone, and especially women, tends to feel a certain kindness toward criminals on their way to the scaffold, and readily imagines them to be unusually handsome and well built. Yet someone who is present at the cruel punishment of the rack feels no such tender emotions. He is more or less overwhelmed with horror, and has no chance to temper this uneasy sensation with any opposite sympathy.

2.2.9.19 The case that most clearly supports my hypothesis is one in which, by a change of objects, we separate the double sympathy even from a moderate degree of the passion. In that case we find that pity, instead of producing love and tenderness as usual, always gives rise to the opposite affection. When we see someone in misfortune, we feel pity and love. But the author of that misfortune becomes the object of our strongest hatred, and the more compassion we feel, the more we detest him. Now why should the same passion of pity produce love for the person who suffers the misfortune and hatred for the person who causes it? The only reason can be this: the author is related only to the misfortune, whereas in considering the sufferer we look at him from every side, and wish for his prosperity as well as feel his affliction.

2.2.9.20 Before leaving this subject, I will just note that this phenomenon of double sympathy, and its tendency to produce love, may help account for the kindness we naturally feel for our relatives and acquaintances. Custom and relation make us enter deeply into the feelings of others. Whatever fortune we suppose to attend them is made present to us by the imagination, and it works on us as if it were originally our own. We rejoice in their pleasures and grieve at their sorrows purely by the force of sympathy. Nothing that concerns them is indifferent to us. And since this correspondence of feelings is the natural companion of love, it readily produces that affection.

RESPECT AND CONTEMPT

Respect and contempt mix love or hatred with humility or pride through comparison.

2.2.10.1 To understand every passion that has any mixture of love or hatred, it now remains only to explain respect and contempt, along with the amorous affection. Let us begin with respect and contempt.

2.2.10.2 When we consider the qualities and circumstances of others, we can regard them as they really are in themselves. We can compare them with our own qualities and circumstances. Or we can combine these two ways of considering them. From the first point of view, the good qualities of others produce love; from the second, humility; and from the third, respect, which is a mixture of these two passions. In the same way, their bad qualities cause hatred, or pride, or contempt, depending on the light in which we view them.

2.2.10.3 That there is a mixture of pride in contempt, and of humility in respect, is too evident from the way they feel and appear to need any special proof. It is no less evident that this mixture arises from a tacit comparison between ourselves and the person we despise or respect. The same man may cause respect, love, or contempt by his condition and talents. Which one he causes depends on whether the person considering him goes from being his inferior to being his equal or his superior. When the point of view changes, the object may stay the same, but its proportion to ourselves changes entirely, and this is what alters the passions. These passions, therefore, arise from our noticing the proportion, that is, from a comparison.

2.2.10.4 I have already noted that the mind has a much stronger propensity to pride than to humility, and I have tried to give a cause for this phenomenon from the principles of human nature. Whether or not my reasoning is accepted, the phenomenon itself is undisputed and appears in many instances. Among other things, it explains why there is much more pride

mixed into contempt than humility into respect. It also explains why we are more elated at the sight of someone beneath us than mortified by the presence of someone above us. Contempt or scorn has so strong a tinge of pride that hardly any other passion can be detected in it. In esteem or respect, by contrast, love is a larger ingredient than humility. Vanity is so quick that it rouses at the slightest call, while humility needs a stronger push to make it act.

2.2.10.5 But here it may reasonably be asked why this mixture occurs only in some cases and not on every occasion. All the objects that cause love when located in another person cause pride when transferred to ourselves. So they ought to cause humility as well as love when they belong to others and are merely compared with what we ourselves possess. Likewise, every quality that produces hatred when considered directly ought always to give rise to pride by comparison. And through a mixture of hatred and pride, it ought to arouse contempt or scorn. The difficulty, then, is why any objects ever cause pure love or hatred, rather than always producing the mixed passions of respect and contempt.

2.2.10.6 I have assumed all along that the passions of love and pride are similar in their sensations, as are those of humility and hatred, and that the first two are always agreeable and the last two painful. This is universally true. But it is worth noticing that the two agreeable passions, like the two painful ones, have certain differences, even contrarieties, that distinguish them. Nothing invigorates and elevates the mind as much as pride and vanity, whereas love or tenderness tends rather to weaken and enfeeble it. The same difference can be seen between the uneasy passions. Anger and hatred give new force to all our thoughts and actions, while humility and shame deject and discourage us. We need to form a distinct idea of these qualities of the passions. Let us remember that pride and hatred invigorate the soul, while love and humility enfeeble it.

2.2.10.7 The agreement between love and pride in the agreeableness of their sensation means that the same objects always

arouse them. But it follows from this other contrariety that they are aroused in very different degrees. Genius and learning are pleasant and magnificent objects, and both these features suit them to pride and vanity. But they are related to love only through their pleasantness. Ignorance and simplicity are disagreeable and lowly. In the same way, this gives them a double connection with humility and only a single one with hatred.[13] We may therefore take it as certain that the same object always produces love and pride, or humility and hatred, according to its different situations. Yet it seldom produces the first two, or the last two, in the same proportion.

2.2.10.8 This is where we must look for the solution to the difficulty mentioned above. Why does any object ever arouse pure love or hatred, instead of always producing respect or contempt through a mixture of humility or pride? No quality in another person gives rise to humility by comparison unless it would have produced pride if it were located in ourselves. Conversely, no object arouses pride by comparison unless it would have produced humility when viewed directly. This is evident, since by comparison objects always produce a sensation directly contrary to their original one. Suppose, then, that we are presented with an object especially fitted to produce love but only imperfectly suited to arouse pride. When this object belongs to another, it directly produces a great degree of love, but only a small degree of humility by comparison. Consequently the humility is hardly felt in the compound and cannot convert the love into respect. This is the case with good nature, good humor, an easy temper, generosity, beauty, and many other qualities. These are especially apt to produce love in others, but have less tendency to arouse pride in ourselves. For this reason, seeing them in another person produces pure love, with only a small mixture of humility and respect. It is easy to extend the same reasoning to the opposite passions.

2.2.10.9 Before leaving this subject, it may be worth explaining a rather curious phenomenon. Why do we usually keep those we

despise at a distance, and not let our inferiors come too near us even in place and position? It has already been observed that almost every kind of idea is accompanied by some emotion. This holds even for the ideas of number and extension, and all the more for objects that are thought important in life and hold our attention. We cannot look at either a rich man or a poor one with complete indifference. We must feel at least some faint touches of respect in the first case and of contempt in the second. These two passions are contrary to each other. But for this contrariety to be felt, the objects must be related in some way; otherwise the affections remain entirely separate and distinct and never meet. The relation occurs whenever the persons become contiguous. This is a general reason why we feel uneasy seeing such ill-matched objects side by side, such as a rich man and a poor one, or a nobleman and a porter.

2.2.10.10 Every onlooker feels this uneasiness, but the superior must feel it more keenly. The close approach of the inferior is regarded as a piece of bad manners, since it shows that he does not sense the disproportion and is not affected by it at all. A sense of someone else's superiority makes everyone inclined to keep their distance from him. When they are obliged to approach him, it leads them to redouble the marks of respect and reverence. When people do not behave this way, it proves they do not sense his superiority. This is also why any great difference in the degree of some quality is called a distance, by a common metaphor. However trivial this may seem, it is founded on natural principles of the imagination. A great difference inclines us to create a distance. The ideas of distance and difference are therefore connected. Connected ideas are readily taken for one another, and this, in general, is the source of metaphor, as we will have occasion to observe later.

13 Hume printed "love and hatred"; the argument requires "love and pride," which is followed here.

LOVE BETWEEN THE SEXES

Sexual love joins pleasure in beauty, bodily appetite and kindness through a double relation.

2.2.11.1 Of all the compound passions that arise from a mixture of love and hatred with other affections, none deserves our attention more than the love between the sexes. This is partly because of its force and violence, and partly because of the curious principles of philosophy for which it provides an indisputable argument. Clearly this affection, in its most natural state, comes from the conjunction of three different impressions or passions. These are the pleasing sensation arising from beauty, the bodily appetite for generation, and a generous kindness or good will. The origin of kindness from beauty can be explained by the preceding reasoning. The question is how beauty arouses the bodily appetite.

2.2.11.2 The appetite for generation, when kept within a certain degree, is clearly of the pleasant kind and is strongly connected with all the agreeable emotions. Joy, mirth, vanity, and kindness all stimulate this desire, as do music, dancing, wine, and good food. On the other hand, sorrow, melancholy, poverty, and humility destroy it. Given this quality, it is easy to see why it should be connected with the sense of beauty.

2.2.11.3 But another principle contributes to the same effect. I have observed that the parallel direction of desires is a real relation, and that it produces a connection among them just as a resemblance in their sensation does. To grasp the full extent of this relation, we must consider that any principal desire may be accompanied by subordinate ones connected with it. If other desires run parallel to these subordinate ones, they are thereby related to the principal one. Thus hunger may often be regarded as the soul's primary inclination, and the desire to approach the food as a secondary one, since that desire is absolutely necessary for satisfying the appetite. If an object, therefore, by any separate qualities of its own, inclines us to approach the food, it

naturally increases our appetite. On the other hand, whatever inclines us to push our food away runs counter to hunger and lessens our inclination for it. Now it is plain that beauty has the first effect and ugliness the second. That is why beauty gives us a keener appetite for our food, while ugliness is enough to put us off the most savory dish that cooking has ever invented. All this applies easily to the appetite for generation.

2.2.11.4 These two relations, resemblance and a parallel desire, create such a connection between the sense of beauty, the bodily appetite, and benevolence that the three become more or less inseparable. Experience shows that it does not matter which of them comes first, since any one of them is almost sure to be accompanied by the related affections. Someone inflamed with lust feels at least a momentary kindness toward its object, and at the same time imagines her more beautiful than usual. Many others begin with kindness and esteem for a person's wit and merit, and move on from there to the other passions. But the most common kind of love is the kind that first arises from beauty and afterward spreads into kindness and into the bodily appetite. Kindness or esteem and the appetite for generation are too far apart to unite easily. The one is perhaps the most refined passion of the soul, the other the grossest and coarsest. The love of beauty stands at a just midpoint between them and shares in both their natures, which is why it is so uniquely suited to produce both.

2.2.11.5 This account of love is not peculiar to my system; it is unavoidable on any hypothesis. The three affections that make up this passion are clearly distinct, and each has its own distinct object. It is certain, therefore, that they produce one another only through their relation. But a relation of passions is not enough by itself. There must also be a relation of ideas. The beauty of one person never inspires us with love for another. This, then, is a tangible proof of the double relation of impressions and ideas. From one instance as evident as this, we can form a judgment about the rest.

2.2.11.6 This may also serve, from another angle, to illustrate what I have insisted on concerning the origin of pride and humility, love and hatred. The self is the object of the first pair of passions, and some other person the object of the second. Yet I have observed that these objects cannot by themselves be the causes of the passions. Each of them is related to two contrary affections, which must destroy each other from the very first moment. Here, then, is the situation of the mind, as I have already described it. It has certain organs naturally fitted to produce a passion, and that passion, once produced, naturally turns our view toward a certain object. But this is not enough to produce the passion. Some other emotion is needed, which, by a double relation of impressions and ideas, may set these principles in motion and give them their first impulse. This situation is even more striking in the case of the appetite for generation. Sex is not only the object but also the cause of the appetite. When that appetite moves us, we turn our view to sex; but merely thinking about it is also enough to arouse the appetite. But this cause loses its force if it operates too often, so it needs to be quickened by some new impulse. We find that this impulse comes from the person's beauty, that is, from a double relation of impressions and ideas. This double relation is necessary where an affection has both a distinct cause and a distinct object. How much more necessary must it be where the affection has only a distinct object, without any determinate cause?

LOVE AND HATRED IN ANIMALS

Animals feel love, hatred and sympathy from the same simple causes as humans.

2.2.12.1 Let us now move on from the passions of love and hatred, and their mixtures and combinations as they appear in human beings, to the same affections as they show themselves in animals. We may observe that love and hatred are common to the whole sentient creation. Their causes, as explained above, are also so simple in nature that they can easily be supposed to

operate on mere animals. No power of reflection or insight is required. Everything is carried on by springs and principles that are not peculiar to man or to any single species of animal. The conclusion to be drawn from this in favor of the foregoing system is obvious.

2.2.12.2 In animals, love is not limited to animals of their own species. It reaches further and takes in almost every sentient and thinking being. A dog naturally loves a man more than its own species, and very commonly meets with affection in return.

2.2.12.3 Animals are hardly susceptible to the pleasures or pains of the imagination. They can judge objects only by the tangible good or evil those objects produce, and must regulate their affections toward them accordingly. So we find that benefits and injuries produce their love or hatred. By feeding and caring for any animal we quickly win its affection, just as by beating and mistreating it we never fail to bring its hostility and ill will upon ourselves.

2.2.12.4 In animals love is not caused by relation as much as it is in our species, because their thoughts are not active enough to trace relations except in very obvious cases. Still, it is easy to see that on some occasions relation has considerable influence on them. Thus acquaintance, which has the same effect as relation, always produces love in animals, whether for people or for one another. For the same reason, any likeness among them is a source of affection. An ox shut in a field with horses will naturally join their company, if I may put it that way. But when it has the choice of both, it will always leave them to enjoy the company of its own kind.

2.2.12.5 The affection of parents for their young comes from a special instinct in animals, as it does in our species.

2.2.12.6 It is evident that sympathy, or the communication of passions, occurs among animals no less than among people. Fear, anger, courage, and other affections are often passed from one animal to another without their knowing the cause that produced the original passion. Grief, too, is received by sympathy. It produces almost all the same consequences and arouses the

same emotions as in our species. The howling and whimpering of a dog cause obvious concern in its fellows. Almost all animals use the same body part in play as in fighting, and nearly the same action: a lion, a tiger, or a cat its paws; an ox its horns; a dog its teeth; a horse its hooves. Yet, remarkably, they take great care not to hurt their companion, even when they have nothing to fear from its resentment. This is clear proof of the sense animals have of each other's pain and pleasure.

2.2.12.7 Everyone has noticed how much more spirited dogs are when they hunt in a pack than when they chase their game alone. Clearly this can come from nothing but sympathy. Hunters also know well that the effect is greater, even too great, when two packs that are strangers to each other are put together. We might perhaps be at a loss to explain this phenomenon if we did not have experience of something similar in ourselves.

2.2.12.8 Envy and malice are very noticeable passions in animals. They are perhaps more common than pity, since they require less effort of thought and imagination.

Book II, Part 3: Of the will and direct passions

Hume treats liberty and necessity, argues that reason alone cannot move the will, and examines the direct passions.

SECT. I. OF LIBERTY AND NECESSITY

2.3.1.1 We now come to explain the direct passions, or the impressions that arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. Of this kind are desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear.

2.3.1.2 Of all the immediate effects of pain and pleasure, none is more remarkable than the *will*. Strictly speaking, it is not included among the passions. But a full understanding of its nature and properties is necessary for explaining them, so we will make it the subject of our inquiry here. I should point out that by the will I mean nothing but the internal impression we feel and are conscious of when we knowingly bring about any new motion of our body or new perception of our mind. This impression, like the earlier ones of pride and humility, love and hatred, is impossible to define and needless to describe any further. So we will cut out all the definitions and distinctions with which philosophers tend to confuse this question rather than clear it up. Going straight to the subject, we will examine the long-disputed question of liberty and necessity, which arises so naturally in discussing the will.

2.3.1.3 It is universally acknowledged that the operations of external bodies are necessary. In the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and in their mutual cohesion there is

not the slightest trace of indifference or liberty. Every object is determined by an absolute fate to a certain degree and direction of motion. It can no more depart from the precise line in which it moves than it can turn itself into an angel, or a spirit, or any higher substance. The actions of matter, therefore, are to be regarded as instances of necessary actions. Whatever is on the same footing as matter in this respect must be acknowledged to be necessary. To find out whether this is the case with the actions of the mind, we will begin by examining matter. We will consider what the idea of necessity in its operations is founded on, and why we conclude that one body or action is the infallible cause of another.

2.3.1.4 It has already been observed that in no single instance can the ultimate connection of any objects be discovered, either by our senses or by reason. We can never penetrate far enough into the essence and structure of bodies to perceive the principle on which their mutual influence depends. It is only their constant union that we are acquainted with, and it is from the constant union that the necessity arises. If objects did not have a uniform and regular conjunction with one another, we would never arrive at any idea of cause and effect. Even then, the necessity that enters into that idea is nothing but a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual companion, and to infer the existence of one from that of the other. Here, then, are two particulars we must regard as essential to necessity: the constant union and the inference of the mind. Wherever we find these, we must acknowledge a necessity. The actions of matter have no necessity except what comes from these circumstances. And we do not discover their connection through any insight into the essence of bodies. So as long as the union and the inference remain, the absence of this insight will never in any case remove the necessity. It is observing the union that produces the inference. It might therefore be thought enough to prove a constant union in the actions of the mind. That would establish the inference, and with it the necessity of these actions. But to give my reasoning more force, I will exam-

ine these particulars separately. I will first prove from experience that our actions have a constant union with our motives, tempers, and circumstances, before considering the inferences we draw from it.

2.3.1.5 For this purpose a very quick and general look at the ordinary course of human affairs will be enough. There is no light in which we can view them that does not confirm this principle. We can consider mankind according to differences of sex, age, government, condition, or method of education. In each case the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles can be seen. Like causes always produce like effects, just as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of nature.

2.3.1.6 There are different trees that regularly produce fruit of different flavors, and this regularity will be admitted as an instance of necessity and causes in external bodies. But are the products of Guienne and of Champagne more regularly different than the feelings, actions, and passions of the two sexes? One sex is distinguished by its strength and maturity, the other by its delicacy and softness.[1]

2.3.1.7 Are the changes of our body from infancy to old age more regular and certain than those of our mind and conduct? Imagine a man who expects a four-year-old child to lift a weight of three hundred pounds. Would he be any more ridiculous than one who expects a child of the same age to produce a piece of philosophical reasoning, or a prudent and well-planned action?

2.3.1.8 We must certainly allow that the cohesion of the parts of matter arises from natural and necessary principles, whatever difficulty we may find in explaining them. For a similar reason we must allow that human society is founded on similar principles. Our reason in the second case is even better than in the first. We not only observe that people always seek society, but can also explain the principles on which this universal propensity is founded. For is it any more certain that two flat pieces of marble will stick together than that two young people

1 Guienne (Guyenne) is the region around Bordeaux; the "products" are the wines of the two regions.

of different sexes from a preliterate society will mate? Do children result from this union more uniformly than the parents' care for their safety and preservation does? Thanks to their parents' care, the children eventually reach the age of discretion. Once they have, are the inconveniences of separating more certain than their foresight of those inconveniences, and their care to avoid them by a close union and alliance?

2.3.1.9 The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day laborer are different from those of a man of rank, and so are his feelings, actions, and manners. The different stations of life influence the whole fabric, outward and inward. These different stations arise necessarily, because uniformly, from the necessary and uniform principles of human nature. People cannot live without society, and cannot associate without government. Government makes a distinction of property and establishes the different ranks of men. This produces industry, trade, manufactures, lawsuits, war, leagues, alliances, voyages, travels, cities, fleets, ports, and all the other actions and objects that create such diversity in human life and at the same time maintain such uniformity in it.

2.3.1.10 Suppose a traveler, returning from a distant country, told us he had seen a climate at fifty degrees north latitude where all the fruits ripen and reach perfection in winter and decay in summer, just as in England they grow and decay in the opposite seasons. He would find few people gullible enough to believe him. I am inclined to think a traveler would get as little credit if he told us of a people exactly like those in Plato's Republic on the one hand, or those in Hobbes's Leviathan on the other. There is a general course of nature in human actions, as there is in the operations of the sun and the climate. There are also characters peculiar to different nations and particular persons, as well as characters common to all mankind. Our knowledge of these characters is founded on observing a uniformity in the actions that flow from them, and this uniformity is the very essence of necessity.

2.3.1.11 I can imagine only one way of evading this argument, which is to deny the uniformity of human actions on which it

rests. As long as actions have a constant union and connection with the situation and temper of the agent, we really grant the thing, however much we may refuse in words to acknowledge the necessity. Now some may perhaps find a pretext for denying this regular union and connection. For what is more capricious than human actions? What is more inconstant than human desires? And what creature strays further, not only from right reason, but from its own character and disposition? An hour, a moment, is enough to make a man swing from one extreme to the other and overturn what cost the greatest pains and labor to build. Necessity is regular and certain; human conduct is irregular and uncertain. The one, therefore, does not come from the other.

2.3.1.12 My reply is that in judging human actions we must go by the same maxims as when we reason about external objects. When any phenomena are constantly and invariably conjoined, they acquire such a connection in the imagination that it passes from one to the other without any doubt or hesitation. But below this there are many lower degrees of evidence and probability, and a single contrary experiment does not entirely destroy all our reasoning. The mind balances the contrary experiments, subtracts the weaker from the stronger, and proceeds with whatever degree of assurance or evidence remains. Even when these contrary experiments are exactly equal, we do not give up the notion of causes and necessity. Instead we suppose that the usual contrariety comes from the operation of contrary and hidden causes. We conclude that the chance or indifference lies only in our judgment, because our knowledge is imperfect, and not in the things themselves. The things are in every case equally necessary, though in appearance they are not equally constant or certain. No union can be more constant and certain than that of some actions with some motives and characters. If in other cases the union is uncertain, that is no more than what happens in the operations of bodies. We cannot conclude anything from the one irregularity that will not follow equally from the other.

2.3.1.13 It is commonly agreed that the mentally ill have no liberty. Yet if we judged by their actions, these have less regularity and constancy than the actions of the wise, and so are further removed from necessity. Our way of thinking on this point is therefore completely inconsistent. But it is a natural result of the confused ideas and undefined terms that we so often use in our reasonings, especially on the present subject.

2.3.1.14 We must now show that the union between motives and actions has the same constancy as the union in any natural operation, and also that its influence on the understanding is the same, in determining us to infer the existence of one from that of the other. If this turns out to be true, then every known circumstance that enters into the connection and production of the actions of matter is also found in all the operations of the mind. So we cannot, without obvious absurdity, attribute necessity to the one and refuse it to the other.

MORAL EVIDENCE

Inferences from motives to actions work exactly like inferences about bodies.

2.3.1.15 No philosopher's judgment is so riveted to this fantastical system of liberty that he does not acknowledge the force of moral evidence and rely on it, in both theory and practice, as a reasonable foundation. Now moral evidence is nothing but a conclusion about people's actions, drawn from considering their motives, temper, and situation. Thus when we see certain characters or figures written on paper, we infer that the person who produced them was affirming certain facts: the death of Caesar, the success of Augustus, the cruelty of Nero. Remembering many other testimonies that agree with these, we conclude that those facts really did once exist. We conclude that so many people, with nothing to gain, would never conspire to deceive us, especially since in the attempt they would have exposed themselves to the ridicule of all their contemporaries, at a time when these facts were claimed to be recent and universally

known. The same kind of reasoning runs through politics, war, commerce, and household management. In fact it mixes itself so thoroughly into human life that it is impossible to act or live for a moment without resorting to it. A prince who imposes a tax on his subjects expects them to comply. A general who leads an army counts on a certain degree of courage. A merchant expects loyalty and skill in his agent or supercargo. A man who orders his dinner does not doubt that his servants will obey. In short, since nothing concerns us more closely than our own actions and those of others, most of our reasoning is taken up with judgments about them. Now I maintain that whoever reasons in this way does, ipso facto, believe that the actions of the will arise from necessity, and that he does not know what he means when he denies it.

2.3.1.16 Whenever we call one object the cause and another the effect, the two objects, considered in themselves, are as distinct and separate from each other as any two things in nature. Even the most careful examination of them could never let us infer the existence of the one from that of the other. Only experience, and the observation of their constant union, allow us to make this inference. Even then, the inference is nothing but the effect of custom on the imagination. Here we must not be content to say that the idea of cause and effect arises from objects that are constantly united. We must affirm that it is the very same as the idea of those objects, and that the necessary connection is not discovered by a conclusion of the understanding but is merely a perception of the mind. So wherever we observe the same union, and wherever the union works in the same way on belief and opinion, we have the idea of causes and necessity, even if we avoid those expressions. In every past instance we have observed, motion in one body has been followed, upon impact, by motion in another. The mind cannot penetrate any further. From this constant union it forms the idea of cause and effect, and through the influence of that union it feels the necessity. Since there is the same constancy and the same influence in

what we call moral evidence, I ask for nothing more. Whatever remains can only be a dispute about words.

2.3.1.17 And indeed, when we consider how neatly natural and moral evidence fit together, forming a single chain of argument between them, we will not hesitate to grant that they are of the same nature and derived from the same principles. A prisoner who has neither money nor influence sees that he cannot escape, as much from the obstinacy of the jailer as from the walls and bars that surround him. In all his attempts to gain his freedom, he chooses to work on the stone and iron of the walls rather than on the inflexible nature of the jailer. When the same prisoner is led to the scaffold, he foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and loyalty of his guards as from the operation of the ax or the wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas: the soldiers' refusal to let him escape; the action of the executioner; the separation of head and body; bleeding, convulsive movements, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions. Yet the mind feels no difference between them as it passes from one link to the next. Nor is it any less certain of the future event than if that event were connected with the present impressions of the memory and senses by a train of causes cemented together by what we like to call a physical necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects are motives, volitions, and actions, or shape and motion. We may change the names of things, but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change.

2.3.1.18 I am confident that no one will ever try to refute these arguments except by altering my definitions, giving a different meaning to the terms cause, effect, necessity, liberty, and chance. According to my definitions, necessity is an essential part of causation. So liberty, by removing necessity, also removes causes, and is the very same thing as chance. Since chance is commonly thought to imply a contradiction, and is at any rate directly contrary to experience, the same arguments always stand against liberty or free will. If anyone alters the

definitions, I cannot claim to argue with him until I know what meaning he gives these terms.

WHY LIBERTY SEEMS REAL

Hume explains why the doctrine of liberty prevails and argues that necessity supports morality.

2.3.2.1 I believe we can give the following three reasons why the doctrine of liberty prevails, however absurd it may be in one sense and unintelligible in any other. First, after we have performed an action, even though we admit that we were influenced by particular views and motives, it is hard to persuade ourselves that we were governed by necessity and that it was utterly impossible for us to have acted otherwise. For the idea of necessity seems to imply something of force, violence, and constraint, and we are not aware of any. Few people are able to distinguish between the liberty of spontaneity, as the schools call it, and the liberty of indifference: between the liberty that is opposed to violence, and the liberty that means the absence of necessity and causes. The first is actually the most common sense of the word. Since it is the only kind of liberty we have any interest in preserving, our thoughts have been directed mainly toward it, and have almost universally confused it with the other.

2.3.2.2 Second, there is a false sensation or experience even of the liberty of indifference, and this is taken as an argument that it really exists. The necessity of any action, whether of matter or of the mind, is not strictly a quality in the agent. It is a quality in some thinking or intelligent being who may consider the action, and it consists in the determination of that being's thought to infer the action's existence from some preceding objects. Liberty or chance, on the other hand, is nothing but the lack of that determination: a certain looseness we feel in passing, or not passing, from the idea of one object to that of the other. Now we may observe that although we seldom feel such looseness or indifference when we reflect on human actions, it very often

happens that we are aware of something like it while performing the actions themselves. And since related or resembling things are easily mistaken for each other, this has been used as a demonstrative, or even an intuitive, proof of human liberty. We feel that our actions are subject to our will on most occasions, and we imagine we feel that the will itself is subject to nothing. For when someone denies it and we are provoked to try, we feel that the will moves easily in every direction, and produces an image of itself even on the side where it did not settle. We persuade ourselves that this image, or faint motion, could have been completed into the thing itself, because if that is denied, we find on a second trial that it can. But all these efforts are in vain. However capricious and irregular the actions we perform, the desire to show our liberty is then the sole motive of those actions, and so we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity. We may imagine we feel a liberty within ourselves. But a spectator can usually infer our actions from our motives and character. Even where he cannot, he concludes in general that he could, if he were perfectly acquainted with every circumstance of our situation and temper, and with the most secret springs of our constitution and disposition. Now according to the doctrine above, this is the very essence of necessity.

2.3.2.3 A third reason why the doctrine of liberty has generally been better received than its opponent comes from religion, which has taken a quite unnecessary interest in this question. No method of reasoning is more common, and none more blameworthy, than trying in philosophical debates to refute a hypothesis by pointing to its dangerous consequences for religion and morality. When an opinion leads us into absurdities, it is certainly false. But it is not certain that an opinion is false because it has dangerous consequences. Such arguments should therefore be avoided altogether, since they do nothing to discover the truth and serve only to make an opponent personally odious. I observe this in general, without claiming any advantage from it. I submit myself frankly to an examination of this kind, and I venture to affirm that the doctrine of necessity, as I

explain it, is not only harmless but even beneficial to religion and morality.

2.3.2.4 I define necessity in two ways, matching the two definitions of cause, of which it is an essential part. I locate it either in the constant union and conjunction of like objects, or in the mind's inference from the one to the other. Now necessity in both these senses has been universally, though tacitly, granted to belong to the human will, in the schools, in the pulpit, and in common life. No one has ever claimed to deny that we can draw inferences about human actions, or that those inferences are founded on the experienced union of like actions with like motives and circumstances. The only point on which anyone can differ from me is this. Perhaps he will refuse to call this necessity. But as long as the meaning is understood, I hope the word can do no harm. Or perhaps he will maintain that there is something more in the operations of matter. Whether there is or not makes no difference to religion, whatever difference it may make to natural philosophy. I may be mistaken in asserting that we have no idea of any other connection in the actions of bodies, and I will be glad to be better informed on that point. But I am sure that I ascribe nothing to the actions of the mind except what must readily be granted. So let no one put a malicious construction on my words by saying simply that I assert the necessity of human actions and put them on the same footing as the operations of senseless matter. I do not ascribe to the will the unintelligible necessity that is supposed to lie in matter. Rather, I ascribe to matter the intelligible quality, call it necessity or not, that the strictest orthodoxy does or must grant to belong to the will. So I change nothing in the accepted systems with regard to the will, but only with regard to material objects.

2.3.2.5 Indeed, I will go further and assert that this kind of necessity is so essential to religion and morality that without it both would be completely overthrown, and that every other supposition is utterly destructive of all laws, both divine and human. It is certainly true that, since all human laws are founded on rewards and punishments, it is assumed as a funda-

mental principle that these motives have an influence on the mind, producing good actions and preventing evil ones. We may give this influence whatever name we like. But since it is usually conjoined with the action, common sense requires that it be regarded as a cause, and looked on as an instance of the necessity I wish to establish.

2.3.2.6 This reasoning is equally solid when applied to divine laws, insofar as the deity is considered as a legislator who is supposed to inflict punishments and bestow rewards in order to produce obedience. But I also maintain something further. Even where he does not act in his capacity as a magistrate, but is regarded as the avenger of crimes merely because they are odious and ugly, the necessary connection of cause and effect in human actions is still required. Without it, punishments could not be inflicted consistently with justice and moral fairness. More than that, it could never even occur to any reasonable being to inflict them. The constant and universal object of hatred or anger is a person or creature endowed with thought and consciousness. When criminal or injurious actions arouse that passion, they do so only through their relation or connection to the person. But according to the doctrine of liberty or chance, this connection is reduced to nothing. People are then no more accountable for actions that are designed and premeditated than for the most casual and accidental ones. Actions are by their very nature temporary and perishing. Where they do not come from some cause in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they do not fix themselves on him, and can bring him neither honor if good nor infamy if evil. The action itself may be blameworthy. It may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion. But the person is not responsible for it. Since it came from nothing durable or constant in him, and leaves nothing of that kind behind, it is impossible that he could become the object of punishment or vengeance on its account. According to the hypothesis of liberty, then, a man who has committed the most horrible crimes is as pure and untainted as at the first moment of his birth. His character is in

no way involved in his actions, since they do not come from it, and the wickedness of the actions can never be used as proof of the depravity of the character. Only on the principles of necessity does a person acquire any merit or demerit from his actions, however common opinion may lean the other way.

2.3.2.7 But people are so inconsistent with themselves that, although they often assert that necessity utterly destroys all merit and demerit, whether toward mankind or toward higher powers, they still go on reasoning on these very principles of necessity in all their judgments on the matter. People are not blamed for evil actions they perform in ignorance and by accident, whatever the consequences. Why? Only because the causes of these actions are momentary and end with the actions alone. People are blamed less for evil actions they perform hastily and without premeditation than for those that come from thought and deliberation. For what reason? Only because a hasty temper, though a constant cause in the mind, operates only at intervals and does not infect the whole character. Again, repentance wipes away every crime, especially when it is accompanied by an evident reform of life and conduct. How is this to be explained? Only by asserting that actions make a person criminal merely insofar as they are proofs of criminal passions or principles in the mind. When some change in these principles means the actions are no longer sound proofs, they also cease to be criminal. But according to the doctrine of liberty or chance, they never were sound proofs, and so they never were criminal.

2.3.2.8 Here, then, I turn to my opponent and ask him to free his own system from these odious consequences before he charges them on others. Or if he would rather have this question decided by fair arguments before philosophers than by speeches before the public, let him go back to what I have put forward to prove that liberty and chance are synonymous, and to what I have said about the nature of moral evidence and the regularity of human actions. On reviewing these arguments, I cannot doubt that I have won a complete victory. So, having proved that all actions

of the will have particular causes, I proceed to explain what these causes are and how they operate.

THE MOTIVES OF THE WILL

Hume argues that reason alone can neither move the will nor oppose a passion.

2.3.3.1 Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat between passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that people are virtuous only insofar as they conform to its commands. Every rational creature, it is said, is obliged to regulate his actions by reason. If any other motive or principle claims to direct his conduct, he ought to oppose it until it is entirely subdued, or at least brought into conformity with that higher principle. Most of moral philosophy, ancient and modern, seems to be founded on this way of thinking. Nor is there a wider field, for metaphysical arguments as well as for popular speeches, than this supposed superiority of reason over passion. The eternity, unchangeableness, and divine origin of reason have been shown off to the best advantage. The blindness, inconstancy, and deceitfulness of passion have been insisted on just as strongly. To show the fallacy of all this philosophy, I will try to prove, first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and second, that it can never oppose passion in directing the will.

2.3.3.2 The understanding works in two different ways: as it judges from demonstration or from probability, that is, as it considers the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects about which only experience informs us. I hardly think anyone will claim that the first kind of reasoning alone is ever the cause of any action. Its proper domain is the world of ideas, while the will always places us in the world of realities. For that reason, demonstration and volition seem to be completely removed from each other. Mathematics, it is true, is useful in all mechanical operations, and arithmetic in almost every art and profession. But they have no influence of themselves. Mechanics

is the art of regulating the motions of bodies toward some intended end or purpose. And the only reason we use arithmetic to fix the proportions of numbers is to discover the proportions of their influence and operation. A merchant wants to know the total of his accounts with someone. Why? Only so that he may learn what sum will have the same effects, in paying his debt and in going to market, as all the individual items taken together. So abstract or demonstrative reasoning never influences any of our actions except insofar as it directs our judgment about causes and effects. This brings us to the second operation of the understanding.

2.3.3.3 It is obvious that when we anticipate pain or pleasure from some object, we feel a resulting emotion of aversion or attraction, and are moved to avoid or embrace whatever will give us this discomfort or satisfaction. It is also obvious that this emotion does not stop there. It makes us look around on every side, and takes in whatever objects are connected with the original one by the relation of cause and effect. Here, then, reasoning comes in to discover this relation, and as our reasoning varies, our actions vary accordingly. But clearly, in this case, the impulse does not arise from reason; it is only directed by it. It is from the prospect of pain or pleasure that aversion or attraction toward an object arises. These emotions extend to the causes and effects of that object, as reason and experience point them out to us. It can never matter to us in the least to know that certain objects are causes and others effects, if both the causes and the effects are indifferent to us. Where the objects themselves do not affect us, their connection can never give them any influence. And since reason is nothing but the discovery of this connection, it clearly cannot be through reason that the objects are able to affect us.

THE SLAVE OF THE PASSIONS

A passion is unreasonable only when joined to a false judgment, so reason cannot oppose it.

2.3.3.4 Since reason alone can never produce any action or give rise to volition, I infer that the same faculty is equally incapable of preventing volition, or of competing for preference with any passion or emotion. This conclusion is necessary. Reason could have the effect of preventing volition only by giving an impulse in the direction opposite to our passion, and that impulse, had it operated alone, would have been able to produce volition. Nothing can oppose or slow the impulse of passion except a contrary impulse. If this contrary impulse ever arose from reason, then reason would have to have an original influence on the will, and would have to be able to cause, as well as prevent, an act of volition. But if reason has no original influence, it cannot possibly withstand any principle that does have such power, or ever hold the mind in suspense for a moment. It follows that the principle that opposes our passion cannot be the same as reason, and is called reason only in a loose sense. We are not speaking strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat between passion and reason. Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never claim any other role than to serve and obey them. Since this opinion may seem somewhat extraordinary, it may be worth confirming it with some other considerations.

2.3.3.5 A passion is an original existence, or, if you like, a modification of existence. It contains no representative quality that would make it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possessed by the passion, and in that emotion I have no more reference to any other object than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five feet tall. So this passion cannot possibly be opposed by, or contradict, truth and reason. For such contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, considered as copies, with the objects they represent.

2.3.3.6 What may first occur to us on this point is the following. Nothing can be contrary to truth or reason except what refers to it, and only the judgments of our understanding have this reference. It must follow that passions can be contrary to reason only insofar as they are accompanied by some judgment or opinion. On this principle, which is so obvious and natural, there are only two senses in which any affection can be called unreasonable. First, when a passion such as hope or fear, grief or joy, despair or confidence, is founded on the supposed existence of objects that do not really exist. Second, when in acting on a passion we choose means that are insufficient for the intended end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects. Where a passion is neither founded on false suppositions nor chooses means insufficient for its end, the understanding can neither justify nor condemn it. It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. It is not contrary to reason for me to choose my total ruin to prevent the slightest discomfort of an Indian, or of a person wholly unknown to me. It is just as little contrary to reason to prefer what I myself admit is my lesser good to my greater, and to have a more ardent affection for the former than for the latter. A trivial good may, in certain circumstances, produce a desire stronger than the one that arises from the greatest and most valuable enjoyment. There is nothing more extraordinary in this than seeing, in mechanics, one pound of weight raise a hundred by the advantage of its position. In short, a passion must be accompanied by some false judgment to be unreasonable. And even then, strictly speaking, it is not the passion that is unreasonable, but the judgment.

2.3.3.7 The consequences are evident. A passion can never, in any sense, be called unreasonable except when it is founded on a false supposition or chooses means insufficient for the intended end. So reason and passion can never possibly oppose each other, or contend for control of the will and actions. The moment we perceive that a supposition is false, or that some means are insufficient, our passions yield to our reason without

any opposition. I may desire some fruit because I think it tastes excellent. But as soon as you convince me I am mistaken, my longing ceases. I may will the performance of certain actions as means of obtaining some desired good. But my willing of these actions is only secondary, and founded on the supposition that they are causes of the intended effect. So as soon as I discover that this supposition is false, they must become indifferent to me.

2.3.3.8 Someone who does not examine things with a strict philosophical eye will naturally imagine that actions of the mind are entirely the same if they do not produce different sensations and cannot be immediately distinguished by feeling and perception. Reason, for instance, operates without producing any noticeable emotion. Except in the loftier inquiries of philosophy, or in the frivolous subtleties of the schools, it hardly ever brings any pleasure or discomfort. As a result, every action of the mind that operates with the same calm and tranquility is confused with reason by everyone who judges things by first view and appearance. Now it is certain that there are some calm desires and tendencies which, though they are real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are known more by their effects than by any immediate feeling or sensation. These desires are of two kinds. Either they are certain instincts originally implanted in our nature, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or they are the general appetite for good and aversion to evil, considered simply as such. When any of these passions are calm and cause no disturbance in the soul, they are very easily mistaken for the determinations of reason, and are supposed to come from the same faculty that judges truth and falsehood. Their nature and principles have been supposed to be the same, because their sensations are not obviously different.

2.3.3.9 Besides these calm passions, which often determine the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind, which also have a great influence on that faculty. When someone injures me, I often feel a violent passion of resentment, which

makes me wish him harm and punishment, regardless of any consideration of pleasure or advantage to myself. When I am immediately threatened with some serious harm, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height and produce a noticeable emotion.

2.3.3.10 The common error of metaphysicians has been to attribute the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, and to suppose that the other has no influence. People often knowingly act against their interest, so the prospect of the greatest possible good does not always influence them. People often resist a violent passion in pursuit of their interests and plans, so it is not present discomfort alone that determines them. In general we may observe that both these principles act on the will, and that where they conflict, one or the other prevails according to the general character or present disposition of the person. What we call strength of mind means that the calm passions prevail over the violent ones. Yet we can easily observe that no one possesses this virtue so constantly as never, on any occasion, to yield to the urgings of passion and desire. These variations of temper are the source of the great difficulty in judging people's actions and resolutions wherever motives and passions conflict.

THE VIOLENT PASSIONS

Opposition, uncertainty and concealment make passions violent; a calm passion need not be weak.

2.3.4.1 There is no subject in philosophy that calls for more delicate speculation than the different causes and effects of the calm and violent passions. It is evident that passions do not influence the will in proportion to their violence, or to the disturbance they cause in the temper. On the contrary, once a passion has become a settled principle of action and the dominant inclination of the soul, it usually no longer produces any noticeable agitation. Since repeated custom and its own force have made everything yield to it, it directs our actions and conduct without

the opposition and emotion that so naturally accompany every momentary gust of passion. We must therefore distinguish between a calm passion and a weak one, and between a violent passion and a strong one. Still, it is certain that when we want to govern someone and push him toward some action, it will usually be better policy to work on the violent passions than on the calm ones, and to take hold of him by his inclination rather than by what is commonly called his reason. We ought to place the object in the particular situations best suited to increase the violence of the passion. For we may observe that everything depends on the situation of the object, and that a change in this respect can turn calm and violent passions into each other. Both kinds of passion pursue good and avoid evil, and both are increased or diminished as the good or evil increases or diminishes. But here lies the difference between them: the same good that causes a violent passion when it is near produces only a calm one when it is remote. Since this subject belongs very properly to the present question about the will, we will examine it thoroughly here, and consider some of the circumstances and situations of objects that make a passion either calm or violent.

2.3.4.2 It is a remarkable property of human nature that any emotion accompanying a passion is easily converted into it, even though the two are originally different in nature, and even contrary. It is true that a perfect union among passions always requires a double relation of impressions and ideas; one relation is not enough for that purpose. But although this is confirmed by undoubted experience, we must understand it within its proper limits, and regard the double relation as necessary only for making one passion produce another. When two passions have already been produced by their separate causes and are both present in the mind, they readily mingle and unite, even if they have only one relation, and sometimes with none at all. The dominant passion swallows up the lesser one and converts it into itself. Once the spirits are aroused, they easily change direction, and it is natural to think that the change will come from the prevailing affection. In many respects the connection

between any two passions is closer than that between any passion and indifference.

2.3.4.3 When a man is thoroughly in love, the little faults and whims of his beloved, and the jealousies and quarrels to which such relationships are so prone, however unpleasant and akin to anger and hatred, are nevertheless found to add force to the prevailing passion. Politicians have a common trick when they want some fact they are going to tell a person to affect him strongly. They first arouse his curiosity, delay satisfying it as long as possible, and in this way raise his anxiety and impatience to the highest pitch before giving him full insight into the matter. They know that his curiosity will plunge him into the passion they intend to raise, and will help the object in its influence on the mind. A soldier advancing into battle is naturally filled with courage and confidence when he thinks of his friends and fellow soldiers, and is struck with fear and terror when he thinks of the enemy. So any new emotion that comes from the former naturally increases his courage, while the same emotion, coming from the latter, increases his fear. This happens through the relation of ideas and the conversion of the lesser emotion into the dominant one. That is why, in military discipline, the uniformity and splendor of our dress, the regularity of our formations and movements, and all the pomp and majesty of war encourage us and our allies, while the same things in the enemy strike terror into us, though they are pleasing and beautiful in themselves.

2.3.4.4 Passions, however independent, naturally flow into each other when both are present at the same time. It follows that when good or evil is placed in a situation that causes some particular emotion in addition to its direct passion of desire or aversion, that direct passion must gain new force and violence.

2.3.4.5 Among other cases, this happens whenever an object arouses contrary passions. For we can observe that an opposition of passions usually causes a new emotion in the spirits, and produces more disturbance than the combination of any two affections of equal force. This new emotion is easily converted

into the dominant passion, and increases its violence beyond the pitch it would have reached had it met with no opposition. That is why we naturally desire what is forbidden, and take pleasure in doing things merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposed to the passions, is seldom able to overcome them. And when it fails to do so, it tends rather to increase them, by producing a conflict in our motives and principles.

2.3.4.6 The same effect follows whether the opposition comes from internal motives or external obstacles. In both cases the passion usually gains new force and violence. The efforts the mind makes to overcome the obstacle excite the spirits and enliven the passion.

2.3.4.7 Uncertainty has the same influence as opposition. The agitation of thought, its quick turns from one view to another, the variety of passions that follow one another according to the different views: all these produce an agitation in the mind, which flows into the dominant passion.

2.3.4.8 In my opinion, there is no other natural reason why security diminishes the passions than that it removes the uncertainty that increases them. Left to itself, the mind immediately languishes, and to keep up its ardor it must be supported at every moment by a new flow of passion. For the same reason despair, though it is the contrary of security, has a similar influence.

2.3.4.9 It is certain that nothing animates an affection more powerfully than concealing part of its object by casting it into a kind of shade. This shows enough to predispose us in favor of the object, while still leaving some work for the imagination. Besides the fact that obscurity is always accompanied by a kind of uncertainty, the effort the fancy makes to complete the idea rouses the spirits and adds force to the passion.

2.3.4.10 Just as despair and security, though contrary to each other, produce the same effects, so absence is observed to have contrary effects, and in different circumstances either increases or diminishes our affections. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld has

very aptly observed that absence destroys weak passions but increases strong ones, as the wind puts out a candle but fans a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea and diminishes the passion. But where the idea is strong and lively enough to sustain itself, the discomfort arising from absence increases the passion and gives it new force and violence.[2]

THE EFFECTS OF CUSTOM

Custom gives ease and inclination, turning pain into pleasure and sometimes pleasure into pain.

2.3.5.1 But nothing has a greater effect in both increasing and diminishing our passions, and in turning pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure, than custom and repetition. Custom has two original effects on the mind: first it gives ease in performing an action or conceiving an object, and afterwards a tendency or inclination toward it. From these we can account for all its other effects, however extraordinary.

2.3.5.2 When the soul applies itself to performing an action or conceiving an object it is not accustomed to, there is a certain stiffness in the faculties, and some difficulty in the spirits' moving in their new direction. Since this difficulty excites the spirits, it is the source of wonder, surprise, and all the emotions that arise from novelty. And it is very agreeable in itself, like everything that enlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But although surprise is agreeable in itself, it puts the spirits in agitation, and so it increases not only our agreeable affections but also our painful ones, according to the principle already stated: every emotion that precedes or accompanies a passion is easily converted into it. That is why everything new affects us most, and gives us more pleasure or pain than, strictly speaking, naturally belongs to it. When it comes back to us often, the novelty wears off, the passions subside, the hurry of the spirits is over, and we view the objects with greater tranquility.

2 François de La Rochefoucauld (1613–80), author of the *Maxims*; this is Maxim 276.

2.3.5.3 Gradually, repetition produces an ease in the human mind, and this is an unfailing source of pleasure as long as the ease does not go beyond a certain degree. And here it is remarkable that the pleasure arising from moderate ease does not tend, as the pleasure of novelty does, to increase painful affections as well as agreeable ones. The pleasure of ease consists not so much in any ferment of the spirits as in their orderly motion. This can sometimes be so powerful as to turn pain into pleasure, and in time give us a taste for what was at first most harsh and disagreeable.

2.3.5.4 But again, just as ease turns pain into pleasure, it often turns pleasure into pain when it is too great, making the actions of the mind so faint and languid that they can no longer engage and sustain it. And indeed, hardly any objects become disagreeable through custom except those that are naturally accompanied by some emotion or affection, which is destroyed by too frequent repetition. One can look at the clouds, the heavens, the trees, and the stones, however often, without ever feeling any aversion. But when the fair sex, or music, or good food, or anything that naturally ought to be agreeable becomes indifferent, it easily produces the opposite affection.

2.3.5.5 But custom gives not only ease in performing an action but also an inclination and tendency toward it, provided the action is not entirely disagreeable and incapable of ever being an object of inclination. This is why custom strengthens all active habits but weakens passive ones, as a recent eminent philosopher has observed. The ease takes away from the force of the passive habits by making the motion of the spirits faint and languid. But in the active habits the spirits are sufficiently sustained by themselves, so the tendency of the mind gives them new force and bends them more strongly toward the action.[3]

3 Probably Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), Part 1, chapter 5.

IMAGINATION AND THE PASSIONS

Lively, particular ideas move the passions more than general or faint ones.

2.3.6.1 It is remarkable that the imagination and the affections are closely united, and that nothing that affects the former can be entirely indifferent to the latter. Wherever our ideas of good or evil acquire new vivacity, the passions become more violent, and keep pace with the imagination in all its variations. Whether this comes from the principle mentioned above, that any accompanying emotion is easily converted into the dominant one, I will not decide. For my present purpose it is enough that we have many instances confirming this influence of the imagination on the passions.

2.3.6.2 Any pleasure we are acquainted with affects us more than another that we admit is greater but whose nature we know nothing about. Of the first we can form a particular and determinate idea. The second we conceive only under the general notion of pleasure. And it is certain that the more general and universal any of our ideas are, the less influence they have on the imagination. A general idea, though it is nothing but a particular one considered in a certain light, is usually more obscure. This is because no particular idea by which we represent a general one is ever fixed or determinate; it can easily be exchanged for other particular ideas that will serve equally well in the representation.

2.3.6.3 There is a well-known passage in the history of Greece that may serve our present purpose. Themistocles told the Athenians that he had formed a plan that would be highly useful to the public, but that he could not possibly tell them about it without ruining its execution, since its success depended entirely on its being carried out in secret. Instead of granting him full power to act as he saw fit, the Athenians ordered him to tell his plan to Aristides, in whose prudence they had complete confidence, and whose opinion they were resolved to follow

blindly.[4] Themistocles's plan was secretly to set fire to the fleet of all the Greek city-states, which was assembled in a nearby port; once it was destroyed, the Athenians would have command of the sea without any rival. Aristides returned to the assembly and told them that nothing could be more advantageous than Themistocles's plan, but at the same time nothing could be more unjust. At this the people unanimously rejected the project.

2.3.6.4 A recent celebrated historian[5] admires this passage of ancient history as one of the most remarkable to be found anywhere. "Here," he says, "it is not philosophers, for whom it is easy in their schools to lay down the finest maxims and most sublime rules of morality, who decide that interest ought never to prevail over justice. It is a whole people with an interest in the proposal put to them, who consider it important to the public good, and who nevertheless reject it unanimously and without hesitation, merely because it is contrary to justice." For my part, I see nothing so extraordinary in this conduct of the Athenians. The same reasons that make it so easy for philosophers to lay down these sublime maxims partly diminish the merit of such conduct in that people. Philosophers never weigh profit against honesty, because their decisions are general, and neither their passions nor their imaginations are engaged by the objects. And although in this case the advantage to the Athenians was immediate, it was known only under the general notion of advantage, without being conceived through any particular idea. So it must have had less influence on their imaginations, and been a less violent temptation, than if they had known all its circumstances. Otherwise it is hard to imagine that a whole people, unjust and violent as people commonly are, would so unanimously have held to justice and rejected a considerable advantage.

2.3.6.5 Any satisfaction we enjoyed recently, and whose memory is still fresh, acts on the will more violently than one whose

4 Themistocles and Aristides were Athenian statesmen of the fifth century BC.

traces have faded and been almost wiped out. What can this come from, except that in the first case memory assists the fancy and gives its conceptions additional force and vigor? The image of the past pleasure, being strong and violent, passes these qualities on to the idea of the future pleasure, which is connected with it by the relation of resemblance.

2.3.6.6 A pleasure that suits the way of life we are engaged in stirs our desires and appetites more than one that is foreign to it. This phenomenon can be explained by the same principle.

2.3.6.7 Nothing is better able to instill a passion in the mind than eloquence, which represents objects in their strongest and most lively colors. We may acknowledge on our own that one object is valuable and another odious; but until an orator excites the imagination and gives these ideas force, they may have only a feeble influence on either the will or the affections.

2.3.6.8 But eloquence is not always necessary. The bare opinion of someone else, especially when reinforced with passion, will give an idea of good or evil an influence on us, though we would otherwise have entirely neglected it. This comes from the principle of sympathy or communication; and sympathy, as I have already observed, is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination.

2.3.6.9 It is remarkable that lively passions usually go with a lively imagination. In this respect, as in others, the force of a passion depends as much on the temperament of the person as on the nature or situation of the object.

2.3.6.10 I have already observed that belief is nothing but a lively idea related to a present impression. This vivacity is a necessary condition for exciting any of our passions, the calm as well as the violent; and a mere fiction of the imagination has no considerable influence on either kind. It is too weak to take hold of the mind or to be accompanied by emotion.

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5 HUME'S NOTE. Monsieur Rollin.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Charles Rollin (1661–1741), French author of a popular *Ancient History*.

NEARNESS AND DISTANCE

Nearness enlivens ideas; distance in time weakens them more than distance in space.

2.3.7.1 There is an easy reason why everything contiguous to us—close to us in space or in time—should be conceived with special force and vivacity, and should outdo every other object in its influence on the imagination. Our self is intimately present to us, and whatever is related to the self must share in that quality. But where an object is so far away that it has lost the advantage of this relation, why its idea becomes still fainter and more obscure the farther away it is would perhaps require a more detailed examination.

2.3.7.2 It is obvious that the imagination can never entirely forget the points of space and time where we exist. It receives such frequent reminders of them from the passions and the senses that, however much it may turn its attention to foreign and remote objects, it is forced at every moment to reflect on the present. It is also remarkable that, in conceiving the objects we regard as real and existing, we take them in their proper order and position, and never leap from one object to another distant from it without running over, at least cursorily, all the objects that lie between them. So when we reflect on any object distant from ourselves, we are obliged not only to reach it in the first place by passing through all the intermediate space between us and the object, but also to renew our progress at every moment, since at every moment we are called back to consider ourselves and our present situation. It is easy to see that this interruption must weaken the idea, by breaking the action of the mind and keeping the conception from being as intense and continuous as when we reflect on a nearer object. The fewer steps we take to reach the object, and the smoother the road, the less noticeably this loss of vivacity is felt; but it can still be observed, more or less, in proportion to the degree of distance and difficulty.

2.3.7.3 Here, then, we have two kinds of objects to consider, the contiguous and the remote. The former, through their relation to ourselves, come close to an impression in force and vivacity; the latter, because of the interruption in our way of conceiving them, appear in a weaker and more imperfect light. That is their effect on the imagination. If my reasoning is sound, they must have a proportional effect on the will and the passions: contiguous objects must have a far greater influence than distant and remote ones. And indeed we find in common life that people are chiefly concerned with objects not far removed in space or time; they enjoy the present and leave what is far off to the care of chance and fortune. Talk to a man about his condition thirty years from now, and he will not pay attention. Speak of what is going to happen tomorrow, and he will listen. The breaking of a mirror at home concerns us more than the burning of a house abroad, some hundreds of leagues away.

2.3.7.4 Further: although distance in both space and time has a considerable effect on the imagination, and through it on the will and the passions, the consequences of removal in space are much weaker than those of removal in time. Twenty years is surely only a small distance in time compared with what history, and even the memory of some people, can tell them about; and yet I doubt whether a thousand leagues, or even the greatest distance this globe allows, will weaken our ideas and diminish our passions so markedly. A West Indies merchant will tell you that he is not without concern about what is happening in Jamaica; yet few people extend their view so far into the future as to dread very remote accidents.

2.3.7.5 The cause of this phenomenon must evidently lie in the different properties of space and time. Without resorting to metaphysics, anyone can easily see that space or extension consists of a number of coexisting parts arranged in a certain order and capable of being present to sight or touch all at once. Time or succession, on the other hand, though it also consists of parts, never presents more than one of them to us at once; nor can any two of them ever coexist. These qualities of the objects

have a corresponding effect on the imagination. Since the parts of extension can be united to the senses, they acquire a union in the fancy; and since the appearance of one part does not exclude another, the transition or passage of thought through the contiguous parts is made smoother and easier. On the other hand, the incompatibility of the parts of time in their real existence separates them in the imagination, and makes it harder for that faculty to trace any long succession or series of events. Each part must appear single and alone, and cannot properly enter the fancy without banishing what is supposed to have come immediately before it. For this reason any distance in time causes a greater interruption in thought than an equal distance in space, and so weakens the idea more considerably, and consequently the passions too—which, according to my system, depend to a great extent on the imagination.

2.3.7.6 There is another phenomenon of a similar nature to the foregoing: the greater effect of a given distance in the future than of the same distance in the past. With respect to the will, this difference is easily accounted for. Since none of our actions can alter the past, it is no wonder that the past never determines the will. But with respect to the passions the question is still wide open, and well worth examining.

2.3.7.7 Besides the tendency to progress gradually through the points of space and time, there is another peculiarity in our way of thinking that works toward producing this phenomenon. We always follow the succession of time in arranging our ideas, and from considering any object we pass more easily to the one that follows immediately after it than to the one that came before it. We can learn this, among other examples, from the order always observed in historical narratives. Nothing but absolute necessity can force a historian to break the order of time and, in his narrative, put first an event that in reality came after another.

2.3.7.8 This is easily applied to the question at hand if we recall what I observed earlier: that the present situation of the person is always that of the imagination, and that it is from there that we proceed to conceive any distant object. When the object is

past, the progress of thought in passing to it from the present runs against nature, since it goes from one point of time to the one before it, and from that to another before that, in opposition to the natural course of succession. On the other hand, when we turn our thought to a future object, our fancy flows along the stream of time and arrives at the object in what seems the most natural order, always passing from one point of time to the one immediately after it. This easy progression of ideas favors the imagination and makes it conceive its object in a stronger and fuller light than when we are continually resisted in our passage and have to overcome the difficulties arising from the natural propensity of the fancy. So a small distance in the past has a greater effect in interrupting and weakening the conception than a much greater one in the future. And from this effect of distance on the imagination comes its influence on the will and the passions.

2.3.7.9 There is another cause that contributes to the same effect and arises from the same quality of the fancy—the one by which we are determined to trace the succession of time with a similar succession of ideas. When, from the present instant, we consider two points of time equally distant in the future and in the past, it is evident that, considered abstractly, their relation to the present is nearly equal. For just as the future will at some time be present, so the past was once present. If we could remove this quality of the imagination, then, an equal distance in the past and in the future would have a similar influence. And this is true not only when the fancy stays fixed and surveys the future and the past from the present instant, but also when it changes its position and places us in different periods of time. For on the one hand, when we suppose ourselves existing at a point of time lying between the present instant and the future object, we find the future object coming closer to us and the past retreating and becoming more distant; and on the other hand, when we suppose ourselves existing at a point of time lying between the present and the past, the past comes closer to us and the future becomes more distant. But because of the prop-

erty of the fancy mentioned above, we prefer to fix our thought on the point of time between the present and the future rather than on the one between the present and the past. We advance our existence rather than set it back; and following what seems the natural succession of time, we proceed from past to present and from present to future. In this way we conceive the future as flowing nearer to us every moment and the past as retreating. So an equal distance in the past and in the future does not have the same effect on the imagination, because we consider the one as continually increasing and the other as continually diminishing. The fancy anticipates the course of things, and surveys the object in the condition it is tending toward as well as in the one regarded as present.

THE ADMIRATION OF DISTANCE

Great distance, especially in the past, increases our admiration and veneration.

2.3.8.1 We have thus accounted for three phenomena that seem quite remarkable: why distance weakens the conception and the passion; why distance in time has a greater effect than distance in space; and why distance in past time has a still greater effect than distance in future time. We must now consider three phenomena that seem to be, in a way, the reverse of these: why a very great distance increases our esteem and admiration for an object; why such a distance in time increases it more than one in space; and why a distance in past time increases it more than one in future time. The curiousness of the subject will, I hope, excuse my dwelling on it for a while.

2.3.8.2 To begin with the first phenomenon—why a great distance increases our esteem and admiration for an object—it is evident that the mere sight and contemplation of any greatness, whether successive or extended, enlarges the soul and gives it a noticeable delight and pleasure. A wide plain, the ocean, eternity, a succession of many ages: all these are engaging objects, and surpass anything, however beautiful, whose beauty is not

accompanied by a corresponding greatness. Now when a very distant object is presented to the imagination, we naturally reflect on the distance in between, and by conceiving something great and magnificent we receive the usual satisfaction. But since the fancy passes easily from one idea to another related to it, and carries over to the second all the passions excited by the first, the admiration directed at the distance naturally spreads itself over the distant object. And so we find that the object need not actually be distant from us in order to cause our admiration; it is enough if, through the natural association of ideas, it carries our view to some considerable distance. A great traveler, even in the same room with us, will pass for a very extraordinary person; just as a Greek medal, even in our own cabinet, is always valued as a precious curiosity. Here the object, by one natural transition, carries our view to the distance; and the admiration that arises from that distance returns, by another natural transition, to the object.

2.3.8.3 But although every great distance produces admiration for the distant object, a distance in time has a more considerable effect than one in space. Ancient busts and inscriptions are valued more than Japanese lacquered tables; and, not to mention the Greeks and Romans, we certainly regard the ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians with more veneration than the modern Chinese and Persians, and spend more fruitless effort clearing up the history and chronology of the former than it would cost us to make a voyage and be reliably informed about the character, learning, and government of the latter. I will have to make a digression in order to explain this phenomenon.

2.3.8.4 It is a very noticeable quality of human nature that any opposition that does not entirely discourage and intimidate us has, if anything, the contrary effect, and inspires us with more than ordinary grandeur and magnanimity. In gathering our force to overcome the opposition we invigorate the soul and give it an elevation it would otherwise never have known. Compliance, by making our strength useless, leaves us unaware of it; but opposition awakens it and puts it to work.

2.3.8.5 The reverse is also true. Opposition not only enlarges the soul; the soul, when full of courage and magnanimity, in a way seeks out opposition. Spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis / Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.[6]

2.3.8.6 Whatever supports and fills out the passions is agreeable to us; whatever weakens and enfeebles them, on the contrary, is uneasy. Since opposition has the first effect and ease the second, it is no wonder that the mind, in certain dispositions, desires the former and dislikes the latter.

2.3.8.7 These principles affect the imagination as well as the passions. To be convinced of this we need only consider the influence of heights and depths on that faculty. Any great elevation of place gives the imagination a kind of pride or sublimity, and a fancied superiority over those who lie below; and, conversely, a sublime and strong imagination conveys the idea of ascent and elevation. This is why we associate, in a way, the idea of whatever is good with height, and evil with lowness. Heaven is supposed to be above, and hell below. A noble genius is called elevated and sublime. *Atque udam spernit humum fugiente penna*.[7] On the other hand, a commonplace and trivial conception is called either low or mean. Prosperity is called ascent, and adversity descent. Kings and princes are supposed to be placed at the top of human affairs, while peasants and day laborers are said to be in the lowest stations. These ways of thinking and of expressing ourselves are not as unimportant as they may seem at first sight.

2.3.8.8 It is evident to common sense as well as to philosophy that there is no natural or essential difference between high and low, and that this distinction arises only from the gravitation of matter, which produces motion from the one to the other. The very same direction that is called ascent in this part of the globe is called descent by our antipodes; and this can come from nothing but the contrary tendency of bodies. Now it is certain that

6 Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.158–59: "Among the tame herds he prays for a foaming boar, or for a tawny lion to come down from the mountain."

7 Horace, Odes 3.2.23–24: "and spurns the damp earth on fleeing wing."

the tendency of bodies, continually acting on our senses, must produce by custom a similar tendency in the fancy; and that when we consider an object situated on a height, the idea of its weight gives us a propensity to carry it from where it is to the place immediately below, and so on until we come to the ground, which stops the body and our imagination alike. For a similar reason we feel a difficulty in going upward, and pass only with a kind of reluctance from what is lower to what is situated above it—as if our ideas acquired a kind of gravity from their objects. As proof of this, do we not find that the ease so much sought after in music and poetry is called the fall or cadence of the harmony or the sentence—the idea of ease conveying to us the idea of descent, in the same way that descent produces ease?

2.3.8.9 Since, then, the imagination, in running from low to high, meets opposition in its internal qualities and principles; and since the soul, when elevated with joy and courage, in a way seeks out opposition and throws itself eagerly into any scene of thought or action where its courage finds material to nourish and exercise it; it follows that everything that invigorates and enlivens the soul, whether by touching the passions or the imagination, naturally conveys to the fancy this inclination to ascend, and determines it to run against the natural current of its thoughts and conceptions. This aspiring movement of the imagination suits the present disposition of the mind; and the difficulty, instead of extinguishing its vigor and eagerness, has the contrary effect of sustaining and increasing them. That is why virtue, genius, power, and riches are associated with height and sublimity, while poverty, slavery, and folly are joined with descent and lowness. If things were with us as Milton represents them with the angels, for whom descent is contrary to nature and who cannot sink without labor and compulsion, this order of things would be entirely reversed. This is clear from the fact that the very nature of ascent and descent derives from difficulty and propensity, so that every one of their effects comes from that origin.

2.3.8.10 All this is easily applied to the present question: why a considerable distance in time produces greater veneration for distant objects than a similar removal in space. The imagination moves with more difficulty in passing from one portion of time to another than in a transition through the parts of space, because space or extension appears united to our senses, while time or succession is always broken and divided. When joined with a small distance, this difficulty interrupts and weakens the fancy; but in a great removal it has the contrary effect. The mind, elevated by the vastness of its object, is elevated still further by the difficulty of the conception; and being obliged at every moment to renew its efforts in the transition from one part of time to another, it feels a more vigorous and sublime disposition than in a transition through the parts of space, where the ideas flow along with ease. In this disposition the imagination, passing as usual from considering the distance to viewing the distant object, gives us a proportional veneration for it. That is why all the relics of antiquity are so precious in our eyes, and seem more valuable than what is brought even from the most remote parts of the world.

2.3.8.11 The third phenomenon I noted will fully confirm this. Not every removal in time has the effect of producing veneration and esteem. We are not inclined to imagine that our descendants will surpass us, or equal our ancestors. This phenomenon is all the more remarkable because a distance in the future does not weaken our ideas as much as an equal removal in the past. Although a removal in the past, when very great, increases our passions beyond a similar removal in the future, a small removal has a greater influence in diminishing them.

2.3.8.12 In our ordinary way of thinking we are placed in a kind of middle station between the past and the future; and since our imagination finds a kind of difficulty in running back along the former and an ease in following the course of the latter, the difficulty conveys the notion of ascent, and the ease that of the contrary. So we imagine our ancestors to be, in a way, raised above us, and our descendants to lie below us. Our fancy reaches the

one only with effort, but reaches the other easily. That effort weakens the conception where the distance is small, but enlarges and elevates the imagination when accompanied by a suitable object. The ease, on the other hand, assists the fancy in a small removal, but detracts from its force when it contemplates any considerable distance.

CALM AND VIOLENT PASSIONS

Hume sums up: what we call reason is calm passion, and the two struggle for the will.

2.3.8.13 Before we leave this subject of the will, it may not be out of place to go over in a few words everything that has been said about it, in order to set the whole more clearly before the reader's eyes. What we commonly understand by passion is a violent and noticeable emotion of mind that arises when some good or evil is presented, or some object that, by the original formation of our faculties, is fitted to excite an appetite. By reason we mean affections of exactly the same kind as these, but ones that operate more calmly and cause no disturbance in the temper. This tranquility leads us into a mistake about them, and makes us regard them as merely the conclusions of our intellectual faculties. Both the causes and the effects of these violent and calm passions are quite variable, and depend to a great extent on the particular temper and disposition of each individual. Generally speaking, the violent passions have a more powerful influence on the will; though it is often found that the calm ones, when reinforced by reflection and backed by resolution, are able to control them in their most furious movements. What makes this whole affair more uncertain is that a calm passion can easily be changed into a violent one, either by a change of temper or by a change in the circumstances and situation of the object—for instance, by borrowing force from some accompanying passion, by custom, or by exciting the imagination. On the whole, this struggle of passion and reason, as it is called, diversifies human life, and makes people so different not only

from one another but also from themselves at different times. Philosophy can account for only a few of the greater and more noticeable events of this war; it must leave all the smaller and more delicate revolutions alone, since they depend on principles too fine and minute for it to comprehend.

THE DIRECT PASSIONS

Hope and fear arise from mixtures of grief and joy produced by uncertainty.

2.3.9.1 It is easy to observe that the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that to produce an affection of any kind it is only necessary to present some good or evil. Take away pain and pleasure, and love and hatred, pride and humility, desire and aversion, and most of our reflective or secondary impressions are immediately taken away with them.

2.3.9.2 The impressions that arise from good and evil most naturally and with the least preparation are the direct passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind, by an original instinct, tends to unite itself with the good and to avoid the evil, even when these are conceived merely in idea and are thought of as existing at some future time.

2.3.9.3 But suppose there is an immediate impression of pain or pleasure, arising from an object related to ourselves or to others. This does not prevent the propensity or aversion, with the emotions that follow from it; rather, by concurring with certain dormant principles of the human mind, it excites the new impressions of pride or humility, love or hatred. The propensity that unites us to the object, or separates us from it, goes on operating, but now in conjunction with the indirect passions, which arise from a double relation of impressions and ideas.

2.3.9.4 These indirect passions, being always either agreeable or uneasy, in their turn give additional force to the direct passions, and increase our desire for or aversion to the object. Thus a suit of fine clothes produces pleasure by its beauty, and this pleasure

produces the direct passions, or the impressions of volition and desire. Again, when these clothes are considered as belonging to ourselves, the double relation gives us the sentiment of pride, which is an indirect passion; and the pleasure that accompanies that passion flows back to the direct affections and gives new force to our desire or volition, joy or hope.

2.3.9.5 When good is certain or probable, it produces joy. When evil is in the same situation, *grief* or *sorrow* arises.

2.3.9.6 When either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to *fear* or *hope*, according to the degree of uncertainty on one side or the other.

2.3.9.7 *Desire* arises from good considered simply, and *aversion* from evil. The *will* exerts itself when either the good or the absence of the evil can be attained by some action of the mind or body.

2.3.9.8 Besides good and evil—or, in other words, pain and pleasure—the direct passions often arise from a natural impulse or instinct that is completely inexplicable. Of this kind are the desire that our enemies be punished and that our friends be happy; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, strictly speaking, produce good and evil, rather than proceeding from them as the other affections do.

2.3.9.9 None of the direct affections seems to deserve our special attention except hope and fear, which we will try to account for here. It is evident that the very same event that would produce grief or joy if it were certain always gives rise to fear or hope when it is only probable and uncertain. So to understand why this circumstance makes such a considerable difference, we must reflect on what I have already put forward in the preceding book about the nature of probability.

2.3.9.10 Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, which does not allow the mind to settle on either side, but tosses it incessantly from one to the other, so that at one moment it is determined to consider an object as existing and at another as the contrary. The imagination or understanding—call it what you like—fluctuates between the

opposite views; and though it may perhaps be turned to one side more often than the other, it is impossible for it, because of the opposition of causes or chances, to rest on either. The pro and con of the question prevail by turns; and the mind, surveying the object in its opposite principles, finds such a contrariety that all certainty and settled opinion are utterly destroyed.

2.3.9.11 Suppose, then, that the object whose reality we are doubtful about is an object of either desire or aversion. It is evident that, as the mind turns to one side or the other, it must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow. An object whose existence we desire gives satisfaction when we reflect on the causes that produce it, and for the same reason excites grief or uneasiness from the opposite consideration. So just as the understanding, in all probable questions, is divided between contrary points of view, the affections must in the same way be divided between opposite emotions.

2.3.9.12 Now if we consider the human mind, we will find that, with regard to the passions, it is not like a wind instrument, which, in running over all the notes, loses the sound immediately when the breath stops; it resembles rather a string instrument, where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and imperceptibly dies away. The imagination is extremely quick and agile, but the passions are slow and sluggish. So when an object is presented that offers a variety of views to the one and of emotions to the other, then even though the fancy may change its views with great speed, each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion; instead, the one passion will always be mixed and blended with the other. As the probability inclines to good or to evil, the passion of joy or of sorrow predominates in the mixture. For the nature of probability is to throw a greater number of views or chances on one side; or, what comes to the same thing, a greater number of recurrences of one passion; or, since the scattered passions are collected into one, a greater degree of that passion. In other words, grief and joy, being intermingled with each

other through the contrary views of the imagination, produce by their union the passions of hope and fear.

2.3.9.13 On this point a very curious question may be raised about the contrariety of passions that is our present subject. It can be observed that where the objects of contrary passions are presented at once, besides the increase of the predominant passion (which has already been explained, and usually arises at their first shock or encounter), it sometimes happens that both passions exist in succession, at short intervals; sometimes that they destroy each other and neither of them takes place; and sometimes that both of them remain united in the mind. It may be asked, therefore, by what theory we can explain these variations, and to what general principle we can reduce them.

2.3.9.14 When the contrary passions arise from entirely different objects, they occur alternately, since the lack of relation between the ideas separates the impressions from each other and prevents their opposition. Thus when a man is distressed at losing a lawsuit and joyful at the birth of a son, his mind, running from the agreeable object to the calamitous one, however quickly it makes this movement, can hardly temper the one affection with the other and remain between them in a state of indifference.

2.3.9.15 The mind reaches that calm state more easily when the same event is of a mixed nature, containing something adverse and something favorable in its different circumstances. For in that case both passions, mingling with each other by means of the relation, destroy each other and leave the mind in perfect tranquility.

2.3.9.16 But suppose, in the third place, that the object is not a compound of good and evil, but is considered as probable or improbable to some degree. In that case, I maintain, the contrary passions will both be present in the soul at once, and instead of destroying and tempering each other, will subsist together and produce a third impression or affection by their union. Contrary passions cannot destroy each other except when their contrary movements meet exactly, and are opposite

in their direction as well as in the sensation they produce. This exact meeting depends on the relations of the ideas from which the passions are derived, and is more or less perfect according to the degree of the relation. In the case of probability, the contrary chances are related to the extent that they bear on the existence or non-existence of the same object. But this relation is far from perfect, since some of the chances lie on the side of existence and others on the side of non-existence, and these are objects altogether incompatible. It is impossible to survey the opposite chances, and the events that depend on them, in one steady view; the imagination has to run alternately from one to the other. Each view of the imagination produces its own particular passion, which dies away by degrees and is followed by a noticeable vibration after the stroke. The incompatibility of the views keeps the passions from colliding head-on, if I may put it that way; and yet their relation is enough to mingle their fainter emotions. It is in this way that hope and fear arise from the various mixtures of these opposite passions of grief and joy, and from their imperfect union and conjunction.

2.3.9.17 In sum: contrary passions succeed each other alternately when they arise from different objects; they destroy each other when they come from different parts of the same object; and they both subsist and mingle together when they are derived from the contrary and incompatible chances or possibilities on which a single object depends. The influence of the relations of ideas is plainly visible throughout this whole affair. If the objects of the contrary passions are totally different, the passions are like two opposite liquids in separate bottles, which have no influence on each other. If the objects are intimately connected, the passions are like an alkali and an acid, which destroy each other when mixed. If the relation is more imperfect, and consists in contradictory views of the same object, the passions are like oil and vinegar, which, however much they are mixed, never perfectly unite and blend.

2.3.9.18 Since the hypothesis about hope and fear carries its own evidence with it, we will be all the more brief in our proofs. A few strong arguments are better than many weak ones.

2.3.9.19 The passions of fear and hope can arise when the chances are equal on both sides and no superiority can be found in one over the other. Indeed, in this situation the passions are, if anything, at their strongest, since the mind then has the least foundation to rest on and is tossed about by the greatest uncertainty. Throw a greater degree of probability onto the side of grief, and you immediately see that passion spread through the mixture and tinge it into fear. Increase the probability, and with it the grief, and the fear prevails more and more, until at last, as the joy continually diminishes, it passes imperceptibly into pure grief. Once you have brought it to this point, diminish the grief in the same way you increased it—by diminishing the probability on that side—and you will see the passion clear up moment by moment, until it changes imperceptibly into hope; which in turn passes, in the same way and by slow degrees, into joy, as you increase that part of the mixture by increasing the probability. Are these not proofs as plain that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy as it is a proof in optics that a colored ray of sunlight passing through a prism is a composition of two others, when you find that, as you diminish or increase the quantity of either, it prevails proportionally more or less in the composition? I am sure neither natural nor moral philosophy admits of stronger proofs.

2.3.9.20 Probability is of two kinds: either the object is really uncertain in itself and is to be determined by chance; or, though the object is already certain, it is uncertain to our judgment, which finds a number of proofs on each side of the question. Both kinds of probability cause fear and hope, and this can only come from the property they share—namely, the uncertainty and fluctuation they give the imagination through the contrariety of views common to both.

2.3.9.21 It is usually a probable good or evil that produces hope or fear, because probability, being a wavering and inconstant

way of surveying an object, naturally causes a similar mixture and uncertainty of passion. But we may observe that wherever this mixture can be produced by other causes, the passions of fear and hope will arise even though there is no probability; and this must be admitted to be a convincing proof of the present hypothesis.

2.3.9.22 We find that an evil conceived merely as possible sometimes produces fear, especially if the evil is very great. A man cannot think of extreme pains and tortures without trembling, if he is in the least danger of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is made up for by the greatness of the evil, and the sensation is as lively as if the evil were more probable. One view or glimpse of the former has the same effect as several of the latter.

2.3.9.23 But it is not only possible evils that cause fear; even some admitted to be impossible do—as when we tremble on the edge of a precipice, though we know we are perfectly safe and it is up to us whether we take another step forward. This comes from the immediate presence of the evil, which influences the imagination in the same way its certainty would; but, being met by the reflection that we are safe, it is immediately withdrawn, and causes the same kind of passion as when contrary passions are produced by a contrariety of chances.

2.3.9.24 Evils that are certain sometimes have the same effect in producing fear as possible or impossible ones. Thus a man in a strong, well-guarded prison, without the least means of escape, trembles at the thought of the rack to which he has been sentenced. This happens only when the certain evil is terrible and overwhelming; in that case the mind continually rejects it with horror, while it continually presses in upon the thought. The evil is fixed and settled, but the mind cannot bear to fix on it; and from this fluctuation and uncertainty there arises a passion that looks very much like fear.

2.3.9.25 But fear or hope arises not only where good or evil is uncertain as to its existence, but also where it is uncertain as to its kind. Suppose a man is told by someone whose truthfulness

he cannot doubt that one of his sons has suddenly been killed. It is evident that the passion this event would cause would not settle into pure grief until he received certain information about which of his sons he had lost. Here there is a certain evil, but its kind is uncertain. Consequently the fear we feel on this occasion has not the least mixture of joy, and arises merely from the fancy's fluctuation between its objects. And although each side of the question here produces the same passion, that passion cannot settle, but receives from the imagination a trembling and unsteady motion, which resembles the mixture and contention of grief and joy both in its cause and in its sensation.

2.3.9.26 From these principles we can explain a phenomenon in the passions that at first sight seems very extraordinary: surprise tends to turn into fear, and everything unexpected frightens us. The most obvious conclusion from this is that human nature is in general timid. At the sudden appearance of any object we immediately conclude that it is an evil, and without waiting until we can examine its nature and see whether it is good or bad, we are at first affected with fear. This, I say, is the most obvious conclusion; but on further examination we will find that the phenomenon has to be explained otherwise. The suddenness and strangeness of an appearance naturally stir up a commotion in the mind, as does everything we are not prepared for and not accustomed to. This commotion in turn naturally produces a curiosity or inquisitiveness. Because the object strikes us with a strong and sudden impulse, this curiosity is very violent and becomes uneasy, and in its fluctuation and uncertainty it resembles the sensation of fear, or the mixed passions of grief and joy. This image of fear naturally turns into the thing itself and gives us a real apprehension of evil, since the mind always forms its judgments more from its present disposition than from the nature of its objects.

2.3.9.27 So all kinds of uncertainty are strongly connected with fear, even when they do not cause any opposition of passions through the opposite views and considerations they present to us. Someone who has left a friend who is ill will feel more anxi-

ety on his account than if he were with him, even though perhaps he could neither help him nor judge how his illness will turn out. In this case the principal object of the passion, his friend's life or death, is just as uncertain to him when he is present as when he is absent. Yet there are a thousand little circumstances of his friend's situation and condition, and knowing them fixes the idea and prevents the fluctuation and uncertainty so closely allied to fear. Uncertainty is, in one respect, as closely allied to hope as to fear, since it is an essential part of the makeup of hope. But the reason it does not lean to that side is that uncertainty by itself is uneasy, and so has a relation of impressions to the uneasy passions.

2.3.9.28 That is how our uncertainty about any minute circumstance concerning a person increases our fear of his death or misfortune. Horace has remarked on this phenomenon: Ut assidens implumibus pullis avis
Serpentium allapsus timet,
Magis relictis; non, ut adsit, auxilî
Latura plus præsentibus.[8]

2.3.9.29 But I carry this principle of the connection of fear with uncertainty further, and observe that any doubt produces that passion, even if it presents nothing to us on any side but what is good and desirable. A virgin on her wedding night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, though she expects nothing but pleasure of the highest kind, and what she has long wished for. The newness and greatness of the event, and the confusion of wishes and joys, so perplex the mind that it does not know which passion to settle on. From this arises a fluttering or unsettledness of the spirits, which is to some degree uneasy and so very naturally degenerates into fear.

2.3.9.30 So we still find that whatever causes any fluctuation or mixture of passions, with any degree of uneasiness, always pro-

8 Horace, Epodes 1.19–22: "As a bird sitting by its unfledged chicks fears the gliding approach of snakes more when it has left them, though if it were there it could give them no more help."

duces fear, or at least a passion so like it that the two can scarcely be told apart.

2.3.9.31 I have limited myself here to examining hope and fear in their simplest and most natural situation, without considering all the variations they may undergo from the mixture of different views and reflections. Terror, consternation, astonishment, anxiety, and other passions of that kind are nothing but different species and degrees of fear. It is easy to imagine how a different situation of the object, or a different turn of thought, may change even the sensation of a passion. This may in general explain all the particular subdivisions of the other affections, as well as of fear. Love may show itself in the form of tenderness, friendship, intimacy, esteem, goodwill, and many other guises. At bottom these are the same affection and arise from the same causes, though with a small variation that there is no need to give any particular account of. This is why I have all along limited myself to the principal passion.

2.3.9.32 The same wish to avoid long-windedness is why I pass over any examination of the will and the direct passions as they appear in animals. Nothing is more evident than that they are of the same nature, and excited by the same causes, as in human beings. I leave this to the reader's own observation, asking him at the same time to consider the additional force it gives to the present system.

CURIOSITY, OR THE LOVE OF TRUTH

The pleasure of inquiry lies in exercising the mind, as in hunting and gambling.

2.3.10.1 But it seems to me we have been rather inattentive in running over so many different parts of the human mind and examining so many passions without once taking into consideration the love of truth, which was the first source of all our inquiries. So before we leave this subject it will be proper to give a few reflections to that passion and show its origin in human nature. It is an affection of so peculiar a kind that it would have

been impossible to treat it under any of the headings we have examined without risking obscurity and confusion.

2.3.10.2 Truth is of two kinds. It consists either in the discovery of the proportions of ideas, considered as such, or in the conformity of our ideas of objects to their real existence. It is certain that the first kind of truth is not desired merely as truth, and that it is not the correctness of our conclusions alone that gives the pleasure. For these conclusions are just as correct when we discover that two bodies are equal by using a pair of compasses as when we learn it by a mathematical demonstration. In the one case the proofs are demonstrative and in the other only sensible, yet generally speaking the mind accepts the one with as much assurance as the other. And in an arithmetical calculation, where both the truth and the assurance are of the same nature as in the most profound algebraic problem, the pleasure is very slight, if it does not actually degenerate into pain. This is clear proof that the satisfaction we sometimes get from discovering truth comes not from truth merely as such, but only from truth as endowed with certain qualities.

2.3.10.3 The first and most important circumstance needed to make truth agreeable is the genius and ability employed in inventing and discovering it. What is easy and obvious is never valued. Even what is difficult in itself is little regarded if we come to know it without difficulty and without any stretch of thought or judgment. We love to trace the demonstrations of mathematicians, but we would get little entertainment from someone who simply informed us of the proportions of lines and angles, even if we had the utmost confidence in both his judgment and his truthfulness. In that case, having ears is enough to learn the truth. We are never obliged to fix our attention or exert our genius, and of all the exercises of the mind this is the most pleasant and agreeable.

2.3.10.4 But though the exercise of genius is the principal source of the satisfaction we get from the sciences, I doubt whether it alone is enough to give us any considerable enjoyment. The truth we discover must also be of some importance. It is easy to

multiply algebraic problems to infinity, and there is no end to discovering the proportions of conic sections. Yet few mathematicians take any pleasure in these researches; they turn their thoughts to what is more useful and important. Now the question is: in what way do this utility and importance act on us? The difficulty here arises from this. Many philosophers have used up their time, destroyed their health, and neglected their fortunes in searching for truths they considered important and useful to the world. Yet it was clear from their whole conduct and behavior that they had no share of public spirit and no concern for the interests of mankind. If they were convinced that their discoveries were of no consequence, they would entirely lose all taste for their studies, and this even though the consequences are entirely indifferent to them. That seems to be a contradiction.

2.3.10.5 To remove this contradiction, we must consider that there are certain desires and inclinations that go no further than the imagination. They are the faint shadows and images of passions rather than any real affections. Suppose, for example, that a man surveys the fortifications of some city. He considers their strength and advantages, natural or man-made, and observes the layout and design of the bastions, ramparts, mines, and other military works. It is plain that he will receive pleasure and satisfaction in proportion as all these are fitted to attain their ends. This pleasure arises from the utility and not the form of the objects, so it can be nothing but a sympathy with the inhabitants, for whose security all this art is employed. Yet it is possible that this person, as a stranger or an enemy, may in his heart have no kindness for them, or may even hate them.

2.3.10.6 It may indeed be objected that such a remote sympathy is a very slight foundation for a passion, and that the great industry and application we often observe in philosophers can never come from so trivial an origin. But here I return to what I have already remarked. The pleasure of study consists chiefly in the activity of the mind, and in the exercise of genius and understanding in discovering or comprehending some truth. If the

importance of the truth is required to complete the pleasure, this is not because of any considerable addition it brings to our enjoyment by itself. It is only because importance is to some extent required to fix our attention. When we are careless and inattentive, the same activity of the understanding has no effect on us. It cannot convey any of the satisfaction that comes from it when we are in another frame of mind.

2.3.10.7 But besides the activity of the mind, which is the principal foundation of the pleasure, a degree of success is also required in attaining the end, that is, in discovering the truth we are examining. On this point I shall make a general remark that may be useful on many occasions. Where the mind pursues some end with passion, that passion may not come originally from the end but merely from the activity and the pursuit. Even so, by the natural course of the affections we acquire a concern for the end itself, and are uneasy at any disappointment we meet with in pursuing it. This comes from the relation and parallel direction of the passions mentioned above.

2.3.10.8 To illustrate all this by a similar case, I will observe that no two passions resemble each other more closely than those of hunting and philosophy, however disproportionate they may at first sight appear. It is evident that the pleasure of hunting consists in the activity of mind and body: the motion, the attention, the difficulty, and the uncertainty. It is evident too that these activities must be accompanied by an idea of utility if they are to have any effect on us. Take a man of the greatest fortune, as far removed from greed as can be. He takes pleasure in hunting partridges and pheasants, but feels no satisfaction in shooting crows and magpies, because he considers the first fit for the table and the second entirely useless. Here it is certain that the utility or importance does not in itself cause any real passion, but is only needed to support the imagination. The same person who overlooks a profit ten times greater in any other matter is pleased to bring home half a dozen woodcocks or plovers after spending several hours hunting them. To make the parallel between hunting and philosophy more complete, we may

observe that in both cases the end of our activity may in itself be despised. Yet in the heat of the activity we come to attend so closely to this end that we are very uneasy at any disappointment, and are sorry when we either miss our game or fall into some error in our reasoning.

2.3.10.9 If we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion for gambling, which gives pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy. It has been remarked that the pleasure of gambling does not come from self-interest alone, since many people give up a sure gain for this entertainment. Nor does it come from the game alone, since the same people get no satisfaction when they play for nothing. It comes from both these causes united, though separately they have no effect. It is here as with certain chemical preparations, where mixing two clear, transparent liquids produces a third that is opaque and colored.

2.3.10.10 The interest we have in any game engages our attention, and without attention we can have no enjoyment, either in that or in any other activity. Once our attention is engaged, the difficulty, variety, and sudden reversals of fortune interest us still further, and our satisfaction arises from that concern. Human life is so tiresome a scene, and people are generally of such indolent dispositions, that whatever amuses them on the whole gives them a noticeable pleasure, even if it does so by a passion mixed with pain. And this pleasure is increased here by the nature of the objects. They are sensible and of narrow compass, so they are easily entered into and are agreeable to the imagination.

2.3.10.11 The same theory that explains the love of truth in mathematics and algebra may be extended to morals, politics, natural philosophy, and other studies, where we consider not abstract relations of ideas but their real connections and existence. But besides the love of knowledge that shows itself in the sciences, there is a certain curiosity implanted in human nature, and this passion is derived from a quite different principle. Some people have an insatiable desire to know the actions

and circumstances of their neighbors, though their interest is in no way concerned in them, and they must rely entirely on others for their information. In that case there is no room for study or application. Let us look for the reason for this phenomenon.

2.3.10.12 It has been proved at length that the effect of belief is at once to enliven and fix any idea in the imagination, and to prevent all hesitation and uncertainty about it. Both these circumstances are advantageous. By the vivacity of the idea we interest the fancy, and produce, though in a lesser degree, the same pleasure that arises from a moderate passion. And as the vivacity of the idea gives pleasure, so its certainty prevents uneasiness, by fixing one particular idea in the mind and keeping it from wavering in the choice of its objects. It is a quality of human nature, conspicuous on many occasions and common to both mind and body, that too sudden and violent a change is unpleasant to us. However indifferent any objects may be in themselves, their alteration gives uneasiness. It is the nature of doubt to cause a variation in the thought and to carry us suddenly from one idea to another, so doubt must consequently be an occasion of pain. This pain occurs chiefly where interest, relation, or the greatness and novelty of some event engages us in it. It is not every matter of fact that we are curious to be informed about. Nor are the facts that rouse our curiosity only the ones we have an interest in knowing. It is enough if the idea strikes us with such force, and concerns us so closely, that its instability and inconstancy make us uneasy. A stranger arriving for the first time in some town may be entirely indifferent to knowing the history and adventures of the inhabitants. But as he becomes better acquainted with them and has lived among them for some considerable time, he acquires the same curiosity as the natives. When we are reading the history of a nation, we may have an ardent desire to clear up some doubt or difficulty that comes up in it. But we become careless about such researches once the ideas of these events have been largely obliterated.

Book III, Part 1: Of virtue and vice in general

Hume argues that moral distinctions come not from reason but from a moral sense.

SECT. I. MORAL DISTINCTIONS NOT DERIVED FROM REASON

3.1.1.1 There is a drawback that attends all abstruse reasoning. It may silence an opponent without convincing him, and it takes the same intense study to make us feel its force as was needed at first to invent it. When we leave our study and engage in the ordinary affairs of life, its conclusions seem to vanish like the phantoms of the night at the appearance of morning, and it is hard for us to keep even the conviction we had attained with difficulty. This is still more conspicuous in a long chain of reasoning. There we must preserve the evidence of the first propositions to the end, and we often lose sight of all the most accepted maxims, whether of philosophy or of common life. I am not without hope, however, that the present system of philosophy will gain new force as it advances, and that our reasonings about morals will confirm whatever has been said about the *understanding* and the *passions*. Morality is a subject that interests us above all others. We imagine the peace of society to be at stake in every decision about it, and this concern obviously must make our speculations appear more real and solid than when the subject is largely indifferent to us. What affects us, we conclude, can never be a chimera. And since our passion is engaged on one side or the other, we naturally think the question lies

within human comprehension, something we tend to doubt in other cases of this kind. Without this advantage I would never have ventured on a third volume of such abstruse philosophy, in an age in which most people seem agreed on turning reading into an amusement and rejecting everything that takes any considerable degree of attention to understand.

3.1.1.2 It has been observed that nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions, and that all the activities of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking fall under this heading. The mind can never exert itself in any action that we cannot include under the term perception. Consequently that term applies no less to the judgments by which we distinguish moral good and evil than to every other operation of the mind. To approve of one character and to condemn another are only so many different perceptions.

3.1.1.3 Now perceptions divide into two kinds, namely impressions and ideas, and this distinction raises a question with which we will open our present inquiry into morals: *Is it by means of our ideas or our impressions that we distinguish between vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameworthy or praiseworthy?* This will at once cut off all loose talk and declamation, and bring us down to something precise and exact on the present subject.

3.1.1.4 Some affirm that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason. Some hold that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being who considers them. Others say that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation not only on human beings but on the Deity himself. All these systems agree in the opinion that morality, like truth, is discerned merely by ideas, and by their juxtaposition and comparison. So in order to judge these systems we need only consider whether it is possible to distinguish between moral good and evil by reason alone, or whether some other principles must work along with it to enable us to make that distinction.

3.1.1.5 If morality naturally had no influence on human passions and actions, it would be pointless to take such pains to instill it, and nothing would be more fruitless than the multitude of rules and precepts that all moralists are so full of. Philosophy is commonly divided into speculative and practical. Since morality is always included under the latter, it is supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and inactive judgments of the understanding. This is confirmed by common experience, which tells us that people are often governed by their duties. They are deterred from some actions by the thought that they are unjust, and impelled to others by the thought that they are obligatory.

3.1.1.6 Since morals, then, have an influence on actions and affections, it follows that they cannot be derived from reason, because reason alone, as we have already proved, can never have any such influence. Morals arouse passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason by itself is utterly powerless in this respect. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.

3.1.1.7 No one, I believe, will deny that this inference is sound, and there is no way to evade it except by denying the principle on which it is founded. As long as it is granted that reason has no influence on our passions and actions, it is useless to claim that morality is discovered only by a deduction of reason. An active principle can never be founded on an inactive one. If reason is inactive in itself, it must remain so in all its forms and appearances, whether it is at work on natural or moral subjects, and whether it considers the powers of external bodies or the actions of rational beings.

3.1.1.8 It would be tedious to repeat all the arguments by which I have proved[1] that reason is perfectly inert and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection; it will be easy to recall what was said on that subject. I will only recall here one of those arguments, which I will try to make still more conclusive and more applicable to the present subject.

1 HUME'S NOTE. Book II, Part III, Section 3.

3.1.1.9 Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in agreement or disagreement either with the real relations of ideas or with real existence and matter of fact. Whatever is not capable of this agreement or disagreement, therefore, cannot be true or false, and can never be an object of our reason. Now it is evident that our passions, volitions, and actions are not capable of any such agreement or disagreement. They are original facts and realities, complete in themselves, and imply no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions. It is impossible, therefore, for them to be pronounced either true or false, or to be either contrary or conformable to reason.

3.1.1.10 This argument is doubly useful for our present purpose. It proves *directly* that actions do not get their merit from conformity to reason, nor their blame from contrariety to it. And it proves the same truth more *indirectly*: reason can never immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving it, so it cannot be the source of moral good and evil, which are found to have that influence. Actions may be praiseworthy or blameworthy, but they cannot be reasonable or unreasonable. Praiseworthy or blameworthy, therefore, are not the same as reasonable or unreasonable. The merit and demerit of actions frequently contradict, and sometimes control, our natural inclinations. But reason has no such influence. Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals.

3.1.1.11 But perhaps it may be said that although no volition or action can be immediately contrary to reason, we may find such a contrariety in some of the things that go along with the action, that is, in its causes or effects. The action may cause a judgment, or may be indirectly caused by one when the judgment works together with a passion. On that account, by a loose way of speaking that philosophy will hardly allow, the same contrariety may be ascribed to the action. We should now consider how far this truth or falsehood can be the source of morals.

3.1.1.12 It has been observed that reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can influence our conduct in only two ways. It may arouse a passion by informing us of the existence of something that is a proper object of it, or it may discover the connection of causes and effects so as to give us the means of exerting some passion. These are the only kinds of judgment that can accompany our actions, or can be said to produce them in any way; and it must be granted that these judgments may often be false and mistaken. A person may be moved by passion because he supposes that pain or pleasure lies in an object that has no tendency to produce either of these sensations, or that produces the opposite of what he imagines. A person may also take the wrong measures for attaining his end, and by his foolish conduct may delay rather than advance the execution of some project. These false judgments may be thought to affect the passions and actions connected with them, and may be said to make them unreasonable, in a figurative and improper way of speaking. But even granting this, it is easy to see that these errors are so far from being the source of all immorality that they are commonly quite innocent. They bring no guilt at all on the person who is unlucky enough to fall into them. They go no further than a mistake of fact, which moralists have not generally considered criminal, since it is perfectly involuntary. I am more to be pitied than blamed if I am mistaken about the power of objects to produce pain or pleasure, or if I do not know the proper means of satisfying my desires. No one can ever regard such errors as a defect in my moral character. Suppose, for instance, that a fruit that is really disagreeable appears to me at a distance, and I mistakenly imagine it to be pleasant and delicious. Here is one error. I choose certain means of reaching this fruit that are not suited to my end. Here is a second error, and there is no third that could ever possibly enter into our reasonings about actions. I ask, then: is a man in this situation, guilty of these two errors, to be regarded as vicious and criminal, however unavoidable they may have been? Or is it possible to imagine that such errors are the sources of all immorality?

3.1.1.13 And here it may be proper to observe that if moral distinctions are derived from the truth or falsehood of those judgments, they must occur wherever we form such judgments. It will make no difference whether the question concerns an apple or a kingdom, or whether the error is avoidable or unavoidable. For since the very essence of morality is supposed to consist in agreement or disagreement with reason, the other circumstances are entirely arbitrary. They can never either give an action the character of virtuous or vicious or take that character away. We may add that since this agreement or disagreement does not admit of degrees, all virtues and vices would of course be equal.

3.1.1.14 It might be claimed that although a mistake of fact is not criminal, a mistake of right often is, and that this may be the source of immorality. I would answer that such a mistake can never be the original source of immorality, since it presupposes a real right and wrong, that is, a real distinction in morals, independent of these judgments. A mistake of right, therefore, may become a species of immorality; but it is only a secondary one, and it is founded on some other immorality prior to it.

3.1.1.15 Then there are the judgments that are the effects of our actions, which, when false, lead people to pronounce the actions contrary to truth and reason. As for these, we may observe that our actions never cause any judgment, true or false, in ourselves; they have such an influence only on others. It is certain that an action may on many occasions give rise to false conclusions in others. Someone who sees through a window some lewd behavior of mine with my neighbor's wife may be simple enough to imagine she is certainly my own. In this respect my action somewhat resembles a lie or falsehood, with this significant difference: I do not perform the action with any intention of producing a false judgment in someone else, but merely to satisfy my lust and passion. Still, it causes a mistake and false judgment by accident, and by some odd figurative way of speaking the falsehood of its effects may be ascribed to the action itself. But I still see no rational pretext for asserting that the tendency

to cause such an error is the first spring or original source of all

immorality.[2]

3.1.1.16 So, on the whole, it is impossible for the distinction between moral good and evil to be made by reason, since that distinction has an influence on our actions of which reason alone is incapable. Reason and judgment may indeed be the mediate cause of an action, by prompting or by directing a passion. But no one claims that a judgment of this kind, whether true or false, is accompanied by virtue or vice. And as for the

To see the fallacy of his hypothesis, we need only consider how a false conclusion comes to be drawn from an action. It happens only because of an obscurity of natural principles, which lets contrary causes secretly interrupt a cause in its operation and makes the connection between two objects uncertain and variable. Now a like uncertainty and variety of causes occur even in natural objects, and produce a like error in our judgment. So if that tendency to produce error were the very essence of vice and immorality, it would follow that even inanimate objects could be vicious and immoral.

judgments caused by our actions, they can still less give those

It is no use to insist that inanimate objects act without liberty and choice. Liberty and choice are not needed for an action to produce an erroneous conclusion in us, so they can in no respect be essential to morality; and I do not readily see how, on this system, they could ever come to be taken into account at all. If the tendency to cause error is the origin of immorality, that tendency and immorality would in every case be inseparable.

Add to this that if I had taken the precaution of shutting the windows while I indulged in those liberties with my neighbor's wife, I would have been guilty of no immorality. My action, being perfectly concealed, would have had no tendency to produce any false conclusion.

For the same reason, a thief who climbs in at a window by a ladder, and takes every imaginable care to cause no disturbance, is in no respect criminal. Either he will not be noticed, or, if he is, he cannot possibly produce any error, since no one will take him from these circumstances to be anything other than what he really is.

It is well known that cross-eyed people very readily cause mistakes in others: we imagine they are greeting or talking to one person when they are addressing another. Are they, then, immoral on that account?

Besides, we can easily see that all those arguments reason in an obvious circle. A person who takes possession of another's goods and uses them as his own in a sense declares them to be his own, and this falsehood is supposed to be the source of the immorality of injustice. But is property, or right, or obligation, intelligible without a prior morality?

A man who is ungrateful to his benefactor in a sense affirms that he never received any favors from him. But in what sense? Is it because it is his duty to be grateful? But this presupposes some prior rule of duty and morals. Is it because human nature is generally grateful, and leads us to conclude that a man who does harm never received any favor from the person he harmed? But human nature is not so generally grateful as to justify such a conclusion. And even if it were, is an exception to a general rule criminal in every case, for no other reason than that it is an exception?

But what should be enough to destroy this whimsical system entirely is this. Explaining why truth is virtuous and falsehood vicious leaves us with the same difficulty as explaining the merit or baseness of any other action. I will grant, if you like, that all immorality is derived from this supposed falsehood in action, provided you can give me any plausible reason why such a falsehood is immoral. If you consider the matter properly, you will find yourself in the same difficulty as at the beginning.

This last argument is very conclusive. If there is not an evident merit or baseness attached to this kind of truth or falsehood, it can never have any influence on our actions. For who ever thought of refraining from an action because others might possibly draw false conclusions from it? Or who ever performed one so that he might give rise to true conclusions?

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The author is William Wollaston, *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (1722).

moral qualities to the actions that are their causes.[3]

3.1.1.17 But to be more specific, and to show that those eternal, immutable fitnesses and unfitnesses of things cannot be defended by sound philosophy, we may weigh the following considerations.

3.1.1.18 If thought and understanding alone could fix the boundaries of right and wrong, the character of virtuous and vicious would have to lie either in some relations of objects or in a matter of fact discovered by our reasoning. This consequence is evident. The operations of the human understanding divide into two kinds, the comparing of ideas and the inferring of matters of fact. So if virtue were discovered by the understanding, it would have to be an object of one of these operations, and there is no third operation of the understanding that could discover it. Certain philosophers have very diligently spread the opinion that morality is capable of demonstration. No one has ever been able to advance a single step in those demonstrations, yet it is taken for granted that this science can be brought to the same certainty as geometry or algebra. On this supposition, vice and virtue must consist in some relations, since everyone agrees that no matter of fact is capable of being demonstrated. Let us begin, then, by examining this hypothesis, and try, if possible, to pin down those moral qualities that have so long been the objects of our fruitless researches. Point out distinctly the relations that constitute morality or obligation, so that we may know what they consist in and how we must judge of them.

3.1.1.19 If you assert that vice and virtue consist in relations capable of certainty and demonstration, you must confine yourself to the four relations that alone admit of that degree of evidence. In that case you run into absurdities from which you will never be able to free yourself. You make the very essence of morality lie in the relations, and every one of these relations applies not only to an irrational object but to an inanimate one. It follows that even such objects must be capable of merit or demerit.

3 The original reads "caused by our judgments"; the sense (see 3.1.1.15) requires "actions."

Resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and *proportions in quantity and number*: all these relations belong as properly to matter as to our actions, passions, and volitions. It is unquestionable, therefore, that morality does not lie in any of these relations, nor the sense of it in discovering them.[4]

3.1.1.20 Someone might assert that the sense of morality consists in the discovery of some relation distinct from these, and that our list was not complete when we included all demonstrable relations under four general headings. To this I do not know what to reply until someone is good enough to point out this new relation to me. It is impossible to refute a system that has never yet been explained. When a man fights in the dark like this, he wastes his blows on the air, and often aims them where the enemy is not.

3.1.1.21 On this occasion, therefore, I must be content to require the following two conditions of anyone who would undertake to clarify this system. First, moral good and evil belong only to the actions of the mind, and are derived from our situation with regard to external objects. So the relations from which these moral distinctions arise must hold only between internal actions and external objects. They must not apply either to internal actions compared among themselves or to external objects set against other external objects. For morality is supposed to go along with certain relations. If these relations could belong to internal actions considered on their own, it would fol-

4 HUME'S NOTE. As proof of how confused our thinking on this subject commonly is, we may observe that those who assert that morality is demonstrable do not say that morality lies in the relations and that the relations are distinguishable by reason. They only say that reason can discover that one action, in such-and-such relations, is virtuous, and another vicious. It seems they thought it enough if they could get the word "relation" into the proposition, without troubling themselves whether it was to the purpose or not. But here, I think, is a plain argument. Demonstrative reason discovers only relations. But according to this hypothesis that same reason also discovers vice and virtue. These moral qualities, therefore, must be relations. When we blame any action in any situation, the whole complex object, of action and situation together, must form certain relations in which the essence of vice consists. Otherwise this hypothesis is unintelligible. For what does reason discover when it pronounces an action vicious? Does it discover a relation or a matter of fact? These questions are decisive, and must not be evaded.

low that we could be guilty of crimes within ourselves, independently of our situation with respect to the universe. Likewise, if these moral relations could apply to external objects, it would follow that even inanimate beings would be capable of moral beauty and deformity. Now it seems hard to imagine any relation that can be discovered between our passions, volitions, and actions, compared to external objects, that could not also belong either to these passions and volitions, or to these external objects, compared among themselves.

3.1.1.22 But it will be still more difficult to fulfill the second condition needed to justify this system. Some maintain an abstract rational difference between moral good and evil, and a natural fitness and unfitness of things. On their principles it is not only supposed that these relations, being eternal and immutable, are the same when considered by every rational creature; their effects are also supposed to be necessarily the same. And it is concluded that they have no less, or rather a greater, influence in directing the will of the Deity than in governing the rational and virtuous of our own species. These two points are evidently distinct. It is one thing to know virtue and another to conform the will to it. So in order to prove that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, binding on every rational mind, it is not enough to show the relations on which they are founded. We must also point out the connection between the relation and the will. And we must prove that this connection is so necessary that it must occur and have its influence in every well-disposed mind, even though the difference between these minds is in other respects immense and infinite. I have already proved that even in human nature no relation can ever produce any action by itself. Besides this, I say, it was shown in treating of the understanding that there is no connection of cause and effect, such as this is supposed to be, that can be discovered otherwise than by experience, or that we can claim any assurance of by simply considering the objects. All beings in the universe, considered in themselves, appear entirely loose and independent of each other. It is only by experience that we learn their influence

and connection, and we ought never to extend this influence beyond experience.

3.1.1.23 Thus it will be impossible to fulfill the first condition required by the system of eternal measures of right and wrong, because it is impossible to show the relations on which such a distinction could be founded. And it is just as impossible to fulfill the second condition, because we cannot prove *a priori* that these relations, if they really existed and were perceived, would be universally compelling and binding.

3.1.1.24 To make these general reflections clearer and more convincing, we can illustrate them with some particular cases in which this character of moral good or evil is most universally acknowledged. Of all the crimes human beings are capable of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude, especially when it is committed against parents and shows itself in the more flagrant cases of wounding and killing. All mankind acknowledges this, philosophers and ordinary people alike. The only question, which arises among philosophers, is whether the guilt or moral deformity of this action is discovered by demonstrative reasoning, or is felt by an internal sense, by means of some sentiment that reflecting on such an action naturally produces. This question will soon be decided against the first opinion if we can show the same relations in other objects without any notion of guilt or wrongdoing attending them. Reason or science is nothing but the comparing of ideas and the discovery of their relations. If the same relations have different characters, it clearly follows that those characters are not discovered by reason alone. To put the matter to this test, then, let us choose some inanimate object, such as an oak or an elm. Suppose that by dropping its seed it produces a sapling below it, which grows up by degrees and at last overtops and destroys the parent tree. I ask: is any relation missing in this case that can be discovered in parricide or ingratitude? Is not the one tree the cause of the other's existence, and the latter the cause of the former's destruction, in just the way a child who murders his parent is? It is not enough to reply that choice or will is missing. In the case

of parricide, the will does not give rise to any *different* relations. It is only the cause from which the action is derived, and so it produces the same relations that in the oak or elm arise from some other principles. It is will or choice that determines a man to kill his parent, and it is the laws of matter and motion that determine a sapling to destroy the oak it sprang from. Here, then, the same relations have different causes, but the relations are still the same. Discovering them is not in both cases attended with a notion of immorality, so it follows that this notion does not arise from such a discovery.

3.1.1.25 But to choose a case that is closer still: I would like to ask anyone why incest in the human species is criminal, while the very same action, and the same relations, in animals have not the slightest moral turpitude or deformity. Suppose the answer is that this action is innocent in animals because they do not have enough reason to discover its turpitude, but that in man, who is endowed with the faculty that ought to restrain him to his duty, the same action instantly becomes criminal. If this is said, I reply that it is obviously arguing in a circle. Before reason can perceive this turpitude, the turpitude must exist. So it is independent of the decisions of our reason, and is more properly their object than their effect. On this system, then, every animal that has sense, appetite, and will—that is, every animal—must be capable of all the same virtues and vices for which we praise and blame human beings. The only difference is that our superior reason may serve to discover the vice or virtue, and in that way may increase the blame or praise. But this discovery still presupposes that these moral distinctions have a separate existence. That existence depends only on the will and appetite, and can be distinguished from reason both in thought and in reality. Animals are capable of the same relations toward each other as the human species. So they would also be capable of the same morality, if the essence of morality consisted in these relations. Their lack of a sufficient degree of reason may prevent them from perceiving the duties and obligations of morality. But it can never prevent these duties from existing, since the duties

must exist beforehand in order to be perceived. Reason must find them; it can never produce them. This argument deserves to be weighed, since in my opinion it is entirely decisive.

VICE IS NOT A MATTER OF FACT

Hume asks where the vice in a willful murder lies, and finds it only in the observer's feeling of disapproval.

3.1.1.26 Nor does this reasoning prove only that morality does not consist in any relations that are the objects of science. If examined, it will prove with equal certainty that morality does not consist in any matter of fact that can be discovered by the understanding. This is the second part of our argument, and if it can be made evident, we may conclude that morality is not an object of reason. But can there be any difficulty in proving that vice and virtue are not matters of fact whose existence we can infer by reason? Take any action agreed to be vicious—willful murder, for instance. Examine it from every angle, and see if you can find the matter of fact, or real existence, that you call vice. Whichever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions, and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice escapes you entirely as long as you consider the object. You can never find it until you turn your reflection into your own breast and find a sentiment of disapproval that arises in you toward this action. Here is a matter of fact; but it is the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object. So when you declare any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that, from the constitution of your nature, you have a feeling or sentiment of blame when you contemplate it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colors, heat, and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects but perceptions in the mind. This discovery in morals, like that other one in physics, should be regarded as a considerable advance in the speculative sciences—though, like that one too, it has little or no influence on practice. Nothing can be more real, or concern us more, than

our own sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness. If these favor virtue and disfavor vice, nothing more can be needed to regulate our conduct and behavior.

IS AND OUGHT

Hume notes that moral writers slide from statements about what is to claims about what ought to be.

3.1.1.27 I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. In every system of morality which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when all of a sudden I am surprised to find that, instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence.[5] For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.[6]

5 Hume's wording is kept here. His "copulations" are the copulas, the linking verbs that join subject and predicate; "of the last consequence" means of the greatest importance.

6 "Vulgar" here means common or popular, not coarse.

MORAL DISTINCTIONS DERIVED FROM A MORAL SENSE

Hume argues that virtue and vice are known by particular feelings of pleasure and pain.

3.1.2.1 The course of the argument thus leads us to a conclusion. Vice and virtue cannot be discovered merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas, so it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they produce that we are able to mark the difference between them. Our decisions about moral rightness and depravity are clearly perceptions. All perceptions are either impressions or ideas, so excluding the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of. This feeling or sentiment, however, is usually so soft and gentle that we are apt to confuse it with an idea, in keeping with our common custom of taking all things that closely resemble one another for the same.

3.1.2.2 The next question is: what is the nature of these impressions, and how do they operate on us? Here we cannot stay long in suspense. We must declare that the impression arising from virtue is agreeable, and the one proceeding from vice uneasy. Every moment's experience must convince us of this. There is no spectacle as fair and beautiful as a noble and generous action, nor any that fills us with more abhorrence than a cruel and treacherous one. No enjoyment equals the satisfaction we get from the company of those we love and esteem, just as the greatest of all punishments is to be forced to spend our lives with those we hate or despise. Even a play or a novel can give us instances of this pleasure that virtue conveys to us, and of the pain that arises from vice.

3.1.2.3 The distinctive impressions by which moral good or evil is known are nothing but particular pains or pleasures. It follows that in all inquiries into these moral distinctions, we need only show the principles that make us feel satisfaction or uneasiness on surveying a character, and we will have explained why the character is praiseworthy or blameworthy. An action, senti-

ment, or character is virtuous or vicious—why? Because the sight of it causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason for the pleasure or uneasiness, therefore, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue is nothing but to feel a satisfaction of a particular kind from contemplating a character. The very feeling constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no further, nor do we inquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer that a character is virtuous because it pleases. Rather, in feeling that it pleases in this particular way, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as with our judgments about all kinds of beauty, tastes, and sensations: our approval is implied in the immediate pleasure they give us.

3.1.2.4 Against the system that establishes eternal rational standards of right and wrong, I have raised this objection: it is impossible to show, in the actions of reasonable creatures, any relations that are not also found in external objects, and so, if morality always accompanied these relations, inanimate matter could become virtuous or vicious. Now a similar objection may be raised against the present system. If virtue and vice are determined by pleasure and pain, these qualities must in every case arise from the sensations. Any object, then, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, might become morally good or evil, provided it can excite satisfaction or uneasiness. This objection seems to be exactly the same, but it has by no means the same force in the one case as in the other. First, it is evident that the term pleasure covers sensations that are very different from each other, which resemble each other only distantly, just enough to be expressed by the same abstract term. A good piece of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; what is more, their goodness is determined merely by the pleasure. But are we therefore to say that the wine is harmonious, or that the music has a good flavor? In the same way, an inanimate object and the character or sentiments of a person may both give satisfaction. But because the satisfaction is different, our sentiments about them are not confused, and we

ascribe virtue to the one and not to the other. Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain that arises from characters and actions of the peculiar kind that makes us praise or condemn. An enemy's good qualities are harmful to us, but may still command our esteem and respect. Only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, does it cause the kind of feeling or sentiment that marks it as morally good or evil. It is true that these two sentiments, the one from interest and the other from morals, are apt to be confused, and naturally run into each other. We seldom fail to think an enemy vicious, and seldom manage to distinguish between his opposition to our interest and real villainy or baseness. But the sentiments are still distinct in themselves, and a man of even temper and good judgment can keep himself free of these illusions. Similarly, a musical voice is certainly nothing but one that naturally gives a particular kind of pleasure. Yet it is hard for a man to recognize that an enemy's voice is agreeable, or to admit that it is musical. But a person with a fine ear who has command of himself can separate these feelings and give praise where it is deserved.

3.1.2.5 *Second*, we may recall the preceding system of the passions, which shows a still more considerable difference among our pains and pleasures. Pride and humility, love and hatred are excited when something is presented to us that both bears a relation to the object of the passion and produces a separate sensation related to the sensation of the passion. Now virtue and vice come with these circumstances. They must necessarily be located either in ourselves or in others, and they excite either pleasure or uneasiness. So they must give rise to one of these four passions. This clearly distinguishes them from the pleasure and pain arising from inanimate objects, which often bear no relation to us. And this is perhaps the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have on the human mind.

3.1.2.6 Someone may now ask in general about this pain or pleasure that distinguishes moral good and evil: *from what principles is it derived, and where does it arise from in the human mind*?

To this I reply, first, that it is absurd to imagine that in every particular instance these sentiments are produced by an original quality and primary constitution. The number of our duties is, in a way, infinite. So it is impossible that our original instincts should extend to each of them, and from our earliest infancy stamp on the human mind the whole multitude of precepts contained in the most complete system of ethics. Such a way of proceeding does not fit the usual maxims by which nature operates. In nature a few principles produce all the variety we observe in the universe, and everything is carried on in the easiest and simplest manner. We must therefore cut down the number of these primary impulses and find some more general principles on which all our notions of morals are founded.

3.1.2.7 In the second place, someone may ask whether we ought to look for these principles in nature, or in some other origin. I would reply that our answer depends on how we define the word "nature," and no word is more ambiguous and equivocal. If nature is opposed to miracles, then not only the distinction between vice and virtue is natural, but so is every event that has ever happened in the world, *except those miracles on which our religion is founded*. So in saying that the sentiments of vice and virtue are natural in this sense, we make no very extraordinary discovery.

3.1.2.8 But nature may also be opposed to what is rare and unusual. In this sense of the word, which is the common one, disputes may often arise about what is natural or unnatural. One may say in general that we have no very precise standard by which to settle these disputes. Frequent and rare depend on the number of examples we have observed. This number may gradually increase or decrease, so it will be impossible to fix any exact boundaries between them. On this point we can only say that, if anything could ever be called natural in this sense, the sentiments of morality certainly can. There never was any nation in the world, nor any single person in any nation, who was utterly without them, and who never, on any occasion, showed the least approval or dislike of conduct. These senti-

ments are so rooted in our constitution and temperament that it is impossible to root them out and destroy them without entirely deranging the human mind by disease or madness.

3.1.2.9 But nature may also be opposed to artifice, as well as to what is rare and unusual. In this sense it may be disputed whether the notions of virtue are natural or not. We easily forget that the designs, projects, and aims of men are principles as necessary in their operation as heat and cold, moist and dry. We take them to be free and entirely our own, and so we usually set them in opposition to the other principles of nature. If it is asked, then, whether the sense of virtue is natural or artificial, I think it is impossible for me at present to give any precise answer to this question. Perhaps it will appear later that our sense of some virtues is artificial and that of others natural. This question will be better discussed when we go into an exact account of each particular vice and virtue.[7]

3.1.2.10 Meanwhile these definitions of natural and unnatural reveal something worth noting: nothing could be more unphilosophical than the systems which assert that virtue is the same as what is natural, and vice the same as what is unnatural. In the first sense of the word "nature," as opposed to miracles, vice and virtue are equally natural. In the second sense, as opposed to what is unusual, virtue may perhaps turn out to be the most unnatural. At least it must be admitted that heroic virtue, being as unusual, is as little natural as the most brutal barbarity. In the third sense of the word, vice and virtue are certainly equally artificial and outside nature. However much it may be disputed whether the notion of merit or demerit in certain actions is natural or artificial, the actions themselves are evidently artificial, and are performed with a certain design and intention. Otherwise they could never be classed under either of these headings. It is impossible, therefore, that the character of natural and

7 HUME'S NOTE. In what follows, "natural" is also sometimes opposed to "civil," and sometimes to "moral." The opposition will always reveal the sense in which it is taken.

unnatural can ever, in any sense, mark the boundaries of vice and virtue.

3.1.2.11 So we are brought back once more to our first position: that virtue is distinguished by the pleasure, and vice by the pain, that any action, sentiment, or character gives us by the mere sight and contemplation of it. This conclusion is very convenient, because it reduces us to one simple question: why does any action or sentiment, on a general view or survey, give a certain satisfaction or uneasiness? Answering this shows the origin of its moral rightness or depravity. We need not look for incomprehensible relations and qualities that never existed in nature, nor even in our imagination by any clear and distinct conception. I flatter myself that I have accomplished a great part of my present aim by stating the question in a way that seems to me so free of ambiguity and obscurity.

Book III, Part 2: Of justice and injustice

Hume argues that justice, property, promises and government are artificial virtues that arise from convention.

SECT. I. JUSTICE, WHETHER A NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL VIRTUE?

3.2.1.1 I have already hinted that our sense of every kind of virtue is not natural. Some virtues produce pleasure and approval by means of an artifice or contrivance, which arises from the circumstances and needs of mankind. I assert that justice is of this kind. I shall try to defend this opinion with a short and, I hope, convincing argument before examining the nature of the artifice from which the sense of that virtue is derived.

3.2.1.2 Clearly, when we praise any actions, we look only to the motives that produced them, and consider the actions as signs or indications of certain principles in the mind and temper. The external performance has no merit. We must look within to find the moral quality. We cannot do this directly, so we fix our attention on actions as external signs. But these actions are still regarded as signs, and the ultimate object of our praise and approval is the motive that produced them.

3.2.1.3 In the same way, when we require an action, or blame a person for not performing it, we always suppose that someone in that situation should be influenced by the motive proper to that action. We consider it vicious in him to disregard that motive. Suppose we find on inquiry that the virtuous motive was still powerful in his breast, though some circumstances unknown to us checked its operation. Then we take back our

blame, and esteem him as much as if he had actually performed the action we require of him.

3.2.1.4 It appears, therefore, that all virtuous actions get their merit only from virtuous motives, and are regarded merely as signs of those motives. From this principle I conclude that the first virtuous motive that gives merit to any action can never be a regard for the virtue of that action. It must be some other natural motive or principle. To suppose that mere regard for the virtue of the action may be the first motive that produced the action and made it virtuous is to reason in a circle. Before we can have such a regard, the action must really be virtuous, and this virtue must be derived from some virtuous motive. Consequently, the virtuous motive must be different from the regard for the virtue of the action. A virtuous motive is needed to make an action virtuous. An action must be virtuous before we can have a regard for its virtue. Some virtuous motive, therefore, must come before that regard.

3.2.1.5 Nor is this merely a metaphysical subtlety. It enters into all our reasonings in everyday life, though perhaps we may not be able to put it in such distinct philosophical terms. We blame a father for neglecting his child. Why? Because it shows a lack of natural affection, which is the duty of every parent. If natural affection were not a duty, caring for children could not be a duty, and we could not possibly have the duty in view in the attention we give our offspring. In this case, therefore, everyone supposes a motive to the action distinct from a sense of duty.

3.2.1.6 Here is a man who performs many benevolent actions: he relieves the distressed, comforts the afflicted, and extends his generosity even to complete strangers. No character can be more lovable and virtuous. We regard these actions as proofs of the greatest humanity. This humanity gives merit to the actions. A regard for this merit is therefore a secondary consideration, derived from the prior principle of humanity, which is meritorious and praiseworthy.

3.2.1.7 In short, we may lay down as an undoubted maxim *that no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there is in human*

nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality.

3.2.1.8 But cannot the sense of morality or duty produce an action without any other motive? I answer: it can. But this is no objection to the present doctrine. When some virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person who feels his heart lacking that motive may hate himself on that account. He may then perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire that virtuous principle by practice, or at least to disguise from himself, as much as possible, his lack of it. A man who really feels no gratitude in his temper is still pleased to perform grateful actions, and thinks he has thereby fulfilled his duty. Actions are at first regarded only as signs of motives. But in this case, as in all others, we usually fix our attention on the signs and neglect, to some extent, the thing signified. On some occasions a person may perform an action merely out of regard for its moral obligation. Yet this still presupposes in human nature some distinct principles that are capable of producing the action, and whose moral beauty makes the action meritorious.

3.2.1.9 Now to apply all this to the present case. Suppose a person has lent me a sum of money on condition that I repay it in a few days. Suppose too that, after the agreed term has expired, he demands the sum. I ask: what reason or motive do I have to repay the money? It may be said that my regard for justice, and my abhorrence of villainy and knavery, are sufficient reasons for me, if I have the least grain of honesty or sense of duty and obligation. And this answer is no doubt correct and satisfactory for man in his civilized state, once he has been brought up according to a certain discipline and education. But in his rough and more natural condition—if you care to call such a condition natural—this answer would be rejected as perfectly unintelligible and sophistical. Someone in that situation would immediately ask you: *What does this honesty and justice consist in, which you find in repaying a loan and keeping away from the property of others*? It surely does not lie in the external action. It must there-

fore be located in the motive from which the external action is derived. And this motive can never be a regard for the honesty of the action. It is a plain fallacy to say that a virtuous motive is needed to make an action honest, and at the same time that regard for the honesty is the motive of the action. We can never have a regard for the virtue of an action unless the action is already virtuous. No action can be virtuous except insofar as it proceeds from a virtuous motive. A virtuous motive, therefore, must come before the regard for the virtue, and the virtuous motive and the regard for the virtue cannot possibly be the same.

3.2.1.10 We need, then, to find some motive for acts of justice and honesty that is distinct from our regard for the honesty, and here lies the great difficulty. Suppose we said that concern for our private interest or reputation is the legitimate motive of all honest actions. Then wherever that concern stops, honesty could no longer have any place. But self-love, when it acts freely, certainly does not prompt us to honest actions; it is the source of all injustice and violence. Nor can a man ever correct those vices without correcting and restraining the natural movements of that appetite.

3.2.1.11 Suppose instead someone claimed that the reason or motive for such actions is regard for the public interest, to which nothing is more contrary than examples of injustice and dishonesty. If this were said, I would put forward the following three considerations as worth our attention. First, public interest is not naturally attached to observing the rules of justice. It becomes connected with it only after an artificial convention for establishing these rules, as will be shown more fully later. Second, suppose the loan was secret, and it is in the lender's interest that the money be repaid in the same way (as when the lender wants to conceal his wealth). In that case the example ceases, and the public no longer has any interest in the borrower's actions. Yet I suppose no moralist will claim that the duty and obligation cease. Third, experience amply proves that men, in the ordinary conduct of life, do not look as far as the

public interest when they pay their creditors, keep their promises, and refrain from theft, robbery, and injustice of every kind. That motive is too remote and too lofty to affect most of mankind. It cannot operate with any force in actions like those of justice and common honesty, which so often run contrary to private interest.

3.2.1.12 In general, we may affirm that there is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourselves. It is true that there is no human creature—indeed no sentient creature—whose happiness or misery does not affect us to some extent when it is brought near to us and represented in lively colors. But this comes merely from sympathy. It is no proof of any such universal affection for mankind, since this concern extends beyond our own species. Affection between the sexes is a passion clearly implanted in human nature. This passion shows itself not only in its own peculiar symptoms, but also by inflaming every other principle of affection, so that beauty, wit, and kindness produce a stronger love than they otherwise would. If there were a universal love among all human beings, it would show itself in the same way. Any degree of a good quality would cause a stronger affection than the same degree of a bad quality would cause hatred. But experience shows the contrary. Men's tempers differ: some have a leaning toward the tender affections, others toward the rougher ones. But on the whole we may say that man in general, or human nature, is nothing but the object of both love and hatred. It requires some other cause to excite these passions, by a double relation of impressions and ideas. It would be useless to try to evade this hypothesis. No phenomena point to any such kind affection toward men independent of their merit and every other circumstance. We love company in general, but we love it as we love any other amusement. An Englishman in Italy is a friend; so is a European in China; and perhaps we would love a man simply as a man if we met him on the moon. But this comes only from the relation to

ourselves, which in these cases gains force by being confined to a few people.

3.2.1.13 If public benevolence, then, or regard for the interests of mankind, cannot be the original motive of justice, much less can private benevolence, or regard for the interests of the party concerned, be this motive. What if he is my enemy, and has given me just cause to hate him? What if he is a vicious man, who deserves the hatred of all mankind? What if he is a miser, and can make no use of what I would take from him? What if he is a dissolute rake, who would receive harm rather than benefit from large possessions? What if I am in need, and have urgent motives to acquire something for my family? In all these cases the original motive of justice would fail. So would justice itself, and along with it all property, right, and obligation.

3.2.1.14 A rich man is under a moral obligation to share some of his surplus with those in need. If private benevolence were the original motive of justice, a man would not be obliged to leave others in possession of more than he is obliged to give them. At least the difference would be very slight. Men generally attach their affections more to what they possess than to what they have never enjoyed, so it would be greater cruelty to take something from a man than not to give it to him. But who will claim that this is the only foundation of justice?

3.2.1.15 Besides, we must consider that men are so attached to their possessions chiefly because they regard them as their property, secured to them inviolably by the laws of society. But this is a secondary consideration, dependent on the prior notions of justice and property.

3.2.1.16 A man's property is supposed to be fenced off against every mortal, in every possible case. But private benevolence is, and ought to be, weaker in some people than in others; and in many—indeed in most—people it must fail completely. Private benevolence, therefore, is not the original motive of justice.

3.2.1.17 From all this it follows that we have no real or universal motive for observing the laws of equity except the very equity and merit of that observance. But no action can be equitable or

meritorious where it cannot arise from some separate motive, so there is an evident sophistry here, a reasoning in a circle. Unless, therefore, we are willing to admit that nature has established a sophistry and made it necessary and unavoidable, we must admit that the sense of justice and injustice is not derived from nature. It arises artificially, though necessarily, from education and human conventions.

3.2.1.18 I shall add a corollary to this reasoning. No action can be praiseworthy or blameworthy without some motives or impelling passions distinct from the sense of morals, so these distinct passions must have a great influence on that sense. We blame or praise according to their general force in human nature. In judging the beauty of animal bodies, we always have in view the structure of a certain species. Where the limbs and features keep the proportion common to the species, we pronounce them handsome and beautiful. In the same way, we always take into account the natural and usual force of the passions when we decide about vice and virtue. If the passions depart very far from the common measures in either direction, they are always disapproved of as vicious. A man naturally loves his children more than his nephews, his nephews more than his cousins, and his cousins more than strangers, other things being equal. Hence come our common measures of duty in preferring the one to the other. Our sense of duty always follows the common and natural course of our passions.

3.2.1.19 To avoid giving offense, I must note here that when I deny that justice is a natural virtue, I use the word "natural" only as opposed to "artificial." In another sense of the word, no principle of the human mind is more natural than a sense of virtue, and so no virtue is more natural than justice. Mankind is an inventive species. Where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be called natural as anything that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection. Though the rules of justice are artificial, they are not arbitrary. Nor is it improper to call them Laws of Nature, if by "natural" we mean what is common

to a species, or even if we restrict it to mean what is inseparable from the species.

THE ORIGIN OF JUSTICE AND PROPERTY

Hume traces justice to a convention that stabilizes possessions, given human selfishness and scarce goods.

3.2.2.1 We now proceed to examine two questions: *how the rules of justice are established by the artifice of men*; and *what reasons lead us to attribute moral beauty and deformity to the observance or neglect of these rules*. These questions will turn out later to be distinct. We shall begin with the first.

3.2.2.2 Of all the animals that populate this globe, man seems at first sight to be the one toward which nature has shown the most cruelty. She has loaded him with countless wants and needs, and given him only slender means of relieving them. In other creatures these two things generally balance each other. If we consider the lion as a voracious, carnivorous animal, we shall easily see that he is very needy. But if we turn our eye to his build and temperament, his agility, his courage, his weapons, and his strength, we shall find that his advantages are in proportion to his wants. The sheep and the ox lack all these advantages; but their appetites are moderate and their food is easily obtained. In man alone can this unnatural combination of weakness and need be observed in its fullest perfection. The food he needs to sustain himself flees from his search and approach, or at least requires his labor to produce it. He must also have clothes and shelter to defend him against the harm of the weather. And yet, considered in himself alone, he has neither weapons, nor strength, nor any other natural abilities in any degree equal to so many needs.

3.2.2.3 Only through society can he make up for his deficiencies, raise himself to an equality with his fellow creatures, and even gain a superiority over them. Through society all his weaknesses are compensated. In that situation his wants multiply every moment, but his abilities increase still more, and leave

him in every respect more satisfied and happy than he could ever possibly become in his wild and solitary condition. When each individual works apart and only for himself, his strength is too small to carry out any considerable work. His labor is spent supplying all his different needs, so he never achieves perfection in any particular skill. And his strength and success are not always equal, so the slightest failure in either of these respects must bring inevitable ruin and misery. Society provides a remedy for these three inconveniences. By combining forces, our power is increased; by dividing up tasks, our ability grows; and by mutual aid we are less exposed to fortune and accidents. This additional strength, ability, and security is what makes society advantageous.

3.2.2.4 But in order for society to be formed, it is not enough that it be advantageous; men must also be aware of these advantages. And in their wild, uncultivated state, they could never attain this knowledge by study and reflection alone. Most fortunately, therefore, those needs whose remedies are remote and obscure are joined by another need. This one has a present and more obvious remedy, and may rightly be regarded as the first and original principle of human society. This need is none other than the natural appetite between the sexes, which unites them and keeps them united until a new tie arises in their concern for their common offspring. This new concern also becomes a principle of union between the parents and offspring, and forms a larger society. In it the parents govern by virtue of their superior strength and wisdom, and at the same time the natural affection they have for their children restrains them in exercising their authority. In a short time, custom and habit, working on the tender minds of the children, make them aware of the advantages they may gain from society. Custom and habit also gradually shape them for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and awkward affections that prevent them from coming together.

3.2.2.5 The circumstances of human nature may make a union necessary, and the passions of lust and natural affection may

seem to make it unavoidable. Yet it must be admitted that other features of our natural temper and of our outward circumstances are very inconvenient, and even contrary to the union society requires. Among the features of our temper, we may rightly consider our selfishness the most considerable. I am aware that, generally speaking, this quality has been portrayed far too extremely. Certain philosophers so delight in describing mankind this way that their descriptions are as far from nature as any accounts of monsters we meet with in fables and romances. Far from thinking that men have no affection for anything beyond themselves, I believe it is rare to meet someone who loves any single person more than himself. But it is just as rare to meet someone in whom all the kind affections taken together do not outweigh all the selfish ones. Consult common experience. The head of a family generally controls its whole expense. Yet do not you see that few such men fail to spend the largest part of their fortunes on the pleasures of their wives and the education of their children, keeping the smallest portion for their own use and entertainment? This is what we can observe about those who have such endearing ties. We may presume that the case would be the same with others if they were placed in a similar situation.

3.2.2.6 This generosity must be acknowledged to the credit of human nature. But we may at the same time note that so noble an affection, far from fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them as the narrowest selfishness. Each person loves himself more than any other single person, and in his love for others has the greatest affection for his relatives and acquaintances. This must necessarily produce an opposition of passions, and a consequent opposition of actions, which cannot fail to endanger the newly established union.

3.2.2.7 It is worth noting, however, that this conflict of passions would carry little danger if it did not coincide with a peculiarity in our outward circumstances that gives it an opportunity to exert itself. There are three different kinds of goods we possess: the inner satisfaction of our minds, the external advantages of

our bodies, and the enjoyment of such possessions as we have acquired by our industry and good fortune. We are perfectly secure in the enjoyment of the first. The second may be torn from us, but can be of no advantage to the one who deprives us of them. Only the last are both exposed to the violence of others and transferable without suffering any loss or alteration. At the same time, there is not enough of them to supply everyone's desires and needs. Therefore, just as the increase of these goods is the chief advantage of society, so the instability of their possession, together with their scarcity, is the chief obstacle.

3.2.2.8 It would be pointless to look in uncultivated nature for a remedy to this problem, or to hope for some non-artificial principle of the human mind that could control these partial affections and make us overcome the temptations arising from our circumstances. The idea of justice can never serve this purpose, or be taken for a natural principle capable of inspiring people to behave equitably toward each other. That virtue, as it is now understood, would never have been dreamed of among people in a rough, wild state. For the notion of injury or injustice implies an immorality or vice committed against some other person. Every immorality comes from some defect or unsoundness in the passions, and this defect must be judged, to a great extent, by the ordinary course of nature in how the mind is constituted. So it will be easy to know whether we are guilty of any immorality toward others by considering the natural and usual strength of the various affections directed toward them. Now it appears that in the original frame of our mind, our strongest attention is confined to ourselves. The next strongest extends to our relatives and acquaintances, and only the weakest reaches strangers and people we are indifferent to. This partiality and unequal affection, then, must influence not only our behavior and conduct in society but even our ideas of vice and virtue. We therefore regard any marked departure from this degree of partiality as vicious and immoral, whether it comes from too great an enlargement or too great a contraction of the affections. We can see this in our ordinary judgments about actions. We blame

a person who centers all his affections on his family. We also blame one who cares so little for them that, whenever interests conflict, he gives preference to a stranger or a mere chance acquaintance. From all this it follows that our natural, uncultivated ideas of morality do not provide a remedy for the partiality of our affections. Instead, they conform to that partiality and give it additional force and influence.

3.2.2.9 The remedy, then, comes not from nature but from artifice. Or, more properly speaking, nature provides a remedy in the judgment and understanding for what is irregular and inconvenient in the affections. Through their early upbringing in society, people become aware of the infinite advantages that result from it, and they also acquire a new fondness for company and conversation. They observe, too, that the principal disturbance in society arises from the goods we call external, and from how loosely they are held and how easily they pass from one person to another. Once they have seen all this, they must look for a remedy by putting these goods, as far as possible, on the same footing as the fixed and constant advantages of the mind and body. This can be done in no other way than by a convention, entered into by all the members of the society, to give stability to the possession of these external goods and leave everyone in peaceful enjoyment of whatever he may acquire by his fortune and industry. In this way everyone knows what he may safely possess, and the passions are restrained in their partial and contradictory motions. Nor is such a restraint contrary to these passions. If it were, it could never be entered into or maintained. It is contrary only to their heedless and impetuous movement. Far from departing from our own interest, or from that of our closest friends, by abstaining from what others possess, we cannot serve both these interests better than by such a convention. For it is by this means that we maintain society, which is as necessary to their well-being and survival as to our own.

3.2.2.10 This convention is not in the nature of a promise, for even promises themselves, as we shall see later, arise from

human conventions. It is only a general sense of common interest, which all the members of the society express to one another and which leads them to regulate their conduct by certain rules. I observe that it will be in my interest to leave another person in possession of his goods, provided he acts the same way toward me. He is aware of a similar interest in regulating his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually expressed and known to both, it produces a corresponding resolution and behavior. And this may properly enough be called a convention or agreement between us, even though no promise is involved. The actions of each of us refer to those of the other, and each is performed on the assumption that something will be done on the other side. Two men rowing a boat do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given each other promises. Nor is the rule about the stability of possession any less derived from human conventions because it arises gradually. It gains force through a slow progression and through our repeated experience of the inconveniences of breaking it. On the contrary, this experience assures us all the more that the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us confidence that their conduct will be regular in the future. It is only on this expectation that our moderation and restraint are founded. In the same way, languages are gradually established by human conventions without any promise. In the same way, gold and silver become the common measures of exchange and are accepted as sufficient payment for things worth a hundred times as much.

3.2.2.11 Once this convention about abstaining from others' possessions has been entered into, and everyone has gained stability in his possessions, the ideas of justice and injustice immediately arise. So do the ideas of property, right, and obligation. The latter are completely unintelligible without first understanding the former. Our property is nothing but those goods whose constant possession is established by the laws of society—that is, by the laws of justice. So those who use the words property, right, or obligation before they have explained the origin of justice, or

who even use them in that explanation, are guilty of a very gross fallacy and can never reason on any solid foundation. A person's property is some object related to him. This relation is not natural but moral, and founded on justice. It is quite absurd, therefore, to imagine that we can have any idea of property without fully understanding the nature of justice and showing its origin in human artifice and contrivance. The origin of justice explains the origin of property. The same artifice gives rise to both. Our first and most natural moral sentiment is founded on the nature of our passions, and it prefers ourselves and our friends over strangers. So there cannot naturally be any such thing as a fixed right or property, as long as people's opposing passions push them in contrary directions and are not restrained by any convention or agreement.

3.2.2.12 No one can doubt that the convention for distinguishing property and for the stability of possession is, of all things, the most necessary to establishing human society. Once the agreement to fix and observe this rule is in place, little or nothing remains to be done toward settling perfect harmony and concord. All the other passions besides this one of interest are either easily restrained or not so harmful in their consequences when indulged. Vanity should rather be regarded as a social passion and a bond of union among people. Pity and love are to be seen in the same light. As for envy and revenge, though harmful, they operate only at intervals and are aimed at particular persons whom we regard as our superiors or enemies. This greed alone, for acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our closest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society. There is hardly anyone who is not driven by it. And everyone has reason to fear it when it acts without restraint and gives way to its first and most natural movements. So, on the whole, we should judge the difficulties in establishing society to be greater or less according to those we meet in regulating and restraining this passion.

3.2.2.13 It is certain that no affection of the human mind has both enough force and the right direction to counterbalance the

love of gain. None can make people fit members of society by getting them to abstain from others' possessions. Benevolence toward strangers is too weak for this purpose. As for the other passions, they rather inflame this greed, once we notice that the larger our possessions, the more able we are to gratify all our appetites. There is no passion, then, capable of controlling the self-interested affection except that very affection itself, by a change in its direction. Now this change must necessarily take place on the slightest reflection. For it is evident that the passion is much better satisfied by being restrained than by being left free. By preserving society we make far greater progress in acquiring possessions than we could in the solitary and forlorn condition that must follow from violence and universal license. The question of whether human nature is wicked or good, therefore, does not enter in the least into the separate question of the origin of society. The only thing to consider is the degree of people's good sense or folly. For whether the passion of self-interest is regarded as vicious or virtuous, it comes to the same thing, since it alone restrains itself. So if it is virtuous, people become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect.

3.2.2.14 Now it is by establishing the rule for the stability of possession that this passion restrains itself. So if that rule were very obscure and hard to devise, society would have to be regarded as something accidental, as it were, and the product of many ages. But suppose it turns out that nothing could be more simple and obvious than that rule. Every parent must establish it in order to keep peace among his children, and these first rudiments of justice must be improved every day as the society grows. If all this is evident, as it certainly must be, we may conclude that it is utterly impossible for people to remain for any considerable time in the wild condition that precedes society. Humanity's very first state and situation may rightly be regarded as social. This does not prevent philosophers, however, from extending their reasoning to the supposed state of nature if they wish. They must only admit that it is a mere philosophical

fiction, which never had and never could have any reality. Human nature is composed of two principal parts, both required in all its actions: the affections and the understanding. It is certain that the blind motions of the former, without the direction of the latter, make people unfit for society. And we may be allowed to consider separately the effects that result from the separate operations of these two component parts of the mind. Moral philosophers may be permitted the same liberty that is allowed to natural philosophers. It is very common for the latter to treat a motion as compounded of two parts separate from each other. At the same time, they acknowledge that in itself the motion is uncompounded and inseparable.

3.2.2.15 This state of nature, then, is to be regarded as a mere fiction, not unlike the golden age that the poets have invented. There is only this difference: the former is described as full of war, violence, and injustice, whereas the latter is presented to us as the most charming and peaceful condition that could possibly be imagined. In that first age of nature, if we believe the poets, the seasons were so mild that people had no need to provide themselves with clothes and houses as protection against the violence of heat and cold. The rivers flowed with wine and milk. The oaks yielded honey, and nature spontaneously produced her greatest delicacies. Nor were these the chief advantages of that happy age. Storms and tempests were not the only things removed from nature. Human hearts also knew nothing of those more furious tempests that now cause such uproar and breed such confusion. Avarice, ambition, cruelty, and selfishness were never heard of. Warm affection, compassion, and sympathy were the only movements the human mind had yet encountered. Even the distinction between mine and yours was banished from that happy race of mortals, and took with it the very notions of property and obligation, justice and injustice.

3.2.2.16 This, no doubt, is to be regarded as an idle fiction. But it still deserves our attention, because nothing could show more clearly the origin of the virtues that are the subject of our

present inquiry. I have already observed that justice arises from human conventions. These are intended as a remedy for certain inconveniences, which come from the combination of certain qualities of the human mind with the situation of external objects. The qualities of the mind are selfishness and limited generosity. The situation of external objects is that they change hands easily and are scarce compared with people's wants and desires. But however bewildered philosophers may have been in these speculations, poets have been guided more unerringly by a certain taste or common instinct. In most kinds of reasoning this goes further than any art and philosophy we have yet been acquainted with. The poets readily perceived what would follow if every person had a tender regard for every other, or if nature abundantly supplied all our wants and desires. The jealousy of interest that justice presupposes could no longer exist. Nor would there be any occasion for the distinctions and limits of property and possession currently in use among mankind. Increase people's benevolence or nature's bounty to a sufficient degree, and you make justice useless by putting much nobler virtues and more valuable blessings in its place. Human selfishness is stirred up by how few possessions we have in proportion to our wants. It is to restrain this selfishness that people have been obliged to separate themselves from the community and to distinguish between their own goods and those of others.

3.2.2.17 Nor do we need to turn to the fictions of poets to learn this. Besides the reason of the thing, we can discover the same truth by common experience and observation. It is easy to notice that warm affection makes all things common among friends. Married people in particular lose their separate property to each other. They know nothing of the mine and yours that are so necessary to human society, and yet cause such disturbance in it. The same effect arises from any change in humanity's circumstances, as when there is such plenty of something that it satisfies all human desires. In that case the distinction of property is entirely lost, and everything remains in common. We can observe this with regard to air and water,

though they are the most valuable of all external objects. And we may easily conclude what would follow if people were supplied with everything in the same abundance, or if everyone had the same affection and tender regard for everyone else as for himself. Justice and injustice would be equally unknown among mankind.

3.2.2.18 Here, then, is a proposition that I think may be regarded as certain. Justice derives its origin only from human selfishness and limited generosity, together with the scanty provision nature has made for human wants. If we look back, we shall find that this proposition gives additional force to some of the observations we have already made on this subject.

3.2.2.19 First, we may conclude from it that a regard for the public interest, or a strong and extensive benevolence, is not our first and original motive for observing the rules of justice. For it is granted that if people were endowed with such benevolence, these rules would never have been dreamed of.

3.2.2.20 Second, we may conclude from the same principle that the sense of justice is not founded on reason. Nor is it founded on the discovery of certain connections and relations of ideas that are eternal, immutable, and universally binding. It is admitted that such a change as the one just mentioned, in the temper and circumstances of mankind, would entirely alter our duties and obligations. So anyone who holds the common view that the sense of virtue derives from reason must show what change this would produce in the relations and ideas. But it is evident why extensive human generosity and perfect abundance of everything would destroy the very idea of justice. The only reason is that they make it useless. On the other hand, our limited benevolence and needy condition give rise to that virtue only by making it necessary to the public interest and to that of every individual. It was therefore a concern for our own interest and the public interest that led us to establish the laws of justice. And nothing could be more certain than that this concern comes not from any relation of ideas, but from our impressions and sentiments. Without them everything in nature is perfectly

indifferent to us and can never affect us in the least. The sense of justice, therefore, is founded not on our ideas but on our impressions.

3.2.2.21 Third, we may further confirm the proposition stated earlier, *that the impressions which give rise to this sense of justice are not natural to the human mind, but arise from artifice and human conventions*. Any considerable change of temper and circumstances destroys justice and injustice alike. And such a change has an effect only by altering our own interest and the public interest. It follows that the first establishment of the rules of justice depends on these different interests. But if people pursued the public interest naturally and with heartfelt affection, they would never have dreamed of restraining each other by these rules. And if they pursued their own interest without any precaution, they would rush headlong into every kind of injustice and violence. These rules, therefore, are artificial, and pursue their end in an oblique and indirect way. Nor is the interest that gives rise to them of a kind that could be pursued by the natural, non-artificial passions of human beings.

3.2.2.22 To make this more evident, consider that although the rules of justice are established purely by interest, their connection with interest is somewhat peculiar, and differs from what we see in other cases. A single act of justice is often contrary to the public interest. If it stood alone, without being followed by other acts, it might in itself be very harmful to society. Suppose a worthy man of generous disposition restores a great fortune to a miser or a seditious bigot. He has acted justly and commendably, but the public really suffers. Nor is every single act of justice, considered by itself, any more conducive to private interest than to public. It is easy to see how someone might impoverish himself by a striking instance of integrity. He might then have reason to wish that, for that single act, the laws of justice were suspended for a moment throughout the universe. But however much single acts of justice may be contrary to public or private interest, the whole plan or scheme is certainly highly conducive to supporting society and to the well-being of

every individual. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary to both. It is impossible to separate the good from the bad. Property must be stable, and must be fixed by general rules. Though in one instance the public suffers, this momentary harm is amply compensated by steady adherence to the rule and by the peace and order it establishes in society. And even every individual person must find himself a gainer when the account is balanced. For without justice society must immediately dissolve, and everyone must fall into that wild and solitary condition. That condition is infinitely worse than the worst situation that could possibly be imagined in society. With enough experience, people come to observe something about any single act of justice performed by a single person. Whatever its consequence, the whole system of actions in which the whole society joins is infinitely advantageous to the whole and to every part. When they have observed this, it is not long before justice and property come into being. Every member of society is aware of this interest. Everyone expresses this awareness to his fellows, along with the resolution he has taken to square his actions with it, on condition that others do the same. Nothing more is needed to lead any one of them to perform an act of justice at the first opportunity. This becomes an example to others. And so justice establishes itself by a kind of convention or agreement. That is, it rests on a sense of interest assumed to be common to all, where every single act is performed in the expectation that others will do likewise. Without such a convention, no one would ever have dreamed that there was such a virtue as justice, or been led to conform his actions to it. Taken as a single act, my justice may be harmful in every respect. I can be led to embrace that virtue only on the assumption that others will imitate my example. Nothing but this combination can make justice advantageous or give me any motive to conform to its rules.

3.2.2.23 We come now to the second question we proposed: why do we attach the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice? Given the principles already established, this question will not keep us long. All we can say about it at present can be dealt with

in a few words. For further satisfaction the reader must wait until we reach the third part of this book. The natural obligation to justice, namely interest, has been fully explained. But the moral obligation, or the sentiment of right and wrong, needs more. We will first have to examine the natural virtues before we can give a full and satisfactory account of it.

3.2.2.24 People find by experience that their selfishness and limited generosity, left to act freely, make them wholly unfit for society. At the same time they observe that society is necessary to satisfy those very passions. They are therefore naturally led to place themselves under the restraint of rules that can make their dealings with one another safer and more convenient. At first, then, only a regard for interest leads them to impose and observe these rules, both in general and in every particular instance. When society is first formed, this motive is strong and forceful enough. But when society has grown populous and expanded into a tribe or nation, this interest is more remote. In a narrower, smaller society people readily see that disorder and confusion follow every breach of these rules, but in a large one they do not see it so readily. In our own actions we may often lose sight of the interest we have in maintaining order, and may follow a lesser and more immediate interest. Yet we never fail to notice the harm we receive, directly or indirectly, from the injustice of others. In that case we are neither blinded by passion nor biased by any contrary temptation. Indeed, even when the injustice is so distant from us that it in no way affects our interest, it still displeases us. We regard it as harmful to human society and damaging to everyone who comes near the person guilty of it. We share their uneasiness by sympathy. Whatever in human actions gives uneasiness on a general survey is called vice, and whatever produces satisfaction in the same way is called virtue. This is why the sense of moral good and evil follows justice and injustice. And although in the present case this sense comes only from contemplating the actions of others, we do not fail to extend it even to our own actions. The general rule reaches beyond the instances from which it arose. At the same

time, we naturally sympathize with others in the sentiments they have about us. Thus self-interest is the original motive for establishing justice; but sympathy with the public interest is the source of the moral approval that accompanies that virtue.

3.2.2.25 Though this progress of the sentiments is natural, and even necessary, it is certainly pushed forward here by the artifice of politicians. To govern people more easily and preserve peace in human society, they have tried to produce an esteem for justice and an abhorrence of injustice. This must no doubt have its effect. But nothing could be more evident than that certain writers on morals have pushed the point too far. They seem to have made every effort to root out all sense of virtue from mankind. Any artifice of politicians may help nature produce the sentiments she suggests to us. On some occasions it may even produce by itself approval or esteem for a particular action. But it cannot possibly be the sole cause of the distinction we make between vice and virtue. For if nature did not help us in this respect, it would be useless for politicians to talk of honorable or dishonorable, praiseworthy or blameworthy. These words would be perfectly unintelligible. They would have no more idea attached to them than if they belonged to a language completely unknown to us. The most politicians can do is extend the natural sentiments beyond their original bounds; but nature must still supply the materials and give us some notion of moral distinctions.

3.2.2.26 Just as public praise and blame increase our esteem for justice, so private education and instruction contribute to the same effect. Parents easily see that the more probity and honor a person has, the more useful he is, both to himself and to others. They also see that these principles have greater force when custom and education reinforce interest and reflection. For these reasons they are led to instill the principles of probity in their children from earliest infancy. They teach them to regard the observance of the rules that maintain society as worthy and honorable, and their violation as base and infamous. In this way the sentiments of honor may take root in their tender minds and

become very firm and solid. They may then fall little short of the principles that are most essential to our nature and most deeply rooted in our inner constitution.

3.2.2.27 What further adds to their solidity is our interest in our reputation. This comes into play once mankind has firmly established the opinion that merit goes with justice and demerit with injustice. Nothing touches us more closely than our reputation, and nothing affects our reputation more than our conduct regarding the property of others. So anyone who cares about his character, or means to live on good terms with others, must lay down an inviolable law for himself. He must never let any temptation whatever lead him into violating the principles that are essential to a person of probity and honor.

3.2.2.28 I shall make just one observation before leaving this subject. I claim that in the state of nature, that imaginary state preceding society, there was neither justice nor injustice. But I do not claim that it was permissible in such a state to violate others' property. I maintain only that there was no such thing as property, and consequently could be no such thing as justice or injustice. I shall have occasion to make a similar point about promises when I come to treat of them. I hope this point, when properly weighed, will be enough to remove all odium from the opinions I have just put forward about justice and injustice.

THE RULES THAT DETERMINE PROPERTY

Hume explains present possession, occupation, prescription, accession and succession largely by the imagination.

3.2.3.1 Establishing the rule of stability of possession is not only useful but absolutely necessary to human society. Yet it can never serve any purpose as long as it remains in such general terms. Some method must be shown for telling which particular goods are to be assigned to each particular person, while the rest of mankind are excluded from possessing and enjoying them. Our next task, then, must be to discover the reasons that

modify this general rule and fit it to the ordinary use and practice of the world.

3.2.3.2 These reasons obviously do not come from any special utility or advantage in a particular person's enjoying particular goods. Neither he nor the public gains more from his possessing them than would result from someone else's possessing them. It would no doubt be better if everyone possessed what is most suitable to him and fit for his use. But this relation of fitness may be shared by several people at once. It is also open to so many disputes, and people are so partial and passionate in judging these disputes, that such a loose and uncertain rule would be completely incompatible with the peace of human society. The convention about the stability of possession is entered into to cut off every occasion of discord and contention. This end would never be achieved if we could apply the rule differently in every particular case, according to whatever particular utility such an application might offer. Justice, in her decisions, never considers whether objects are fit or unfit for particular persons, but guides herself by broader views. Whether a person is generous or a miser, she receives him equally well. He gets a decision in his favor just as easily, even for something entirely useless to him.

3.2.3.3 It follows, therefore, that the general rule that possession must be stable is applied not by particular judgments but by other general rules. These must extend to the whole society and not be bent by either spite or favor. To illustrate this, I propose the following case. I first consider people in their wild and solitary condition. I suppose that they are aware of the misery of that state and foresee the advantages that would come from society. So they seek each other's company and offer each other mutual protection and assistance. I also suppose that they have enough good sense to see at once that the chief obstacle to this project of society and partnership lies in the greed and selfishness of their natural temper. To remedy this, they enter into a convention for the stability of possession and for mutual restraint and forbearance. I am aware that this way of proceed-

ing is not altogether natural. But I am here only supposing that these reflections are formed all at once, when in fact they arise imperceptibly and by degrees. Besides this, I say, it is quite possible that several people, separated by various accidents from the societies they formerly belonged to, might be obliged to form a new society among themselves. In that case they are exactly in the situation described above.

3.2.3.4 It is evident, then, what their first difficulty in this situation is, once the general convention for establishing society and for the constancy of possession is in place. They must separate their possessions and assign to each his particular portion, which he is to enjoy unalterably from then on. This difficulty will not keep them long. The most natural expedient must immediately occur to them: that everyone should continue to enjoy what he is at present master of. Property, or constant possession, should be joined to immediate possession. Such is the effect of custom that it not only reconciles us to anything we have long enjoyed but even gives us an affection for it. It makes us prefer it to other objects that may be more valuable but are less familiar to us. What has long been before our eyes, and has often been used to our advantage, is what we are always most unwilling to part with. By contrast, we can easily live without possessions we have never enjoyed and are not used to. It is evident, therefore, that people would readily accept this expedient, that everyone continue to enjoy what he presently pos-

sesses; and this is why they would so naturally agree in preferring it.[1]

3.2.3.5 But we may observe that the rule assigning property to the present possessor is natural, and useful for that reason, but

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1 HUME'S NOTE. Several causes sometimes present themselves for the same phenomenon, and we must determine which is the principal and predominant one. No questions in philosophy are more difficult than these. There is seldom any very precise argument to settle our choice. We must be content to be guided by a kind of taste or fancy, arising from analogy and from comparing familiar instances. So in the present case there are, no doubt, motives of public interest for most of the rules that determine property. But I still suspect that these rules are principally fixed by the imagination, or by the more frivolous properties of our thought and conception. I shall go on explaining these causes, leaving it to the reader to choose whether he prefers those derived from public utility or those derived from the imagination. We shall begin with the right of the present possessor.

I have already noted a quality of human nature: when two objects appear closely related to each other, the mind tends to ascribe some additional relation to them in order to complete the union. This inclination is so strong that it often makes us fall into errors (such as that of the conjunction of thought and matter), if we find that they can serve that purpose. Many of our impressions are incapable of place or spatial position. Yet we suppose those very impressions to be locally conjoined with the impressions of sight and touch. We do so merely because they are conjoined by causation and already united in the imagination. We can invent a new relation, even an absurd one, in order to complete a union. So it is easy to imagine what the mind will do with any relations that depend on it. It will readily join them to any preceding relation, and unite by a new bond objects that are already united in the fancy. For instance, when arranging bodies we never fail to place those that resemble each other next to each other, or at least in corresponding positions. We feel satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or resemblance of situation to resemblance of qualities. And this is easily explained by the known properties of human nature. Sometimes the mind is determined to join certain objects but undecided as to which particular objects. It then naturally turns to those that are related to each other. They are already united in the mind, and they present themselves to our conception at the same time. Far from needing any new reason for joining them, it would take a very powerful reason to make us overlook this natural affinity. We shall have occasion to explain this more fully later, when we come to treat of beauty. Meanwhile, we may be content to observe that the same love of order and uniformity arranges the books in a library and the chairs in a parlor. It also contributes to the formation of society and the well-being of mankind, by modifying the general rule about the stability of possession. Property forms a relation between a person and an object, so it is natural to found it on some preceding relation. And property is nothing but constant possession secured by the laws of society. So it is natural to add it to present possession, which is a relation that resembles it. For this also has its influence. If it is natural to join all sorts of relations, it is even more natural to join relations that resemble each other and are related together.

its usefulness does not extend beyond the first formation of society. Nothing would be more harmful than to keep observing it constantly. That would rule out restitution and authorize and reward every injustice. We must therefore look for some other circumstance that can give rise to property once society is established. I find four of this kind that are most important: Occupation, Prescription, Accession, and Succession. We shall briefly examine each of these, beginning with Occupation.

3.2.3.6 The possession of all external goods is changeable and uncertain. This is one of the greatest obstacles to establishing society. It is why, by universal agreement, express or tacit, people restrain themselves by what we now call the rules of justice and equity. The condition that precedes this restraint is so miserable that we submit to the remedy as quickly as possible. This gives us an easy explanation of why we attach the idea of property to first possession, or occupation. People are unwilling to leave property in suspense even for the shortest time, or to open the slightest door to violence and disorder. To this we may add that first possession always draws the most attention; and if we disregarded it, there would be no plausible reason for assigning property to any later possession.[2]

3.2.3.7 All that remains is to determine exactly what is meant by possession; and this is not as easy as one might at first think. We are said to be in possession of a thing not only when we are directly touching it. We are also said to possess it when we are so placed that we have it in our power to use it, and can move, alter, or destroy it as our present pleasure or advantage directs. This relation, then, is a species of cause and effect. And property

2 HUME'S NOTE. Some philosophers explain the right of occupation by saying that everyone has property in his own labor, and that when he joins that labor to anything, it gives him property in the whole. But there are three objections. 1. There are several kinds of occupation where we cannot be said to join our labor to the object we acquire, as when we possess a meadow by grazing our cattle on it. 2. This explains the matter by way of accession, which is taking a needless detour. 3. We cannot be said to join our labor to anything except in a figurative sense. Properly speaking, we only make an alteration in it by our labor. This forms a relation between us and the object; and from this the property arises, according to the preceding principles.

is nothing but stable possession, derived from the rules of justice or the conventions of men. So it is to be considered the same species of relation. But here we may observe that the power of using any object becomes more or less certain as the interruptions we may encounter are more or less probable. This probability can increase by imperceptible degrees. So in many cases it is impossible to determine when possession begins or ends, and there is no definite standard by which we can decide such disputes. A wild boar that falls into our snares is considered to be in our possession if it is impossible for it to escape. But what do we mean by impossible? How do we separate this impossibility from an improbability? And how do we distinguish that precisely from a probability? Mark out the exact limits of each, and show the standard by which we can decide all

the disputes that may arise on this subject—and, as experience

shows, often do.[3]

3.2.3.8 But disputes like these can arise not only about whether property and possession actually exist, but also about how far they extend. These disputes often admit of no decision, or can be decided by no faculty other than the imagination. A person who lands on the shore of a small island that is deserted and uncultivated is considered its possessor from the very first moment, and acquires property in the whole of it. This is because the object is there bounded and circumscribed in the fancy, and at the same time is proportioned to the new possessor. The same person landing on a deserted island as large as Great Britain extends his property no farther than his immediate possession, though a large colony is regarded as the owner of the whole from the moment it disembarks.

3.2.3.9 But it often happens that the title of first possession becomes obscure over time, and that many of the controversies that may arise about it are impossible to settle. In that case long possession, or prescription, naturally takes over and gives a person sufficient property in anything he enjoys. The nature of human society does not allow of any great precision, nor can we always go back to the first origin of things in order to determine their present condition. Any considerable span of time sets objects at such a distance that they seem, in a way, to lose their reality, and have as little influence on the mind as if they had never existed. A man's title that is clear and certain now will seem obscure and doubtful fifty years from now, even if the facts it rests on are proved with the greatest evidence and certainty. The same facts do not have the same influence after so long an interval. And this may be taken as a convincing argument for our earlier doctrine about property and justice. Possession over a long stretch of time conveys a title to any object. But while it is certain that everything is produced in time, nothing real is produced by time. It follows that property, being produced by time, is not anything real in the objects. It is the off-

3 HUME'S NOTE. If we look for a solution to these difficulties in reason and public interest, we shall never find satisfaction. If we look for it in the imagination, it is evident that the qualities acting on that faculty shade into one another so imperceptibly and gradually that they cannot be given any precise bounds or limit. The difficulties on this point must increase when we consider that our judgment spring of the sentiments, which are the only thing time is found will be counted as possession in one case and not in another. Someone who has hunted a hare to the point of utter exhaustion would regard it as an injustice for another to rush in ahead of him and seize his prey. But suppose the same person reaches out to pick an apple hanging within his reach. He has no reason to complain if someone quicker gets past him and takes possession. What is the reason for this difference? The hare's immobility is not natural to it but the result of the hunter's effort. So in that case it forms a strong relation with the hunter, which is lacking in the other.

Here, then, it appears that a certain and unfailing power of enjoyment, without touch or some other sensible relation, often does not produce property. I further observe that a sensible relation, without any present power, is sometimes enough to give title to an object. Seeing a thing is seldom a significant relation. It is regarded as one only when the object is hidden or very obscure, and in that case we find that sight alone conveys property. Hence the maxim *that even a whole continent belongs to the nation that first discovered it*. It is remarkable, however, that in the case both of discovery and of possession, the first discoverer or possessor must add to the relation an intention of making himself the owner. Otherwise the relation will not have its effect. This is because the connection in our fancy between the property and the relation is not strong enough by itself, and needs to be helped by such an intention.

From all these circumstances it is easy to see how tangled many questions about acquiring property by occupation can become. The slightest effort of thought can present us with cases that admit of no reasonable decision. If we prefer real examples to invented ones, we may consider the following, which is found in almost every writer who has treated the laws of nature. Two Greek colonies, having left their native country in search of new homes, were told that a nearby city had been abandoned by its inhabitants. To find out whether the report was true, they immediately sent two messengers, one from each colony. As they approached, the messengers found the information to be true. They began a race, each intending to take possession of the city for his countrymen. One of them, realizing he was no match for the other, hurled his spear at the city gates and was lucky enough to fix it there before his rival arrived. This produced a dispute between the two colonies over which of them owned the empty city; and this dispute still continues among philosophers. For my part, I find the dispute impossible to decide. The whole question depends on the fancy, which in this case has no precise or definite standard by which to pass judgment. To make this evident, suppose these two men had been simply members of the colonies, and not messengers or deputies. Then their actions would have been of no consequence, since their relation to the colonies would have been only weak and imperfect. Add to this that nothing led them to run to the gates rather than the walls or any other part of the city, except one thing. The gates, being the most obvious and striking part, best satisfy the fancy when taken for the whole. We see this from the poets, who often draw their images and metaphors from them. Besides, the touch or contact of the one messenger is not properly possession, any more than piercing the gates with a spear is. It only forms a relation. And there is a relation in the other case that is equally obvious, though perhaps not equally strong. Which of these relations, then, conveys a right and property, or whether either of them is enough for that effect, I leave to the decision of those wiser than myself.

to have any influence on.[4]

3.2.3.10 We acquire property in objects by accession when they are intimately connected with objects that are already our property, and at the same time are inferior to them. Thus the fruits of our garden, the offspring of our cattle, and the work of our slaves are all regarded as our property, even before we possess them. Where objects are connected together in the imagination, they tend to be put on the same footing, and are commonly supposed to have the same qualities. We pass readily from one to

4 HUME'S NOTE. Present possession is plainly a relation between a person and an object. But it is not enough to outweigh the relation of first possession unless it is long and uninterrupted. In that case the relation is increased on the side of present possession by the length of time, and diminished on the side of first possession by the distance. This change in the relation produces a corresponding change in the property.

the other, and make no distinction in our judgments about them

—especially if the second is inferior to the first.[5]

* *"If Titius's grain has been mixed with yours by the will of both of you, it is common property, because the individual bodies, that is, the individual grains, which belonged to each of you, have been made common by your consent. But if it was mixed by accident, or Titius mixed it without your consent, it does not seem to be common, because the individual bodies persist in their own substance. In such cases the grain is no more common than a flock is understood to be common if Titius's sheep have been mixed with yours. But if the whole of the grain is kept by one of you, an action for recovery lies for the quantity of each*

It will be easy to answer this objection if we consider how nimble and unsteady the imagination is, and the different lights in which it is constantly placing its objects. When we attribute to a person property in two objects, we do not always pass from the person to one object, and from that to the other object related to it. Since the objects are here to be considered as the person's property, we tend to join them together and place them in the same light. Suppose, then, that a great object and a small one are related. If a person is strongly related to the great object, he will also be strongly related to both objects taken together, because he is related to the most considerable part. On the other hand, if he is related only to the small object, he will not be strongly related to both taken together. His relation is only to the most trivial part, which does not strike us very forcibly when we consider the whole. And this is why small objects become accessions to great ones, and not great ones to small.

person's grain, and it is left to the judge to estimate what the quality of each

It is the general opinion of philosophers and civil lawyers that the sea cannot become the property of any nation. The reason is that it is impossible to take possession of it, or to form any such distinct relation with it as might ground property. Where this reason no longer applies, property immediately comes in. Thus the most energetic advocates of the freedom of the seas universally grant that firths and bays naturally belong, as an accession, to the owners of the surrounding mainland. Strictly speaking, these have no more bond or union with the land than the Pacific Ocean would have. But since they have a union in the fancy, and are at the same time inferior, they are naturally regarded as an accession.

By the laws of most nations, and by the natural bent of our thought, property in rivers is attributed to the owners of their banks. The exception is such vast rivers as the Rhine or the Danube, which seem to the imagination too large to follow, as an accession, the property of the neighboring fields. Yet even these rivers are considered the property of the nation through whose territory they run. The idea of a nation is of a suitable bulk to correspond to them, and to bear such a relation to them in the fancy.

Additions to lands bordering on rivers follow the land, say the civil lawyers, provided they are made by what they call alluvion—that is, gradually and imperceptibly. These are circumstances that greatly help the imagination in joining the two. Where a considerable piece is torn all at once from one bank and joined to another, it does not become the property of the man whose land it lands on until it unites with the land, and until the trees or plants have spread their roots into both. Before that, the imagination does not join them sufficiently.

There are other cases that somewhat resemble this one of accession, but that are at bottom considerably different, and deserve our attention. One of these is the joining of the property of different persons in such a way that it cannot be separated. The question is to whom the combined mass must belong.

Where this joining is such as to allow division but not separation, the decision is natural and easy. The whole mass must be supposed to be held in common by the owners of the various parts, and then divided according to the proportions of those parts. But here I cannot help noticing a remarkable subtlety in Roman law, in its distinction between confusion and commixtion. Confusion is a union of two bodies, such as different liquids, where the parts become entirely indistinguishable. Commixtion is the blending of two bodies, such as two bushels of grain, where the parts remain separate in an obvious and visible way. In the latter case the imagination does not find so complete a union as in the former, but can trace and keep a distinct idea of each person's property. This is why the civil law, though it established complete common ownership in the case of confusion, followed by a proportional division, supposes in the case of commixtion that each owner keeps a distinct right—however much necessity may in the end force them to accept the same division.

person's grain was." Justinian, *Institutes*, Book 2, Title 1, Section 28.[6]

Where the property of two persons is joined in such a way as to allow neither division nor separation—as when someone builds a house on another's land—the whole must belong to one of the owners. And here I claim that it is naturally conceived to belong to the owner of the most considerable part. The compound object may be related to two different persons and carry our view to both of them at once. But the most considerable part chiefly engages our attention, and through the close union draws the lesser part along with it. For this reason the whole bears a relation to the owner of that part, and is regarded as his property.

The only difficulty is what we shall choose to call the most considerable part, the one most attractive to the imagination.

This quality depends on several different circumstances that have little connection with one another. One part of a compound object may become more considerable than another because it is more constant and durable; because it is of greater value; because it is more obvious and striking; because it is larger in extent; or because its existence is more separate and independent. These circumstances can be combined and opposed in every possible way and to every imaginable degree. So it is easy to see that there will be many cases where the reasons on both sides are so evenly balanced that we cannot reach any satisfactory decision.

Here, then, is the proper business of municipal laws: to settle what the principles of human nature have left undetermined.

What is on the surface goes with the soil, says the civil law; the writing goes with the paper; the canvas goes with the picture. These decisions do not fit well together, and they are proof of the conflict between the principles they come from.

But of all questions of this kind the most curious is the one that for so many ages divided the followers of Proculus and Sabinus. Suppose a person makes a cup out of another's metal, or a ship out of his wood, and suppose the owner of the metal or wood demands his goods back. The question is whether he acquires a title to the cup or the ship. Sabinus held that he does. He asserted that the substance or matter is the foundation of all the qualities, and that it is incorruptible and immortal, and therefore superior to the form, which is accidental and dependent.

Proculus, on the other hand, observed that the form is the most obvious and striking part, and that it is from the form that bodies are named as

6 Hume quotes Justinian's Institutes in Latin; the passage is given here in English.

> belonging to this or that particular species. He might have added that in most bodies the matter or substance is so fluctuating and uncertain that it is utterly impossible to trace it through all its changes. For my part, I do not know on what principles such a controversy could be settled with certainty.
>
> I shall therefore content myself with observing that Tribonian's decision seems to me rather ingenious. The cup belongs to the owner of the metal, because it can be brought back to its original form; but the ship belongs to the maker of its form, for the opposite reason. However ingenious this reasoning may seem, it plainly depends on the fancy. Because such a reduction is possible, the fancy finds a closer connection and relation between a cup and the owner of its metal than between a ship and the owner of its wood, where the substance is more fixed and unalterable.[7]

3.2.3.11 The right of succession is a very natural one. It arises from the presumed consent of the parent or near relative, and from the general interest of mankind, which requires that men's possessions pass to those dearest to them, so as to make them more industrious and thrifty. Perhaps these causes are reinforced by the influence of relation, or the association of ideas, by which we are naturally led to think of the son after the parent's death, and to ascribe to him a title to his father's possessions. Those goods must become someone's property—but whose is the question. Here the person's children evidently come to mind naturally; and since they are already connected to those possessions through their deceased parent, we tend to

7 Hume writes "Trebonian"; the Roman jurist behind Justinian's code is usually spelled Tribonian.

connect them still further by the relation of property. There are many parallel instances of this.[8]

TRANSFER OF PROPERTY BY CONSENT

Hume shows why property may pass by consent and why delivery is required.

3.2.4.1 However useful, or even necessary, stability of possession may be to human society, it comes with very considerable inconveniences. The relation of fitness or suitability should never be taken into account in distributing property among mankind. We must govern ourselves by rules that are more general in their application and freer from doubt and uncertainty. Of this kind is present possession when society is first established, and afterwards occupation, prescription, accession, and succession. Since these depend very much on chance, they must often conflict with people's wants and desires, and persons and possessions must often be very badly matched. This is a major inconvenience, which calls for a remedy. To apply a remedy directly, and allow every man to seize by violence whatever he judges suitable for him, would destroy society. So the rules of justice look for some middle way between rigid stability and this changeable and uncertain adjustment. But there is no middle way better than the obvious one: that possession and property should always be stable, except when the owner consents to give them to some other person. This rule can have no

8 HUME'S NOTE. When we examine the different titles to authority in government, we shall find many reasons to convince us that the right of succession depends to a great extent on the imagination. Meanwhile I shall content myself with noting one example that belongs to the present subject. Suppose a person dies without children, and a dispute arises among his relatives over his inheritance. Clearly, if his wealth came partly from his father and partly from his mother, the most natural way to settle such a dispute is to divide his possessions and assign each part to the family it came from. Now the person is supposed to have once been the full and entire owner of those goods. So I ask: what makes us find a certain fairness and natural reason in this division, if not the imagination? His affection for these families does not depend on his possessions, so his consent can never be presumed for precisely this division. And as for the public interest, it seems not in the least concerned one way or the other.

bad consequence in causing wars and quarrels, since the consent of the owner, who alone is concerned, is included in the transfer. And it can serve many good purposes in matching property to persons. Different parts of the earth produce different goods. Not only that, but different men are naturally suited to different occupations, and reach greater perfection in any one of them when they confine themselves to it alone. All this requires mutual exchange and commerce. This is why the transfer of property by consent is founded on a law of nature, just as its stability without such consent is.

3.2.4.2 So much is settled by plain utility and interest. But perhaps it is for more trivial reasons that delivery, or a perceptible handing over of the object, is commonly required by civil laws—and also by the laws of nature, according to most authors—as a necessary condition in the transfer of property. The property of an object, when taken as something real, without any reference to morality or the sentiments of the mind, is a quality wholly imperceptible, and even inconceivable. Nor can we form any distinct notion either of its stability or of its transfer. This imperfection in our ideas is less noticeably felt with regard to its stability, since that engages our attention less and is easily passed over by the mind without close examination. But the transfer of property from one person to another is a more striking event. So the defect in our ideas becomes more noticeable on that occasion, and makes us look around on every side for some remedy. Now nothing enlivens an idea more than a present impression, together with a relation between that impression and the idea. So it is natural for us to seek some false light from this quarter. To help the imagination conceive the transfer of property, we take the perceptible object and actually transfer its possession to the person on whom we want to bestow the property. The supposed resemblance of the actions, and the presence of this perceptible delivery, deceive the mind and make it imagine that it conceives the mysterious passing-over of the property. That this explanation is correct is shown by the fact that men have invented a symbolic delivery to satisfy

the fancy where a real one is impracticable. Thus handing over the keys of a granary is understood as delivering the grain inside it, and handing over stone and earth represents the delivery of a manor. This is a kind of superstitious practice in civil law and in the laws of nature, resembling the Roman Catholic superstitions in religion. Roman Catholics represent the inconceivable mysteries of the Christian religion, and make them more present to the mind, by a candle, a vestment, or a gesture that is supposed to resemble them. In the same way, lawyers and moralists have hit on similar inventions for the same reason, and have tried by these means to satisfy themselves about the transfer of property by consent.

THE OBLIGATION OF PROMISES

Hume argues that promises are human conventions whose force comes from interest.

3.2.5.1 That the moral rule requiring us to keep promises is not natural will be clear enough from two propositions, which I now proceed to prove: that a promise would not be intelligible before human conventions had established it; and that even if it were intelligible, it would not carry any moral obligation.

3.2.5.2 I say, first, that a promise is not naturally intelligible, nor prior to human conventions. A man unacquainted with society could never enter into any engagement with another, even if they could perceive each other's thoughts by intuition. If promises are natural and intelligible, there must be some act of the mind accompanying the words "I promise," and the obligation must depend on this act of the mind. So let us run through all the faculties of the soul, and see which of them is exercised in our promises.

3.2.5.3 The act of the mind expressed by a promise is not a resolution to do something, for that alone never imposes any obligation. Nor is it a desire to do it, for we can bind ourselves without such a desire, or even with an aversion that we openly declare. Nor is it the willing of the action we promise to perform, for a

promise always concerns some future time, and the will has influence only on present actions. The act of the mind that enters into a promise and produces its obligation is neither resolving, desiring, nor willing any particular performance. It follows, then, that it must necessarily be the willing of that obligation which arises from the promise. Nor is this merely a philosophical conclusion. It fits entirely with our ordinary ways of thinking and speaking, when we say that we are bound by our own consent, and that the obligation arises from our mere will and pleasure. The only question, then, is whether there is not an obvious absurdity in supposing this act of the mind—an absurdity no one could fall into whose ideas were not muddled by prejudice and the misleading use of language.

3.2.5.4 All morality depends on our sentiments. When some action or quality of the mind pleases us in a certain way, we say it is virtuous; and when neglecting or failing to perform it displeases us in a similar way, we say that we are under an obligation to perform it. A change in the obligation presupposes a change in the sentiment, and the creation of a new obligation presupposes that some new sentiment arises. But it is certain that we can naturally no more change our own sentiments than the motions of the heavens. Nor can we, by a single act of our will—that is, by a promise—make any action agreeable or disagreeable, moral or immoral, which without that act would have produced opposite impressions or had different qualities. It would be absurd, therefore, to will any new obligation, that is, any new sentiment of pain or pleasure; nor is it possible that men could naturally fall into so gross an absurdity. A promise,

then, is naturally something altogether unintelligible, and there is no act of the mind belonging to it.[9]

3.2.5.5 But, second, even if there were some act of the mind belonging to a promise, it could not naturally produce any obligation. This is evident from the preceding reasoning. A promise creates a new obligation. A new obligation presupposes that new sentiments arise. The will never creates new sentiments. So no obligation could naturally arise from a promise, even supposing the mind could fall into the absurdity of willing that obligation.

3.2.5.6 The same truth can be proved even more clearly by the reasoning that showed justice in general to be an artificial virtue. No action can be required of us as our duty unless there is implanted in human nature some motivating passion or motive capable of producing the action. This motive cannot be the sense of duty. A sense of duty presupposes a prior obligation. And where an action is not required by any natural passion, it cannot be required by any natural obligation, since it can be omitted without showing any defect or imperfection in the mind and temper, and therefore without any vice. Now it is evident

9 HUME'S NOTE. If morality were discoverable by reason and not by sentiment, it would be even more evident that promises could make no change in it. Morality is supposed to consist in relation. Every new imposition of morality, therefore, must arise from some new relation of objects. Consequently the will could not produce any change in morals directly, but could do so only by producing a change in the objects. But the moral obligation of a promise is purely the effect of the will, without the least change in any part of the universe. It follows that promises have no natural obligation.

Someone might say that this act of the will, being in effect a new object, produces new relations and new duties. I would answer that this is a pure sophism, which can be detected with a very modest degree of care and precision. To will a new obligation is to will a new relation of objects. So if this new relation of objects were formed by the volition itself, we would in effect be willing the volition—which is plainly absurd and impossible. The will here has no object to aim at, but must turn back on itself ad infinitum. The new obligation depends on new relations. The new relations depend on a new volition. The new volition has as its object a new obligation, and so new relations, and so a new volition; and this volition in turn aims at a new obligation, relation, and volition, without end. It is impossible, therefore, that we could ever will a new obligation. Consequently it is impossible that the will could ever accompany a promise, or produce a new moral obligation.

that we have no motive leading us to keep promises that is distinct from a sense of duty. If we thought promises carried no moral obligation, we would never feel any inclination to keep them. This is not the case with the natural virtues. Even if there were no obligation to relieve the miserable, our humanity would lead us to do it. And when we omit that duty, the immorality of the omission comes from its being proof that we lack the natural sentiments of humanity. A father knows it is his duty to take care of his children, but he also has a natural inclination to do so. And if no human being had that inclination, no one could be under any such obligation. But there is naturally no inclination to keep promises distinct from a sense of their obligation. It follows that fidelity is not a natural virtue, and that promises have no force prior to human conventions.

3.2.5.7 Anyone who disagrees must give a proper proof of these two propositions: *That there is a special act of the mind attached to promises; and that as a result of this act of the mind there arises an inclination to perform, distinct from a sense of duty*. I presume that neither of these points can be proved. So I venture to conclude that promises are human inventions, founded on the necessities and interests of society.

3.2.5.8 To discover these necessities and interests, we must consider the same qualities of human nature that we have already found to give rise to the earlier laws of society. Men are naturally selfish, or endowed only with a limited generosity. So they are not easily induced to do anything for the interest of strangers, except with a view to some reciprocal advantage that they have no hope of getting other than by doing it. Now it often happens that these mutual performances cannot be completed at the same moment. So one party has to be content to remain in uncertainty, and depend on the other's gratitude for a return of kindness. But there is so much corruption among men that, generally speaking, this is only a flimsy security. And since the benefactor is here supposed to confer his favors with a view to self-interest, this both lessens the obligation and sets an example of selfishness, which is the true mother of ingratitude.

So if we followed the natural course of our passions and inclinations, we would perform few actions for the benefit of others from disinterested motives, because we are naturally very limited in our kindness and affection. And we would perform just as few from regard to our interest, because we cannot rely on their gratitude. Here, then, the mutual exchange of good offices is more or less lost among mankind, and everyone is reduced to his own skill and industry for his well-being and survival. The invention of the law of nature concerning the stability of possession has already made men tolerable to one another. The invention of the transfer of property and possession by consent has begun to make them useful to one another. But these laws of nature, however strictly observed, are still not enough to make men as serviceable to each other as they are by nature fitted to become. Even though possession is stable, men may often gain little from it, while they have more of some kind of goods than they need and at the same time suffer from the lack of others. The transfer of property, which is the proper remedy for this inconvenience, cannot remedy it completely. It can only apply to objects that are present and individual, not to those that are absent or general. One cannot transfer ownership of a particular house twenty leagues away, because the consent cannot be accompanied by delivery, which is a necessary condition. Nor can one transfer ownership of ten bushels of grain, or five hogsheads of wine, by mere words and consent, because these are only general terms, and have no direct relation to any particular heap of grain or barrels of wine. Besides, human commerce is not confined to the barter of goods. It can extend to services and actions, which we may exchange to our mutual interest and advantage. Your corn is ripe today; mine will be tomorrow. It is profitable for us both that I should work with you today, and that you should help me tomorrow. I have no kindness for you, and I know you have as little for me. So I will not take any trouble on your account. And if I worked with you on my own account, expecting a return, I know I would be disappointed, and that I would rely on your gratitude in vain. So I leave you to

work alone; you treat me the same way. The seasons change, and both of us lose our harvests for lack of mutual confidence and security.

3.2.5.9 All this is the effect of the natural and inherent principles and passions of human nature. Since these passions and principles are unchangeable, it might be thought that our conduct, which depends on them, must be unchangeable too. On that view it would be useless for moralists or politicians to tamper with us, or to try to change the usual course of our actions with a view to the public interest. And indeed, if the success of their plans depended on their succeeding in correcting men's selfishness and ingratitude, they would never make any progress, unless aided by omnipotence, which alone is able to remold the human mind and change its character in such fundamental respects. All they can hope to do is to give a new direction to those natural passions, and teach us that we can satisfy our appetites better in an indirect and artificial way than by their headlong, impetuous motion. That is how I learn to do a service for another without bearing him any real kindness. I foresee that he will return my service, in expectation of another of the same kind, and in order to keep up the same exchange of good offices with me or with others. And accordingly, after I have served him, and he has the benefit of my action, he is induced to do his part, foreseeing the consequences of refusing.

3.2.5.10 But though this self-interested commerce among men begins to take hold and to predominate in society, it does not entirely abolish the more generous and noble exchange of friendship and good offices. I may still do services for people I love and know particularly well, without any prospect of advantage. And they may repay me in the same way, with no aim but to repay my past services. So in order to distinguish these two different kinds of commerce, the interested and the disinterested, a certain form of words was invented for the former, by which we bind ourselves to the performance of some action. This form of words constitutes what we call a promise, which is the sanction of the interested commerce of mankind.

When a man says he promises something, he in effect expresses a resolution to do it. Along with that, by using this form of words, he subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again if he fails. A resolution is the natural act of the mind that promises express. But if there were nothing more than a resolution involved, promises would only declare our previous motives, and would not create any new motive or obligation. It is the conventions of men that create a new motive. They do so once experience has taught us that human affairs would be conducted much more to our mutual advantage if certain symbols or signs were instituted, by which we could give each other assurance of our conduct in any particular case. Once these signs are instituted, whoever uses them is immediately bound by his interest to carry out his engagements, and must never expect to be trusted again if he refuses to do what he promised.

3.2.5.11 Nor should the knowledge needed to make mankind aware of this interest in instituting and keeping promises be thought beyond the capacity of human nature, however primitive and uncultivated. Very little experience of the world is needed to make us perceive all these consequences and advantages. The briefest experience of society reveals them to every mortal. And when each individual sees the same sense of interest in all his fellows, he immediately does his part in any contract, being assured that they will not fail to do theirs. All of them, in concert, enter into a scheme of actions designed for the common benefit, and agree to be true to their word. Nothing more is needed to form this concert or convention than that each person have a sense of interest in the faithful fulfillment of engagements, and express that sense to the other members of society. This immediately causes that interest to act on them; and interest is the first obligation to keep promises.

3.2.5.12 Afterwards a moral sentiment joins with interest, and becomes a new obligation on mankind. This moral sentiment in keeping promises arises from the same principles as the one in refraining from others' property. Public interest, education, and the artifices of politicians have the same effect in both cases.

The difficulties we meet in supposing that a moral obligation attaches to promises, we either overcome or evade. For instance, the expression of a resolution is not commonly thought to be binding, and we cannot easily conceive how using a certain form of words could make any real difference. Here, therefore, we invent a new act of the mind, which we call willing an obligation, and we suppose that the morality depends on this. But we have already proved that there is no such act of the mind, and consequently that promises impose no natural obligation.

3.2.5.13 To confirm this, we may add some further reflections on the will that is supposed to enter into a promise and cause its obligation. It is evident that the will alone is never supposed to cause the obligation. It must be expressed by words or signs in order to bind anyone. Once the expression has been brought in as subordinate to the will, it soon becomes the principal part of the promise. A man will be no less bound by his word even if he secretly gives his intention a different direction, and withholds himself both from a resolution and from willing an obligation. But though on most occasions the expression makes up the whole of the promise, it does not always do so. Someone who used an expression whose meaning he did not know, and which he used without any intention of binding himself, would certainly not be bound by it. Indeed, even if he knows its meaning, if he uses it only in jest, with signs that clearly show he has no serious intention of binding himself, he would be under no obligation to perform. The words must be a perfect expression of the will, without any contrary signs. Yet we must not carry even this too far. Suppose that, by our quickness of understanding, we conclude from certain signs that someone intends to deceive us. We must not imagine that he is not bound by his expression or verbal promise if we accept it. We must limit this conclusion to cases where the signs are of a different kind from those of deceit. All these contradictions are easily accounted for if the obligation of promises is merely a human invention for the convenience of society. But they will never be explained if it

is something real and natural, arising from some action of the mind or body.

3.2.5.14 I shall further observe that every new promise imposes a new moral obligation on the person who promises, and that this new obligation arises from his will. This makes it one of the most mysterious and incomprehensible operations that can possibly be imagined. It may even be compared to *transubstantiation* or *holy orders*,[10] where a certain form of words, together with a certain intention, entirely changes the nature of an external object, and even of a human being. But though these mysteries are alike in this respect, it is very remarkable that they differ widely in other respects, and this difference may be regarded as strong proof that their origins are different. Since the obligation of promises is an invention serving the interest of society, it is bent into as many different forms as that interest requires, and even runs into outright contradictions rather than lose sight of its object. But those other monstrous doctrines are mere inventions of priests, with no public interest in view. So they are less disturbed in their progress by new obstacles, and it must be admitted that, after the first absurdity, they follow the current of reason and good sense more directly. Theologians clearly saw that the external form of words, being mere sound, requires an intention to give it any effect. They also saw that once this intention is regarded as a necessary condition, its absence must equally prevent the effect, whether avowed or concealed, sincere or deceitful. Accordingly they have commonly held that the intention of the priest makes the sacrament. When he secretly withdraws his intention, he is himself gravely guilty, but he still destroys the baptism, or communion, or holy orders. The terrible consequences of this doctrine did not prevent its taking hold, whereas the inconvenience of a similar doctrine about promises has prevented that doctrine from establishing itself. Men are always more concerned about the present life than the future one, and tend to think the smallest evil that concerns the

10 HUME'S NOTE. I mean insofar as holy orders are supposed to confer the indelible character. In other respects they are only a legal qualification.

former more important than the greatest that concerns the latter.

3.2.5.15 We can draw the same conclusion about the origin of promises from the force that is supposed to invalidate all contracts and free us from their obligation. Such a principle proves that promises have no natural obligation, and are mere artificial contrivances for the convenience and advantage of society. If we consider the matter rightly, force is not essentially different from any other motive of hope or fear that may induce us to give our word and put ourselves under an obligation. A dangerously wounded man who promises a surgeon a fair sum to cure him would certainly be bound to pay it. Yet his case is not so very different from that of someone who promises a sum to a robber as to produce so great a difference in our moral sentiments—if these sentiments were not built entirely on public interest and convenience.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

Hume gives three more arguments that the laws of justice are artificial.

3.2.6.1 We have now gone over the three fundamental laws of nature: the stability of possession, its transfer by consent, and the keeping of promises. The peace and security of human society depend entirely on the strict observance of these three laws. Where they are neglected, there is no possibility of establishing good relations among men. Society is absolutely necessary for the well-being of men, and these laws are just as necessary to sustain society. Whatever restraint they may put on men's passions, they are the real offspring of those passions, and are only a more artful and refined way of satisfying them. Nothing is more vigilant and inventive than our passions, and nothing is more obvious than the convention to observe these rules. So nature has left this matter entirely to the conduct of men. It has not placed in the mind any special original principles to determine us to a set of actions into which the other principles of our

frame and constitution were enough to lead us. To convince ourselves of this truth more fully, we may stop here a moment. From a review of the preceding reasoning we may draw some new arguments to prove that these laws, however necessary, are entirely artificial and of human invention; and consequently that justice is an artificial, not a natural, virtue. (1)

3.2.6.2 The first argument I shall use comes from the common definition of justice. Justice is commonly defined as a constant and perpetual will to give everyone his due. This definition supposes that there are such things as right and property independent of justice and prior to it, and that they would have existed even if men had never dreamed of practicing such a virtue. I have already noted, in passing, the fallacy of this opinion, and I shall here go on to set out my views on the subject a little more clearly.

3.2.6.3 I will begin by observing that this quality, which we call property, is like many of the imaginary qualities of the Peripatetic philosophy. When considered apart from our moral sentiments, it vanishes on a closer inspection of the subject. Property plainly does not consist in any of the sensible qualities of the object, for these may stay exactly the same while the property changes. Property, then, must consist in some relation of the object. But it is not its relation to other external, inanimate objects, for these too may stay exactly the same while the property changes. So this quality consists in the relations of objects to intelligent, rational beings. But it is not the external, bodily relation that forms the essence of property. That relation may be the same between inanimate objects, or with regard to animals, and in those cases it forms no property. Property, then, consists in some internal relation. That is, it consists in some influence that the object's external relations have on the mind and on actions. Thus the external relation we call occupation or first possession is not itself imagined to be the object's property, but only to cause its property. Now clearly this external relation causes nothing in external objects. It influences only the mind, by giving us a sense of duty to keep away from that object and to

restore it to its first possessor. These actions are what we properly call justice. So the nature of property depends on that virtue, not the virtue on property.

3.2.6.4 So anyone who claims that justice is a natural virtue and injustice a natural vice must claim the following. Setting aside the notions of property, right and obligation, a certain conduct and train of actions, in certain external relations of objects, naturally has a moral beauty or ugliness and causes an original pleasure or uneasiness. On that view, giving a man back his goods would be considered virtuous for a particular reason. It would not be because nature has attached a certain feeling of pleasure to such conduct with regard to the property of others. It would be because she has attached that feeling to such conduct with regard to those external objects that others have had first or long possession of, or have received by the consent of those who had first or long possession. If nature has given us no such sentiment, then there is naturally, prior to human conventions, no such thing as property. This dry and exact consideration of the subject seems to make it evident enough that nature has attached no pleasure or sentiment of approval to such conduct. Still, I want to leave as little room for doubt as possible, so I will add a few more arguments to confirm my view.

3.2.6.5 First: if nature had given us a pleasure of this kind, it would have been as evident and noticeable as on every other occasion. We would have had no difficulty seeing that considering such actions, in such a situation, gives a certain pleasure and sentiment of approval. We would not have been forced to use notions of property in defining justice while at the same time using notions of justice in defining property. This deceptive way of reasoning plainly proves that the subject contains obscurities and difficulties that we cannot overcome and want to dodge by this trick.

3.2.6.6 Second: the rules by which property, rights and obligations are determined show no marks of a natural origin, but many marks of artifice and contrivance. They are too numerous to have come from nature. They can be changed by human laws.

And all of them have a direct and evident tendency toward the public good and the support of civil society. This last point is remarkable for two reasons. First, suppose the cause of establishing these laws had been a regard for the public good, just as the public good is their natural tendency. They would still have been artificial, since they were deliberately contrived and aimed at a certain end. Second, if men had been endowed with so strong a regard for the public good, they would never have restrained themselves by these rules. So the laws of justice arise from natural principles in an even more roundabout and artificial way. Their real origin is self-love. And since one person's self-love is naturally opposed to another's, these various self-interested passions are forced to adjust themselves so as to agree on some system of conduct and behavior. This system takes in the interest of each individual, and so it naturally benefits the public, though its inventors did not intend it for that purpose. (2)

3.2.6.7 Next, we may observe that all kinds of vice and virtue shade imperceptibly into each other. They may approach by such fine degrees that it is very hard, if not flatly impossible, to tell where one ends and the other begins. From this observation we can draw a new argument for the principle above. Whatever may be true of vice and virtue generally, it is certain that rights, obligations and property admit of no such imperceptible gradation. A man either has full and complete property or none at all. He is either entirely obliged to perform an action or under no obligation whatever. Civil laws may talk of perfect and imperfect ownership, but it is easy to see that this comes from a fiction. That fiction has no foundation in reason and can never enter into our notions of natural justice and equity. A man who hires a horse, even for a single day, has as full a right to use it for that time as the person we call its owner has to use it on any other day. Clearly, however the use may be limited in time or degree, the right itself does not admit of any such gradation. It is absolute and complete as far as it extends. Accordingly we see that this right both arises and perishes in an instant. A man

acquires complete property in an object by occupation or by the owner's consent, and loses it by his own consent. None of this involves the imperceptible gradation so noticeable in other qualities and relations. Since this is the case with property, rights and obligations, I ask: how does it stand with justice and injustice? However you answer, you run into hopeless difficulties. If you reply that justice and injustice admit of degree and shade imperceptibly into each other, you directly contradict the position just stated, that obligation and property do not admit of such gradation. These depend entirely on justice and injustice and follow them in all their variations. Where the justice is complete, the property is complete too. Where the justice is imperfect, the property must be imperfect too. And conversely, if property admits of no such variations, then justice cannot admit of them either. So suppose you accept this last proposition and claim that justice and injustice do not admit of degrees. You are then in effect claiming that they are not naturally either vicious or virtuous. For vice and virtue, moral good and evil, and indeed all natural qualities, shade imperceptibly into each other and are often impossible to tell apart.

3.2.6.8 It is worth noting a further point here. Abstract reasoning and the general maxims of philosophy and law establish that property, right and obligation do not admit of degrees. Yet in our ordinary, careless way of thinking we find that view very hard to hold, and we even secretly embrace the opposite principle. An object must be in the possession of one person or another. An action must either be performed or not. We must pick one side in these dilemmas, and often no fair middle can be found. When we reflect on the matter, this forces us to admit that all property and obligations are complete. But on the other hand, consider the origin of property and obligation. We find that they depend on public utility, and sometimes on the tendencies of the imagination, which are seldom wholly on one side. So we naturally tend to imagine that these moral relations admit of an imperceptible gradation. That is why arbitrators, whom the parties' consent leaves complete masters of the matter, usually find so

much equity and justice on both sides that they strike a middle course and split the difference. Civil judges do not have this liberty and must give a decisive verdict for one side or the other. So they are often at a loss how to decide, and are forced to proceed on the flimsiest reasons in the world. Half rights and half obligations seem so natural in ordinary life, but in their courts they are complete absurdities. For that reason judges are often forced to treat half arguments as whole ones, in order to settle the case one way or the other. (3)

3.2.6.9 The third argument of this kind can be explained as follows. If we look at the ordinary course of human actions, we will find that the mind does not restrain itself by any general and universal rules. On most occasions it acts as its present motives and inclination determine it. Each action is a particular individual event. So it must come from particular principles, and from our immediate situation within ourselves and with respect to the rest of the universe. On some occasions we extend our motives beyond the very circumstances that gave rise to them, and form something like general rules for our conduct. Even then, it is easy to see that these rules are not perfectly inflexible but allow of many exceptions. Since this is the ordinary course of human actions, we may draw a conclusion. The laws of justice are universal and perfectly inflexible, so they can never be derived from nature, nor be the immediate offspring of any natural motive or inclination. No action can be morally good or evil unless some natural passion or motive pushes us toward it or holds us back from it. And clearly the morality must be capable of all the same variations that are natural to the passion. Here are two people disputing over an estate. One is rich, a fool, and a bachelor. The other is poor, a sensible man, and has a large family. The first is my enemy; the second my friend. I may be moved in this affair by a view to public or private interest, by friendship or by enmity. Either way, I must be led to do my utmost to get the estate for the second. Suppose I were moved only by natural motives, without any combination or convention with others. Then no consideration of these people's right and property

would be able to restrain me. All property depends on morality, and all morality depends on the ordinary course of our passions and actions. These in turn are directed only by particular motives. So such partial conduct would clearly fit the strictest morality and could never be a violation of property. So suppose men acted toward the laws of society as freely as they do in every other affair. On most occasions they would conduct themselves by particular judgments. They would take into account the characters and circumstances of the persons as well as the general nature of the question. But it is easy to see that this would produce endless confusion in human society. Unless general and inflexible principles restrained men's greed and partiality, these would quickly bring disorder into the world. It was with a view to this problem, then, that men established those principles. They agreed to restrain themselves by general rules that cannot be changed by spite or favor, or by particular views of private or public interest. These rules, then, are artificially invented for a certain purpose. They run contrary to the common principles of human nature, which adapt themselves to circumstances and have no fixed, invariable way of operating.

3.2.6.10 Nor do I see how I could easily be mistaken about this. When anyone imposes general inflexible rules on himself in his conduct with others, he clearly regards certain objects as their property, and takes that property to be sacred and inviolable. But no proposition could be more evident than that property is perfectly unintelligible unless we first suppose justice and injustice. And these virtues and vices are just as unintelligible unless we have motives, independent of the morality, to push us toward just actions and hold us back from unjust ones. So whatever those motives are, they must adapt themselves to circumstances. They must admit of all the variations that human affairs are liable to in their incessant changes. Such motives are therefore a very unsuitable foundation for rules as rigid and inflexible as the laws of nature. Clearly these laws can only be derived from human conventions, made once men have seen

the disorders that result from following their natural and variable principles.

3.2.6.11 On the whole, then, we should regard this distinction between justice and injustice as having two different foundations. One is interest: men observe that it is impossible to live in society without restraining themselves by certain rules. The other is morality: once this interest has been observed, men take pleasure in the sight of actions that tend toward the peace of society, and feel uneasiness at actions contrary to it. It is the voluntary convention and artifice of men that brings the first interest into play. To that extent those laws of justice are to be considered artificial. Once that interest has been established and acknowledged, the sense of morality in observing these rules follows naturally and of its own accord. It is certain, though, that a new artifice also strengthens it. The public instruction of politicians and the private education given by parents help give us a sense of honor and duty in strictly regulating our actions with regard to the property of others.

THE ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

Hume explains government as a remedy for our preference for near over remote interests.

3.2.7.1 Nothing is more certain than that men are largely governed by interest. Even when they extend their concern beyond themselves, it does not reach very far. In ordinary life it is unusual for them to look beyond their closest friends and acquaintances. It is no less certain that men can pursue their interest most effectively by a universal and inflexible observance of the rules of justice. Only by this can they preserve society and keep themselves from falling into the wretched and wild condition commonly represented as the state of nature. All men have a great interest in upholding society and observing the rules of justice. That interest is also plain and obvious, even to the crudest and least cultivated of the human race. It is almost impossible for anyone who has experienced society to be mistaken about it.

Men are sincerely attached to their interest. Their interest is closely bound up with the observance of justice, and this interest is certain and openly acknowledged. So one may ask how any disorder can ever arise in society. What principle in human nature is powerful enough to overcome so strong a passion, or violent enough to obscure such clear knowledge?

3.2.7.2 It was observed, in treating the passions, that men are powerfully governed by the imagination. They proportion their feelings more to the light in which an object appears to them than to its real and intrinsic value. Whatever strikes them with a strong and lively idea usually wins out over what lies in a dimmer light. It takes a great superiority of value to offset this advantage. Now everything close to us, in space or time, strikes us with such an idea. So it has a corresponding effect on the will and the passions, and usually acts with more force than any object lying in a more distant and dimmer light. We may be fully convinced that the distant object is better than the near one, yet we cannot regulate our actions by this judgment. We give in to the urgings of our passions, which always plead for whatever is near and close at hand.

3.2.7.3 This is why men so often act against their known interest. In particular, it is why they prefer any trivial present advantage to the maintenance of order in society, which depends so heavily on the observance of justice. The consequences of every breach of equity seem very remote, and they cannot outweigh any immediate advantage the breach may bring. They are no less real, however, for being remote. And since all men are to some degree subject to the same weakness, violations of equity necessarily become very frequent in society. Dealings among men are thereby made very dangerous and uncertain. You share my tendency to favor what is near over what is remote. So you are naturally drawn to commit acts of injustice just as I am. Your example pushes me further this way through imitation. It also gives me a new reason for breaking equity, by showing me that I would be the dupe of my own integrity if I alone imposed a strict restraint on myself amid the lawlessness of others.

3.2.7.4 This quality of human nature, then, is not only very dangerous to society but also seems, at first glance, to be beyond any remedy. The remedy can only come from men's consent. If men are incapable on their own of preferring the remote to the near, they will never consent to anything that would force them into that choice and so obviously contradict their natural principles and tendencies. Whoever chooses the means chooses the end too. If it is impossible for us to prefer what is remote, it is equally impossible for us to submit to any necessity that would force us to act that way.

3.2.7.5 But notice that here this weakness of human nature becomes its own remedy. We guard against our neglect of remote objects precisely because we are naturally inclined to that neglect. When we consider objects at a distance, all their fine distinctions vanish. We then always prefer whatever is preferable in itself, without regard to its situation and circumstances. This gives rise to what we call, in a loose sense, reason. It is a principle that often runs contrary to the tendencies that show themselves as the object draws near. When I think about an action I am to perform a year from now, I always resolve to prefer the greater good, whether at that time it will be nearer or more remote. No difference in that respect makes any difference to my present intentions and resolutions. My distance from the final decision makes all those fine differences vanish, and I am affected only by the general and more noticeable qualities of good and evil. But as I get nearer, the circumstances I at first overlooked begin to show themselves and to influence my conduct and feelings. A new inclination toward the present good springs up and makes it hard for me to stick inflexibly to my original purpose and resolution. I may greatly regret this natural weakness and try by every possible means to free myself from it. I may turn to study and self-reflection, to the advice of friends, to frequent meditation and repeated resolution. And having found how ineffective all these are, I may gladly embrace any other device that lets me put a restraint on myself and guard against this weakness.

3.2.7.6 The only difficulty, then, is to find this device. By it men must cure their natural weakness and place themselves under the necessity of observing the laws of justice and equity, despite their violent tendency to prefer the near to the remote. Clearly no such remedy can be effective unless it corrects this tendency. And it is impossible to change or correct anything essential in our nature. So the most we can do is change our circumstances and situation, making the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest and their violation our most remote. But this cannot be done for all mankind. It can only be done for a few, whom we thus give an immediate interest in the carrying out of justice. These are the people we call civil magistrates, kings and their ministers, our governors and rulers. They have no personal stake in the affairs of most of the state, so they have no interest, or only a remote one, in any act of injustice. And since they are satisfied with their present condition and their role in society, they have an immediate interest in every enforcement of justice, which is so necessary to upholding society. Here, then, is the origin of civil government and society. Men cannot cure at the root, either in themselves or in others, that narrowness of soul that makes them prefer the present to the remote. They cannot change their natures. All they can do is change their situation. They can make the observance of justice the immediate interest of certain particular persons, and its violation their more remote interest. These persons are then led not only to observe those rules in their own conduct but also to make others keep to them, and to enforce the dictates of equity throughout the whole society. And if necessary they can give others a more immediate interest in the carrying out of justice too, and create a number of officers, civil and military, to help them govern.

3.2.7.7 But this enforcement of justice, though the chief advantage of government, is not the only one. Violent passion keeps men from seeing clearly the interest they have in behaving fairly toward others. In the same way it keeps them from seeing what fairness itself requires, and makes them strikingly partial

in their own favor. This problem is corrected in the same way as the one above. The same persons who enforce the laws of justice will also decide all disputes about them. Since they have no personal stake in the affairs of most of the society, they will decide these disputes more fairly than each person would in his own case.

3.2.7.8 By means of these two advantages, the enforcement and the adjudication of justice, men gain security against each other's weakness and passion as well as against their own. Under the protection of their governors they begin to enjoy at ease the pleasures of society and mutual help. But government extends its beneficial influence further. It is not content to protect men in the conventions they make for their mutual interest. It often obliges them to make such conventions, and forces them to pursue their own advantage by joining together in some common end or purpose. No quality in human nature causes more fatal errors in our conduct than the one that leads us to prefer whatever is present to what is distant and remote. It makes us desire objects more by their situation than by their intrinsic value. Two neighbors may agree to drain a meadow they own in common. It is easy for them to know each other's minds, and each must see that if he fails to do his part, the immediate consequence is that the whole project is abandoned. But it is very difficult, indeed impossible, for a thousand people to agree on any such action. It is hard for them to coordinate so complicated a plan, and harder still to carry it out, since each looks for an excuse to free himself of the trouble and expense and would put the whole burden on others. Political society easily remedies both these problems. Magistrates find an immediate interest in the interest of any considerable part of their subjects. They need consult no one but themselves to form a plan for promoting that interest. The failure of any one part in carrying out the plan is connected, though not immediately, with the failure of the whole. The magistrates prevent that failure, because they have no interest in it, immediate or remote. Thus, through the care of government, bridges are built, harbors opened, ramparts raised,

canals dug, fleets fitted out and armies trained everywhere. Government is made up of men subject to all human weaknesses. Yet by one of the finest and subtlest inventions imaginable, it becomes a compound that is to some extent exempt from all these weaknesses.

THE SOURCE OF ALLEGIANCE

Hume argues that the duty of allegiance does not rest on a promise or original contract.

3.2.8.1 Government is a very advantageous invention, and in some circumstances even absolutely necessary to mankind. But it is not necessary in all circumstances, and men can keep society going for some time without resorting to it. Men, it is true, are always strongly inclined to prefer present interest to what is distant and remote. They find it hard to resist an advantage they can enjoy right away out of fear of an evil that lies at a distance. Still, this weakness is less conspicuous where possessions and the pleasures of life are few and of little value, as they always are in the infancy of society. A Native American is hardly tempted to take another's hut or steal his bow, since he already has the same things himself. As for any greater good fortune one may have over another in hunting and fishing, it is only occasional and temporary and does little to disturb society. Some philosophers think that men are utterly incapable of society without government. I am so far from agreeing that I claim the first rudiments of government arise from quarrels not among men of the same society but among those of different societies. Less wealth is needed to produce quarrels between societies than to produce them within one. In public war and violence men fear nothing but the resistance they meet. Because they share that danger in common, it seems less terrible. And because it comes from strangers, its consequences seem less harmful than when a man stands alone against someone whose dealings benefit him and without whose company he could not survive. Now foreign war, for a society without government,

necessarily produces civil war. Throw any considerable goods among men and they instantly start quarreling, each striving to get hold of what pleases him, without regard to the consequences. In a foreign war the most considerable of all goods, life and limb, are at stake. Everyone avoids dangerous posts, grabs the best weapons, and uses the slightest wound as an excuse. The laws may be observed well enough while men are calm, but in such turmoil they can no longer operate.

3.2.8.2 We find this confirmed in the tribes of America. There men live in harmony and friendship among themselves without any established government, and never submit to any of their fellows except in time of war. Then their captain enjoys a shadow of authority, which he loses once they return from the field and make peace with neighboring tribes. This authority, however, teaches them the advantages of government. They learn to turn to it when their wealth and possessions have grown considerable, whether through the plunder of war, through trade, or through chance inventions. By then their riches are great enough to make them forget, in every crisis, the interest they have in preserving peace and justice. This gives us a plausible reason, among others, why all governments are at first monarchical, without any mixture or variety, and why republics arise only from the abuses of monarchy and despotic power. Camps are the true mothers of cities. Every emergency in war arises suddenly, so war cannot be conducted without some authority in a single person. The same kind of authority therefore naturally takes hold in the civil government that follows the military one. I take this reason to be more natural than the common one derived from patriarchal government, or the authority of a father. That authority is said to arise first within one family and to accustom its members to being governed by a single person. Society without government is one of the most natural states of men. It must continue even after many families have joined together, and long after the first generation. Nothing but an increase of wealth and possessions could force men to leave it. And all societies are so crude and untaught when they

first form that many years must pass before their wealth grows enough to disturb men in their enjoyment of peace and harmony.

3.2.8.3 Men can maintain a small, uncultivated society without government. But they cannot possibly maintain a society of any kind without justice and the observance of those three fundamental laws: the stability of possession, its transfer by consent, and the performance of promises. These, then, come before government. They are taken to impose an obligation before the duty of allegiance to civil magistrates has ever been thought of. Indeed, I will go further and claim that government, when first established, would naturally be supposed to derive its obligation from those laws of nature, and in particular from the one concerning the performance of promises. Once men have seen that government is necessary to maintain peace and enforce justice, they would naturally assemble, choose magistrates, settle their power, and promise them obedience. A promise is taken to be a bond or security already in use and carrying a moral obligation. So it is to be regarded as the original sanction of government and the source of the first obligation to obedience. This reasoning seems so natural that it has become the foundation of our fashionable system of politics. It is more or less the creed of a party among us who pride themselves, with reason, on the soundness of their philosophy and their freedom of thought. All men, they say, are born free and equal. Government and superiority can only be established by consent. Men's consent in establishing government imposes on them a new obligation, unknown to the laws of nature. Therefore men are bound to obey their magistrates only because they promised to. If they had not given their word, expressly or tacitly, to keep their allegiance, it would never have become part of their moral duty. This conclusion, however, is entirely mistaken when stretched to cover government in all its ages and situations. I maintain that the duty of allegiance is at first grafted onto the obligation of promises, and is for some time supported by that obligation. But it quickly takes root on its own and has an original obliga-

tion and authority, independent of all contracts. This is an important principle, which we must examine with care before going any further.

3.2.8.4 Some philosophers claim that justice is a natural virtue, prior to human conventions. It makes sense for them to reduce all civil allegiance to the obligation of a promise, and to claim that our own consent alone binds us to any submission to government. All government is plainly a human invention, and history tells us the origin of most governments. So if we want to claim that our political duties carry any natural obligation of morality, we must look further back for their source. These philosophers, therefore, are quick to observe that society is as old as the human species, and those three fundamental laws of nature as old as society. They take advantage of the antiquity and obscure origin of these laws. First they deny that the laws are artificial and voluntary human inventions. Then they try to graft onto them those other duties that are more plainly artificial. But suppose we are once set right on this point, and have found that natural as well as civil justice derives its origin from human conventions. We will then quickly see how pointless it is to reduce the one to the other. It is pointless to look in the laws of nature for a firmer foundation for our political duties than interest and human conventions, when these laws are themselves built on exactly the same foundation. Whichever way we turn the subject, we will find that these two kinds of duty stand on exactly the same footing. They have the same source both for their first invention and for their moral obligation. They are designed to remedy similar problems, and they acquire their moral sanction in the same way, from remedying those problems. These are two points I will try to prove as clearly as possible.

3.2.8.5 We have already shown how men invented the three fundamental laws of nature. They saw that society was necessary for their mutual survival, and found it impossible to maintain any dealings with one another without some restraint on their natural appetites. So the same self-love that makes men such a

nuisance to each other takes a new and more convenient direction. It then produces the rules of justice and is the first motive for observing them. The rules of justice are sufficient to maintain any society. But men observe that in large and refined societies they cannot keep those rules on their own. So they establish government as a new invention to reach their ends. By a stricter enforcement of justice, it preserves the old advantages or obtains new ones. To this extent, then, our civil duties are connected with our natural ones. The former are invented chiefly for the sake of the latter, and the chief object of government is to make men observe the laws of nature. In this respect, however, the law of nature concerning the performance of promises is only included along with the rest. Its exact observance is to be regarded as an effect of the institution of government. Obedience to government is not an effect of the obligation of a promise. The object of our civil duties is to enforce our natural ones. Yet the first[11] motive both for inventing and for performing either kind of duty is nothing but self-interest. And since the interest in obeying government is separate from the interest in keeping promises, we must also allow a separate obligation. Obeying the civil magistrate is required to preserve order and harmony in society. Keeping promises is required to create mutual trust and confidence in the ordinary business of life. The ends, as well as the means, are entirely distinct, and neither is subordinate to the other.

3.2.8.6 To make this clearer, consider that men will often bind themselves by promises to do what would have been in their interest even without the promises. They do this when they want to give others fuller security, adding a new obligation of interest on top of the one they were already under. The interest in keeping promises, besides its moral obligation, is general, openly acknowledged, and of the utmost importance in life. Other interests may be more particular and doubtful. We tend to suspect more strongly that men may indulge their whims or passions by acting against them. Here, then, promises naturally

11 HUME'S NOTE. First in time, not in dignity or force.

come into play, and are often required for fuller satisfaction and security. But suppose those other interests are as general and openly acknowledged as the interest in keeping a promise. Then they will be regarded as on the same footing, and men will begin to place the same confidence in them. Now this is exactly the case with our civil duties, or obedience to the magistrate. Without it no government could survive. Nor could any peace or order be maintained in large societies, where there are so many possessions on one side and so many wants, real or imaginary, on the other. Our civil duties, therefore, must soon detach themselves from our promises and acquire a force and influence of their own. The interest in both is of exactly the same kind. It is general, openly acknowledged, and prevails in all times and places. So there is no reasonable pretext for founding one on the other, when each has a foundation of its own. We might as well reduce to the obligation of a promise the obligation to keep off other people's possessions as reduce allegiance to it. The interests are no more distinct in the one case than in the other. Respect for property is no more necessary to natural society than obedience is to civil society or government. Nor is natural society more necessary to the existence of mankind than civil society is to their well-being and happiness. In short, if keeping promises is advantageous, so is obeying government. If the first interest is general, so is the second. If the one interest is obvious and openly acknowledged, so is the other. And since these two rules are founded on similar obligations of interest, each must have its own authority, independent of the other.

3.2.8.7 Promises and allegiance differ not only in their natural obligations of interest but also in their moral obligations of honor and conscience. The merit or demerit of the one does not depend in the least on that of the other. Indeed, if we consider the close connection between natural and moral obligations, we will find this conclusion entirely unavoidable. Our interest is always engaged on the side of obedience to government. Nothing but a great present advantage can lead us to rebel, by making us overlook the remote interest we have in preserving peace

and order in society. A present interest may blind us in this way to the character of our own actions. It does not blind us to the actions of others, however, and does not stop them from appearing in their true colors, as highly damaging to the public interest and to our own in particular. This naturally makes us uneasy when we consider such seditious and disloyal actions, and makes us attach to them the idea of vice and moral ugliness. The same principle makes us disapprove of every kind of private injustice, and in particular of breaking promises. We blame all treachery and breach of faith because we realize that the freedom and extent of human dealings depend entirely on faithfulness to promises. We blame all disloyalty to magistrates because we see that justice cannot be enforced without submission to government. This holds for the stability of possession, for its transfer by consent, and for the performance of promises. Since there are two entirely distinct interests here, they must give rise to two moral obligations, equally separate and independent. Even if there were no such thing as a promise in the world, government would still be necessary in all large and civilized societies. And if promises had only their own proper obligation, without the separate sanction of government, they would have little effect in such societies. This marks the boundary between our public and private duties. It shows that the latter depend more on the former than the former on the latter. Education and the artifice of politicians combine to give loyalty an extra morality, and to brand all rebellion with a greater degree of guilt and infamy. Nor is it any wonder that politicians work hard to instill such notions, since their interest is so particularly involved.

3.2.8.8 These arguments may not seem entirely conclusive, though I think they are. So I will appeal to authority, and prove from the universal consent of mankind that the obligation to submit to government is not derived from any promise of the subjects. All along I have tried to establish my system on pure reason, and have hardly ever cited the judgment even of philosophers or historians on any point. No one need be surprised that I should now appeal to popular authority and set the senti-

ments of the common crowd against any philosophical reasoning. For it must be noted that in this case men's opinions carry a special authority and are, to a large extent, infallible. The distinction between moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain that results from viewing any sentiment or character. That pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it. It follows[12] that there is exactly as much vice or virtue in any character as everyone places in it, and that we can never be mistaken on this point. Our judgments about the origin of any vice or virtue are not as certain as our judgments about their degrees. But the question here concerns not some philosophical origin of an obligation but a plain matter of fact. So it is hard to see how we could fall into error. A man who acknowledges that he owes another a certain sum must surely know whether he is bound by his own bond or his father's. He must know whether he is bound out of mere goodwill or for money lent to him, and under what conditions and for what purposes he has bound himself. In the same way, it is certain that there is a moral obligation to submit to government, because everyone thinks so. It must be just as certain that this obligation does not arise from a promise. No one whose judgment has not been led astray by clinging too strictly to a philosophical system has ever dreamed of tracing it to that origin. Neither magistrates nor subjects have formed this idea of our civil duties.

3.2.8.9 Magistrates do not derive their authority, or their subjects' obligation to obey, from a promise or original contract. Far from it: they conceal from their people as much as possible, and especially from the common people, that their authority has its origin there. If this were the sanction of government, our rulers would never receive it tacitly, which is the most that can be claimed. For what is given tacitly and imperceptibly can never have as much influence on mankind as what is done expressly

12 HUME'S NOTE. This proposition must hold strictly true of every quality that is determined merely by sentiment. In what sense we can speak of a right or wrong taste in morals, eloquence or beauty will be considered later. Meanwhile, it may be observed that the *general* sentiments of mankind are so uniform that such questions are of little importance.

and openly. A tacit promise is one where the will is signified by signs less definite than speech. But there must certainly be a will in the case. However silent or tacit that will was, it can never escape the notice of the person who exercised it. Yet if you asked the vast majority of the nation whether they had ever consented to the authority of their rulers or promised to obey them, they would be inclined to think you very strange. They would certainly reply that the matter did not depend on their consent, and that they were born to such obedience. In consequence of this opinion, we often see them regard certain persons as their natural rulers even when those persons are stripped of all power and authority, and when no one, however foolish, would voluntarily choose them. They do this merely because these persons belong to the line that ruled before, and stand in the degree of it that used to succeed. That line may have ruled at so distant a period that hardly anyone alive could ever have given any promise of obedience. Has a government, then, no authority over people like these? They never consented to it, and would regard the very attempt at such a free choice as a piece of arrogance and impiety. Experience shows that government punishes them quite freely for what it calls treason and rebellion. Yet on this system, it seems, treason comes down to ordinary injustice. You may say that by living in its territory they in effect consented to the established government. I answer that this could only be so where they think the matter depends on their choice. Few or none besides those philosophers have ever imagined that. No one has ever offered the following as an excuse for a rebel. The first act he performed after reaching the age of discretion was to make war on the sovereign of the state. While he was a child he could not bind himself by his own consent. And having become a man, he showed plainly by his first act that he had no intention of imposing any obligation of obedience on himself. On the contrary, civil laws punish this crime at the same age as any other crime that is criminal in itself, without our consent. That is, they punish it once the person has come to the full use of reason. Yet in fairness they ought to allow some interval for this

crime, in which at least a tacit consent might be supposed. We may add that a man living under an absolute government would owe it no allegiance, since by its very nature it does not depend on consent. But that is as natural and common a form of government as any, so it must surely give rise to some obligation. And experience plainly shows that men subject to it always think so. This clearly proves that we do not commonly regard our allegiance as derived from our consent or promise. Here is a further proof. When for some reason we have given an express promise of allegiance, we always distinguish exactly between the two obligations. We believe that the one adds more force to the other than a mere repetition of the same promise would. Where no promise has been given, a man does not think that rebellion makes him guilty of breaking faith in private matters. He keeps those two duties of honor and allegiance perfectly distinct and separate. These philosophers considered the uniting of these two duties a very subtle invention. That is convincing proof that it is not a true one. For no one can give a promise, or be bound by its sanction and obligation, without knowing it.

THE LIMITS OF ALLEGIANCE

Hume shows that resistance to extreme tyranny is justified when government stops serving its purpose.

3.2.9.1 The political writers who have appealed to a promise, or original contract, as the source of our allegiance to government meant to establish a principle that is perfectly just and reasonable, even though the reasoning by which they tried to establish it was fallacious and sophistical. They wanted to prove that our submission to government admits of exceptions, and that outrageous tyranny in the rulers is enough to free the subjects from all ties of allegiance. Since people enter society and submit to government by their free and voluntary consent, they say, they must have in view certain advantages they expect to gain from it, and for which they are content to give up their native liberty. So something is pledged in return on the magistrate's side,

namely protection and security. It is only by the hope he offers of these advantages that he can ever persuade people to submit to him. But when, instead of protection and security, they meet with tyranny and oppression, they are released from their promises (as happens in all conditional contracts) and return to the state of liberty that came before the institution of government. People would never be so foolish as to enter into engagements that would work entirely to the advantage of others, with no view to bettering their own condition. Whoever proposes to draw any profit from our submission must undertake, either explicitly or tacitly, to let us gain some advantage from his authority. Nor should he expect us to go on obeying him if he does not do his part.

3.2.9.2 I repeat: this conclusion is correct, though the principles are mistaken, and I flatter myself that I can establish the same conclusion on more reasonable principles. In establishing our political duties I will not take so roundabout a route as to assert the following: that people perceive the advantages of government; that they institute government with a view to those advantages; that this institution requires a promise of obedience; and that this promise imposes a moral obligation to a certain degree but, being conditional, stops being binding whenever the other contracting party fails to perform his part of the bargain. I see that a promise itself arises entirely from human conventions and is invented with a view to a certain interest. So I look for some interest of this kind that is more directly connected with government. It should be both the original motive for its institution and the source of our obedience to it. I find that this interest consists in the security and protection we enjoy in political society, which we can never attain when perfectly free and independent. Since interest, then, is the immediate sanction of government, the one can last no longer than the other. Whenever the civil magistrate carries his oppression so far as to make his authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must cease too.

3.2.9.3 So far the conclusion is immediate and direct, as regards the natural obligation we have to allegiance. As to the moral obligation, we may observe that here the maxim "when the cause ceases, the effect must cease too" would be false. For there is a principle of human nature, which we have often noted, that people are strongly addicted to general rules, and that we often carry our maxims beyond the reasons that first led us to establish them. Where cases are alike in many circumstances, we tend to treat them the same way. We do not consider that they differ in the most important circumstances, and that the resemblance is more apparent than real. It may therefore be thought that, in the case of allegiance, our moral obligation of duty will not cease even when the natural obligation of interest, which is its cause, has ceased. On this view people may be bound in conscience to submit to a tyrannical government against their own interest and the public's. And indeed I yield to the force of this argument so far as to acknowledge two things: general rules commonly extend beyond the principles on which they are founded, and we seldom make any exception to them unless that exception has the qualities of a general rule and is founded on very numerous and common instances. Now this, I assert, is exactly the present case. When people submit to the authority of others, it is to secure themselves some protection against the wickedness and injustice of human beings. Their unruly passions and their present and immediate interest constantly drive them to violate all the laws of society. But since this imperfection is inherent in human nature, we know it must accompany people in every state and condition. Those we choose as rulers do not suddenly acquire a nature superior to the rest of mankind because of their superior power and authority. What we expect from them depends not on a change in their nature but on a change in their situation, as they acquire a more immediate interest in preserving order and executing justice. But this interest is more immediate only in the execution of justice among their subjects. And besides this, I say, we may often expect, given the irregularity of human nature, that they

will neglect even this immediate interest and be carried away by their passions into every excess of cruelty and ambition. Our general knowledge of human nature, our observation of the past history of mankind, our experience of the present day: all these must lead us to open the door to exceptions. They must make us conclude that we may resist the more violent effects of supreme power without any crime or injustice.

3.2.9.4 Accordingly we may observe that this is both the general practice and the general principle of mankind. No nation that could find any remedy has ever endured the cruel ravages of a tyrant, or been blamed for resisting. Those who took up arms against Dionysius, or Nero, or Philip II have the good will of every reader of their history, and nothing but the most violent perversion of common sense could ever lead us to condemn them. It is certain, then, that in all our notions of morals we never entertain anything so absurd as passive obedience. We make allowance for resistance in the more flagrant cases of tyranny and oppression. The general opinion of mankind has some authority in every case, but in this matter of morals it is perfectly infallible. Nor is it any less infallible because people cannot clearly explain the principles on which it is founded. Few people can follow this train of reasoning: Government is a mere human invention for the interest of society. Where the tyranny of the ruler removes this interest, it also removes the natural obligation to obey. The moral obligation is founded on the natural one, and therefore must cease where that ceases. This holds especially where the subject lets us foresee very many occasions on which the natural obligation may cease, so that we form a kind of general rule to govern our conduct when they arise. This train of reasoning is too subtle for ordinary people. Yet it is certain that everyone has an implicit notion of it. They know that they owe obedience to government merely because of the public interest. They also know that human nature is so subject to frailties and passions that it may easily pervert this institution and turn their rulers into tyrants and public enemies. If the sense of common interest were not our

original motive for obedience, I would like to ask what other principle there is in human nature capable of subduing people's natural ambition and forcing them into such submission. Imitation and custom are not enough. For the question still comes back: what motive first produces the instances of submission that we imitate, and the train of actions that produces the custom? There is evidently no principle other than public interest. And if interest first produces obedience to government, the obligation to obey must cease whenever the interest ceases, to any great degree and in a considerable number of cases.

TO WHOM ALLEGIANCE IS OWED

Hume examines long possession, present possession, conquest, succession and positive law as titles to rule.

3.2.10.1 On some occasions it may be justifiable, in both sound politics and morality, to resist supreme power. But it is certain that in the ordinary course of human affairs nothing can be more harmful and criminal. Besides the upheavals that always accompany revolutions, such a practice tends directly to overthrow all government and to cause universal anarchy and confusion among mankind. Just as large and civilized societies cannot survive without government, so government is entirely useless without strict obedience. We should always weigh the advantages we gain from authority against the disadvantages. In this way we will become more cautious about putting the doctrine of resistance into practice. The common rule requires submission. Only in cases of grievous tyranny and oppression can the exception apply.

3.2.10.2 Since, then, such blind submission is commonly owed to the magistracy, the next question is to whom it is owed: whom are we to regard as our lawful magistrates? To answer this, let us recall what we have already established about the origin of government and political society. Suppose everyone is his own master, and breaks or keeps the laws of society according to his present interest or pleasure. Once people have experienced that

no steady order can be kept in society on those terms, they naturally hit upon the invention of government. They put it out of their own power, as far as possible, to break the laws of society. Government, therefore, arises from the same voluntary convention of men. It is evident that the same convention that establishes government will also determine who is to govern, and will remove all doubt and ambiguity on this point. And the voluntary consent of men must have all the more force here because the authority of the magistrate at first rests on a promise by the subjects. By that promise they bind themselves to obedience, as in every other contract or engagement. The same promise, then, that binds them to obedience ties them to a particular person and makes him the object of their allegiance.

3.2.10.3 But suppose government has been established on this footing for a considerable time, and the separate interest we have in submission has produced a separate sentiment of morality. Then the case is entirely changed. A promise can no longer determine the particular magistrate, since it is no longer regarded as the foundation of government. We naturally suppose we were born to submit. We imagine that certain particular persons have a right to command, just as we on our side are bound to obey. These notions of right and obligation come from nothing but the advantage we gain from government. That advantage makes us reluctant to resist ourselves and displeased at any instance of resistance in others. But it is remarkable that in this new state of affairs, the original sanction of government, which is interest, is not allowed to determine whom we are to obey. At first, when affairs rested on a promise, the original sanction did determine it. A promise fixes and determines the persons without any uncertainty. But suppose people regulated their conduct in this matter by a view to particular interest, whether public or private. It is evident that they would involve themselves in endless confusion and would make all government largely ineffective. Everyone's private interest is different. And though the public interest is in itself always one and the same, it becomes the source of just as great dissension, because

particular persons hold different opinions about it. So the same interest that makes us submit to magistracy makes us set that very interest aside in choosing our magistrates. It binds us to a certain form of government and to particular persons, without letting us aim at the utmost perfection in either. The case here is the same as with the law of nature concerning the stability of possession. It is highly advantageous, and even absolutely necessary to society, that possession should be stable, and this leads us to establish such a rule. But suppose we followed the same advantage in assigning particular possessions to particular persons. We find that we would defeat our purpose and perpetuate the confusion the rule is meant to prevent. So in modifying the law of nature concerning the stability of possession, we must proceed by general rules and guide ourselves by general interests. Nor need we fear that our attachment to this law will weaken because the interests that determine it seem trivial. The mind's impulse comes from a very strong interest. Those other, lesser interests serve only to direct the motion, without adding anything to it or taking anything from it. It is the same with government. Nothing is more advantageous to society than such an invention, and this interest is enough to make us embrace it with ardor and eagerness. Afterward, though, we are obliged to regulate and direct our devotion to government by several considerations that are not of the same importance, and to choose our magistrates without having in view any particular advantage from the choice.

3.2.10.4 The first of the principles I will note as a foundation of the right of magistracy is the one that gives authority to all the most established governments in the world without exception. I mean long possession under any one form of government, or succession of princes. It is certain that if we go back to the first origin of every nation, we will find hardly any line of kings or form of commonwealth that was not originally founded on usurpation and rebellion, and whose title was not at first worse than doubtful and uncertain. Time alone gives solidity to their right. Working gradually on people's minds, it reconciles them

to any authority and makes it seem just and reasonable. Nothing gives any sentiment a greater influence over us than custom, or turns our imagination more strongly toward any object. We have a general instinct or tendency to suppose that a moral obligation attends loyalty. When we have long been accustomed to obey a certain set of people, that tendency easily takes this direction and chooses that set of people as its object. It is interest that gives the general instinct; but it is custom that gives the particular direction.

3.2.10.5 And here it is worth noting that the same length of time has a different influence on our sentiments of morality, according to its different influence on the mind. We naturally judge everything by comparison. When we consider the fate of kingdoms and republics, we take in a long stretch of time, so a short duration does not have the same influence on our sentiments here as it does with any other object. A person thinks he acquires a right to a horse or a suit of clothes in a very short time. But a century is hardly enough to establish a new government, or to remove all the subjects' scruples about it. Add to this that a shorter period will give a prince a title to any additional power he may usurp than will fix his right where the whole of it is a usurpation. The kings of France have held absolute power for no more than two reigns, and yet nothing will seem more outlandish to the French than talk of their liberties. If we consider what has been said about accession, we will easily account for this phenomenon.

3.2.10.6 When no form of government has been established by long possession, present possession is enough to take its place, and may be regarded as the second source of all public authority. The right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind. Nothing can be more natural than to join this constant possession to the present one, according to the principles mentioned above. If the same principles did not apply to the property of private persons, it was because very strong considerations of interest outweighed them. As we observed, all resti-

tution would thereby be prevented, and every act of violence authorized and protected. The same motives may seem to carry weight with regard to public authority too. But here a contrary interest opposes them: the preservation of peace, and the avoidance of all changes. However easily such changes may be made in private affairs, where the public is concerned they are unavoidably accompanied by bloodshed and confusion.

3.2.10.7 Suppose someone found it impossible to account for the right of the present possessor by any accepted system of ethics, and so resolved to deny that right outright and assert that morality does not authorize it. He would rightly be thought to maintain a very extravagant paradox and to shock the common sense and judgment of mankind. No maxim fits better with both prudence and morals than to submit quietly to the government we find established in the country where we happen to live, without inquiring too closely into its origin and first establishment. Few governments will bear being examined so rigorously. How many kingdoms are there in the world today, and how many more do we find in history, whose rulers have no better foundation for their authority than present possession? To confine ourselves to the Roman and Greek empire: is it not evident that the long succession of emperors, from the dissolution of Roman liberty to the final extinction of that empire by the Turks, could not even claim any other title to rule? Election by the senate was a mere formality, which always followed the choice of the legions. The legions in the different provinces were almost always divided, and nothing but the sword could settle the difference. So it was by the sword that every emperor acquired, as well as defended, his right. We must either say that the whole known world, for so many ages, had no government and owed allegiance to no one, or else allow that in public affairs the right of the stronger is to be accepted as legitimate and authorized by morality, when no other title opposes it.

3.2.10.8 The right of conquest may be considered a third source of the title of sovereigns. This right closely resembles that of present possession, but has somewhat greater force. It is backed

by the notions of glory and honor we ascribe to conquerors, instead of the sentiments of hatred and detestation that attach to usurpers. People naturally favor those they love. So they are readier to ascribe a right to successful violence between one sovereign and another than to the successful rebellion of a subject against his sovereign.[13]

3.2.10.9 Sometimes neither long possession, nor present possession, nor conquest applies, as when the first sovereign who founded a monarchy dies. In that case the right of succession naturally prevails in their place. People are commonly led to put the son of their late monarch on the throne and to suppose that he inherits his father's authority. The presumed consent of the father, the imitation of succession in private families, the state's interest in choosing the person who is most powerful and has the most numerous followers: all these reasons lead people to prefer the son of their late monarch to anyone else.[14]

3.2.10.10 These reasons carry some weight. But I am convinced that anyone who considers the matter impartially will see that certain principles of the imagination combine with these considerations of interest. By the natural transition of thought, the royal authority seems connected with the young prince even in his father's lifetime, and still more after his death. So nothing is more natural than to complete this union by a new relation, by actually putting him in possession of what seems so naturally to belong to him.

3.2.10.11 To confirm this, we may weigh the following phenomena, which are rather curious of their kind. In elective monarchies the right of succession has no place by law and settled cus-

13 HUME'S NOTE. I do not claim here that present possession or conquest is enough to give a title against long possession and positive laws. I claim only that they have some force: they can tip the balance where the titles are otherwise equal, and will sometimes even be enough to sanctify the weaker title. What degree of force they have is hard to determine. I believe all moderate people will allow that they carry great weight in all disputes about the rights of princes.

14 HUME'S NOTE. To prevent misunderstanding, I should note that this case of succession is not the same as that of hereditary monarchies, where custom has fixed the right of succession. Those depend on the principle of long possession explained above.

tom. And yet its influence is so natural that it cannot be excluded entirely from the imagination, and the subjects cannot be made indifferent to the son of their late monarch. Hence in some governments of this kind the choice usually falls on one member or another of the royal family, while in others they are all excluded. These opposite phenomena come from the same principle. Where the royal family is excluded, it is out of a refinement in politics. People become aware of their inclination to choose a sovereign from that family and grow jealous of their liberty. They fear that their new monarch, helped by this inclination, might establish his family and destroy the freedom of elections for the future.

3.2.10.12 The story of Artaxerxes and the younger Cyrus may give us some reflections to the same effect. Cyrus claimed a right to the throne over his elder brother because he was born after his father's accession. I do not claim that this reason was valid. I only infer from it that he would never have used such a pretext were it not for the qualities of the imagination mentioned above. By these we are naturally inclined to unite by a new relation whatever objects we find already united. Artaxerxes had an advantage over his brother, being the eldest son and first in line of succession. But Cyrus was more closely related to the royal authority, having been conceived after his father was invested with it.

3.2.10.13 Might it be claimed here that the view of convenience could be the source of the whole right of succession? On this view people gladly seize on any rule that lets them fix the successor of their late sovereign and prevent the anarchy and confusion that accompany every new election. To this I would answer that I readily grant this motive may contribute something to the effect. But I also assert that such a motive could not possibly operate without another principle. The interest of a nation requires that the succession to the crown be fixed one way or another, but it makes no difference to that interest which way it is fixed. So if the relation of blood did not have an effect independent of public interest, it would never have been taken

into account without a positive law. And it would have been impossible for so many positive laws of different nations ever to have agreed so precisely in the same aims and intentions.

3.2.10.14 This leads us to consider the fifth source of authority, namely positive laws: when the legislature establishes a certain form of government and succession of princes. At first sight it may be thought that this must reduce to one or another of the preceding titles of authority. The legislative power from which the positive law comes must itself be established by original contract, long possession, present possession, conquest, or succession. Consequently the positive law must derive its force from one of those principles. But it is remarkable that a positive law, though it can derive its force only from these principles, does not acquire the full force of the principle it comes from. It loses considerably in the transition, as one would naturally expect. For instance, suppose a government has been established for many centuries on a certain system of laws, forms, and methods of succession. The legislative power, established by this long succession, suddenly changes the whole system of government and introduces a new constitution in its place. I believe few of the subjects will think themselves bound to comply with this change unless it has an evident tendency to the public good. Short of that, people will think themselves still free to return to the old government. Hence the notion of fundamental laws, which are supposed to be unalterable by the will of the sovereign. The Salic law is understood to be of this kind in France. How far these fundamental laws extend is not settled in any government, nor could it ever be. The gradation from the most important laws to the most trivial, and from the most ancient to the most modern, is so imperceptible that it will be impossible to set limits to the legislative power and determine how far it may innovate in the principles of government. That is the work of imagination and passion more than of reason.

3.2.10.15 Consider the history of the various nations of the world: their revolutions, conquests, growth, and decline; the way their particular governments were established; and the way the right

of succession passed from one person to another. Whoever does so will soon learn to treat all disputes about the rights of princes very lightly. Some people set a high value on strict adherence to general rules and on rigid loyalty to particular persons and families. He will be convinced that these virtues owe less to reason than to bigotry and superstition. On this point, the study of history confirms the reasonings of true philosophy. By showing us the original qualities of human nature, philosophy teaches us that political controversies in most cases admit of no decision and are entirely subordinate to the interests of peace and liberty. Where the public good does not evidently demand a change, it is certain that the concurrence of all those titles (original contract, long possession, present possession, succession, and positive laws) forms the strongest title to sovereignty, and is rightly regarded as sacred and inviolable. But when these titles are mixed and opposed to different degrees, they often cause perplexity. They are then better resolved by the swords of soldiers than by the arguments of lawyers and philosophers. Suppose Tiberius had died while Germanicus and Drusus were both alive, without naming either as his successor. Who will tell me which of them should have succeeded him? In that nation adoption had the same effect in private families as blood, and it had already taken effect in public affairs in two instances. Should the right of adoption be accepted there as equivalent to that of blood? Should Germanicus be considered the elder son because he was born before Drusus, or the younger because he was adopted after his brother's birth? Should the right of the elder be respected in a nation where the eldest brother had no advantage in succession within private families? Should the Roman empire at that time be considered hereditary because of two examples? Or, since it was founded on so recent a usurpation, should it even so early be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or to the present possessor? Whatever principles we may claim to answer these and similar questions by, I am afraid we will never satisfy an impartial inquirer. Such an inquirer takes no side in political

controversies and will be satisfied with nothing but sound reason and philosophy.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688

Hume applies his principles to resistance in mixed governments and the change of dynasty in England.

3.2.10.16 But here an English reader will be inclined to ask about that famous revolution which has had such a happy influence on our constitution and has brought such mighty consequences. We have already remarked that in cases of enormous tyranny and oppression it is lawful to take up arms even against supreme power. Government is a mere human invention for mutual advantage and security. So once it ceases to have that tendency, it no longer imposes any obligation, natural or moral. Common sense and the practice of all ages support this general principle. Even so, it is certainly impossible for the laws, or even for philosophy, to establish particular rules by which we may know when resistance is lawful, or to decide all the controversies that may arise on that subject. This may happen not only with regard to supreme power. Even in some constitutions where the legislative authority is not lodged in one person, there may be a magistrate so eminent and powerful that he forces the laws to keep silent on this point. Nor would this silence come only from their respect, but also from their prudence. In the vast variety of circumstances that arise in every government, an exercise of power by so great a magistrate may benefit the public at one time, and be harmful and tyrannical at another. But despite this silence of the laws in limited monarchies, it is certain that the people still keep the right of resistance. Not even the most despotic governments can deprive them of it. The same necessity of self-preservation, and the same motive of public good, give them the same liberty in the one case as in the other. We may further observe that in such mixed governments the cases where resistance is lawful must arise much more often than in arbitrary governments, and the subjects must be given more lat-

itude to defend themselves by force of arms. The chief magistrate may adopt measures that are in themselves extremely harmful to the public. Or he may simply try to encroach on the other parts of the constitution and extend his power beyond its legal bounds. In either case it is permissible to resist and dethrone him, even though such resistance and violence may be judged unlawful and rebellious by the general tenor of the laws. For besides the fact that nothing is more essential to the public interest than the preservation of public liberty, something else is evident. Once such a mixed government is supposed to be established, every part or member of the constitution must have a right of self-defense, and a right to maintain its ancient bounds against the encroachment of every other authority. Matter would have been created in vain if it were deprived of a power of resistance, since without it no part of matter could keep a distinct existence, and the whole might be squeezed into a single point. In the same way, it is a gross absurdity to suppose a right without a remedy in any government. It is equally absurd to allow that supreme power is shared with the people without allowing that it is lawful for them to defend their share against every invader. Those, then, who would seem to respect our free government and yet deny the right of resistance have given up all claim to common sense and do not deserve a serious answer.

3.2.10.17 It is not part of my present purpose to show that these general principles apply to the recent revolution, and that all the rights and privileges that ought to be sacred to a free nation were at that time threatened with the greatest danger. I prefer to leave this disputed subject, if it really admits of dispute, and to indulge in some philosophical reflections that naturally arise from that important event.

3.2.10.18 First, suppose the Lords and Commons in our constitution, without any reason of public interest, either deposed the reigning king or, after his death, excluded the prince who by law and settled custom ought to succeed. We may observe that no one would consider their proceedings legal or think himself bound to comply with them. But suppose the king justly forfeits

his legal authority, by his unjust practices or by his attempts at tyrannical and despotic power. It then becomes morally lawful, and consistent with the nature of political society, to dethrone him. What is more, we are also inclined to think that the remaining members of the constitution acquire a right to exclude his next heir and to choose whomever they please as his successor. This rests on a very peculiar quality of our thought and imagination. When a king forfeits his authority, his heir ought naturally to remain in the same position as if the king had been removed by death, unless the heir forfeits it for himself by taking part in the tyranny.[15] But though this may seem reasonable, we readily go along with the contrary opinion. In a government like ours, the deposition of a king is certainly an act beyond all ordinary authority. It is an illegal assumption, for the public good, of a power that in the ordinary course of government can belong to no member of the constitution. When the public good is so great and so evident as to justify the action, the commendable use of this license naturally leads us to attribute to Parliament a right to take further liberties. Once the ancient bounds of the laws have been transgressed with approval, we are not inclined to be so strict about confining ourselves exactly within their limits. The mind naturally carries on with any course of action it has begun, and after we have performed the first action of a given kind, we do not usually have any scruples about our duty. Thus at the Revolution, no one who thought the deposition of the father justifiable considered himself confined to his infant son. Yet suppose that unhappy monarch had died innocent at that time, and his son had by some accident been carried overseas. There is no doubt that a regency would then have been appointed until the son came of age and could be restored to his dominions. Even the slightest properties of the imagination affect the judgments of the people. So it shows the wisdom of the laws and of Parliament to take advantage of such properties, and to choose magistrates either within or outside a

15 The original reads "forfeit his legal," with the noun evidently dropped; "authority" is supplied.

line of succession, according to where ordinary people will most naturally attribute authority and right.

3.2.10.19 Second, the accession of the Prince of Orange to the throne might at first have given rise to many disputes, and his title may have been contested. But it ought not to seem doubtful now. It must have acquired sufficient authority from the three princes who have succeeded him on the same title. Nothing is more common than this way of thinking, though at first sight nothing may seem more unreasonable. Princes often seem to acquire a right from their successors as well as from their ancestors. A king who might rightly be considered a usurper in his lifetime will be regarded by posterity as a lawful prince, because he has had the good fortune to settle his family on the throne and entirely change the old form of government. Julius Caesar is regarded as the first Roman emperor, while Sulla and Marius, whose titles were really the same as his, are treated as tyrants and usurpers. Time and custom give authority to all forms of government and all successions of princes. Power that was at first founded only on injustice and violence becomes in time legal and binding. Nor does the mind stop there. It retraces its steps and transfers to their predecessors and ancestors the right it naturally ascribes to their posterity, since they are related and united in the imagination. The present king of France makes Hugh Capet a more lawful prince than Cromwell. In the same way, the established liberty of the Dutch is no small justification for their stubborn resistance to Philip II.

THE LAWS OF NATIONS

Hume argues that justice binds states as it binds individuals, but with less force.

3.2.11.1 Once civil government has been established over the greater part of mankind, and different societies have formed next to one another, a new set of duties arises among neighboring states, suited to the nature of the dealings they carry on with one another. Political writers tell us that in every kind of dealing

a body politic is to be considered as one person. And indeed this claim is correct to this extent: different nations, like private persons, need mutual assistance, while their selfishness and ambition are perpetual sources of war and discord. Nations resemble individuals in this respect, but they are very different in others. So it is no wonder they govern themselves by different maxims and give rise to a new set of rules, which we call the laws of nations. Under this heading we may include the sacredness of the persons of ambassadors, the declaration of war, abstaining from poisoned weapons, and other duties of that kind. These are evidently designed for the dealings peculiar to different societies.

3.2.11.2 These rules are added on top of the laws of nature, but they do not entirely abolish them. One may safely affirm that the three fundamental rules of justice (the stability of possession, its transfer by consent, and the performance of promises) are duties of princes as well as of subjects. The same interest produces the same effect in both cases. Where possession has no stability, there must be perpetual war. Where property is not transferred by consent, there can be no commerce. Where promises are not kept, there can be no leagues or alliances. So the advantages of peace, commerce, and mutual aid make us extend to different kingdoms the same notions of justice that hold among individuals.

3.2.11.3 There is a maxim very current in the world, which few politicians are willing to admit but which the practice of all ages has sanctioned: that there is a system of morals designed for princes that is much looser than the one that ought to govern private persons. Evidently this does not mean that public duties and obligations are narrower in extent. Nor will anyone be so extravagant as to claim that the most solemn treaties should have no force among princes. For since princes do in fact make treaties among themselves, they must expect some advantage from carrying them out. The prospect of such advantage in the future must engage them to perform their part, and must establish that law of nature. The meaning of this political maxim,

then, is this: the morality of princes has the same extent as that of private persons, but not the same force, and it may lawfully be transgressed for a more trivial motive. However shocking such a proposition may seem to certain philosophers, it will be easy to defend it on the principles by which we have accounted for the origin of justice and equity.

3.2.11.4 People find by experience that it is impossible to survive without society, and impossible to maintain society while they give free rein to their appetites. Once they find this, so urgent an interest quickly restrains their actions and imposes an obligation to observe the rules we call the laws of justice. This obligation of interest does not stop there. By the necessary course of the passions and sentiments, it gives rise to the moral obligation of duty, as we approve of actions that tend toward the peace of society and disapprove of those that tend to disturb it. The same natural obligation of interest holds among independent kingdoms and gives rise to the same morality. So no one, however corrupt his morals, will approve of a prince who voluntarily and of his own accord breaks his word or violates a treaty. But here we may observe that dealings between different states, though advantageous and sometimes even necessary, are not as necessary or advantageous as those among individuals. Without dealings among individuals it is utterly impossible for human nature ever to survive. Since, then, the natural obligation to justice among different states is not as strong as among individuals, the moral obligation that arises from it must share its weakness. We must necessarily be more indulgent toward a prince or minister who deceives another than toward a private gentleman who breaks his word of honor.

3.2.11.5 If it were asked what proportion these two kinds of morality bear to each other, I would answer that we can never give a precise answer to this question. Nor can we reduce to numbers the proportion we ought to fix between them. One may safely say that this proportion finds itself, without any art or study on our part, as we may observe on many other occasions. The practice of the world goes further in teaching us the degrees of our

duty than the subtlest philosophy ever yet invented. And this may serve as a convincing proof that everyone has an implicit notion of the foundation of those moral rules concerning natural and civil justice. Everyone is aware that these rules arise merely from human conventions and from our interest in preserving peace and order. For otherwise a lessening of the interest would never produce a relaxation of the morality. Nor would it reconcile us more easily to a breach of justice among princes and republics than in the private dealings of one subject with another.

CHASTITY AND MODESTY

Hume explains the duties of chastity and modesty as products of convention and social interest.

3.2.12.1 If there is any difficulty in this system concerning the laws of nature and of nations, it will concern the universal approval or blame that follows their observance or violation. Some may think the general interests of society do not sufficiently explain it. To remove all doubts of this kind as far as possible, I will here consider another set of duties, namely the modesty and chastity that belong to women. I have no doubt that these virtues will turn out to be even more conspicuous instances of the operation of the principles I have been insisting on.

3.2.12.2 There are some philosophers who attack the female virtues with great vehemence. They imagine they have gone a long way in exposing popular errors when they can show that there is no foundation in nature for all the outward modesty we require in women's speech, dress, and behavior. I believe I can spare myself the trouble of dwelling on so obvious a point. I can proceed without further preparation to examine how such notions arise from education, from the voluntary conventions of men, and from the interest of society.

3.2.12.3 Anyone who considers the length and helplessness of human infancy, together with the concern both sexes naturally have for their offspring, will easily see that there must be a

union of male and female for the upbringing of the young, and that this union must last a considerable time. But to induce men to impose this restraint on themselves, and to bear cheerfully all the fatigue and expense it brings, they must believe that the children are their own. They must believe that their natural instinct is not directed at the wrong object when they give free rein to love and tenderness. Now if we examine the structure of the human body, we will find that this security is very difficult for us men to obtain. In the union of the sexes, the principle of generation passes from the man to the woman. So a mistake may easily occur on the man's side, though it is utterly impossible on the woman's. From this trivial anatomical observation comes the vast difference between the upbringing and duties of the two sexes.

3.2.12.4 If a philosopher examined the matter a priori, he would reason as follows. Men are induced to work for the maintenance and upbringing of their children by the conviction that the children are really their own. So it is reasonable, and even necessary, to give them some security on this point. This security cannot consist entirely in imposing severe punishments on the wife for any breach of conjugal fidelity. Such public punishments cannot be inflicted without legal proof, and legal proof is hard to come by in this matter. What restraint, then, shall we impose on women, to counterbalance so strong a temptation to infidelity as they have? There seems to be no restraint possible except the punishment of bad fame or reputation. This punishment has a mighty influence on the human mind. At the same time, the world inflicts it on the basis of suspicions, conjectures, and evidence that would never be admitted in any court of law. To impose a proper restraint on women, therefore, we must attach a special degree of shame to their infidelity, beyond what arises merely from its injustice, and must give proportionate praise to their chastity.

3.2.12.5 This is a very strong motive to fidelity, but our philosopher would soon discover that it would not be enough on its own. All human beings, and especially women, tend to overlook

remote motives in favor of any present temptation. Here the temptation is the strongest imaginable. Its approaches are imperceptible and seductive. And a woman easily finds, or flatters herself she will find, sure means of protecting her reputation and preventing all the harmful consequences of her pleasures. It is necessary, therefore, that besides the disgrace attached to such liberties, there should be some prior reluctance or dread that may prevent their first approaches. This reluctance may give women a repugnance to all expressions, postures, and liberties that bear an immediate relation to that enjoyment.

3.2.12.6 Such would be the reasoning of our speculative philosopher. But I am convinced that if he lacked a thorough knowledge of human nature, he would be inclined to regard it as mere fanciful speculation. He would consider the disgrace attached to infidelity, and a reluctance toward all its first approaches, as principles more to be wished for than hoped for in the world. For how, he would ask, could we ever persuade people that violations of marital duty are more disgraceful than any other kind of injustice, when they are clearly more excusable because the temptation is so great? And how could we possibly create a reluctance toward the approaches of a pleasure for which nature has given us so strong an inclination—an inclination that must in the end be satisfied, for the preservation of the species?

3.2.12.7 But speculative reasonings that cost philosophers so much effort are often arrived at by the world naturally and without reflection, just as difficulties that seem insurmountable in theory are easily overcome in practice. Those who have an interest in women's fidelity naturally disapprove of their infidelity and of everything that leads toward it. Those who have no interest are carried along with the current. Education takes hold of the pliable minds of women in their infancy. And once a general rule of this kind is established, people tend to extend it beyond the principles from which it first arose. So bachelors, however debauched, cannot help being shocked by any instance of lewdness or shamelessness in women. And although all these

maxims plainly concern reproduction, women past childbearing have no more license in this respect than those in the flower of their youth and beauty. People undoubtedly have an implicit notion that all these ideas of modesty and decency relate to reproduction, since they do not impose the same laws, with the same force, on men, where that reason does not apply. There the exception is obvious and broad. It rests on a striking difference, which produces a clear separation and disjunction of ideas. But the case is not the same with the different ages of women. So even though people know that these notions are founded on the public interest, the general rule carries us beyond the original principle and makes us extend the notions of modesty over the whole sex, from earliest infancy to the most extreme old age and infirmity.

3.2.12.8 Courage, which is the point of honor among men, derives its merit largely from artifice, as does the chastity of women—though courage also has some foundation in nature, as we will see later.

3.2.12.9 As for the obligations men are under with respect to chastity, we may observe that, according to the general notions of the world, they stand in nearly the same proportion to the obligations of women as the obligations of the law of nations stand to those of the law of nature. It is contrary to the interest of civil society that men should have complete liberty to indulge their sexual appetites. But since this interest is weaker than in the case of women, the moral obligation arising from it must be proportionately weaker. To prove this, we need only appeal to the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages.

Book III, Part 3: Of the other virtues and vices

Hume traces the natural virtues to sympathy, and concludes the Treatise.

SECT. I. OF THE ORIGIN OF THE NATURAL VIRTUES AND VICES

3.3.1.1 We now come to examine the virtues and vices that are entirely natural and do not depend at all on human artifice and contrivance. Examining them will bring this system of morals to a close.

3.3.1.2 The chief spring, or driving principle, of the human mind is pleasure or pain. When these sensations are removed from both our thought and our feeling, we are largely incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition. The most immediate effects of pleasure and pain are the mind's movements toward things and away from them. These take various forms—volition, desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear—depending on how the pleasure or pain changes its situation: whether it becomes probable or improbable, certain or uncertain, or is regarded as beyond our power for the present moment. But suppose that, in addition, the objects that cause pleasure or pain acquire a relation to ourselves or to others. They still continue to arouse desire and aversion, grief and joy. But at the same time they cause the indirect passions of pride or humility, love or hatred, which in this case have a double relation of impressions and ideas to the pain or pleasure.

3.3.1.3 We have already observed that moral distinctions depend entirely on certain distinctive sentiments of pain and pleasure. Any mental quality in ourselves or others that gives us satisfaction when we survey or reflect on it is, as a matter of course, virtuous, just as anything of this kind that gives us uneasiness is vicious. Now every quality in ourselves or others that gives pleasure always causes pride or love, and every quality that produces uneasiness arouses humility or hatred. It follows that, with regard to our mental qualities, these two pairs are to be treated as equivalent: virtue and the power of producing love or pride; vice and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge the one by the other. We may declare any quality of mind that causes love or pride virtuous, and any quality that causes hatred or humility vicious.

3.3.1.4 If an action is virtuous or vicious, it is only as a sign of some quality or character. It must depend on durable principles of the mind, which extend over a person's whole conduct and become part of his personal character. Actions themselves, when they do not proceed from any constant principle, have no influence on love or hatred, pride or humility. Consequently they are never taken into account in morality.

3.3.1.5 This point is self-evident, and it deserves attention, since it is of the utmost importance for the present subject. In our inquiries into the origin of morals, we must never consider any single action, but only the quality or character from which the action proceeded. These alone are durable enough to affect our sentiments about the person. Actions are indeed better indications of a character than words, or even than wishes and sentiments. But it is only insofar as they are such indications that they bring love or hatred, praise or blame.

3.3.1.6 To discover the true origin of morals, and of the love or hatred that arises from mental qualities, we must dig fairly deep and compare some principles we have already examined and explained.

3.3.1.7 We can begin by reconsidering the nature and force of sympathy. The minds of all people are similar in their feelings

and operations. No one can be moved by any affection that all others are not, to some degree, capable of. When strings are equally tuned, the motion of one is communicated to the rest; in the same way, all the affections readily pass from one person to another and produce corresponding movements in every human being. When I see the effects of passion in someone's voice and gestures, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes. It forms so lively an idea of the passion that the idea is soon converted into the passion itself. In the same way, when I perceive the causes of any emotion, my mind is carried to the effects and is moved by a similar emotion. Suppose I were present at one of the more terrible operations of surgery. It is certain that even before it began, the preparation of the instruments, the laying out of the bandages, the heating of the irons, along with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and the assistants, would have a great effect on my mind and arouse the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another person reveals itself directly to the mind. We are aware only of its causes or effects. From these we infer the passion, and consequently it is these that give rise to our sympathy.

3.3.1.8 Our sense of beauty depends very much on this principle. Wherever an object tends to produce pleasure in its owner, it is always regarded as beautiful, just as every object that tends to produce pain is disagreeable and ugly. Thus the convenience of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, and the capacity, safety, and speed of a ship make up the principal beauty of each of these objects. Here the object called beautiful pleases only by its tendency to produce a certain effect. That effect is the pleasure or advantage of some other person. Now the pleasure of a stranger, for whom we have no friendship, pleases us only by sympathy. To this principle, therefore, we owe the beauty we find in everything useful. A little reflection shows how large a part of beauty this is. Wherever an object tends to produce pleasure in its owner—in other words, is the proper cause of pleasure—it is sure to please the spectator, through a delicate sympathy with the owner. Most

works of art are considered beautiful in proportion to how well they are suited to human use, and even many of the productions of nature derive their beauty from that source. In most cases, handsomeness and beauty are not an absolute but a relative quality, and they please us only by their tendency to produce an end that is agreeable.[1]

3.3.1.9 In many cases the same principle produces our moral sentiments as well as our sentiments of beauty. No virtue is more esteemed than justice, and no vice more detested than injustice. Nor do any qualities do more to fix a character as either lovable or odious. Now justice is a moral virtue only because it has this tendency to the good of mankind; indeed, it is nothing but an artificial invention for that purpose. The same can be said of allegiance, the laws of nations, modesty, and good manners. All these are mere human contrivances for the interest of society. A very strong moral sentiment has accompanied them in all nations and ages. So we must grant that reflecting on the tendency of characters and mental qualities is enough to give us the sentiments of approval and blame. Now the means to an end can be agreeable only where the end is agreeable. And the good of society, where neither our own interest nor that of our friends is involved, pleases only by sympathy. It follows that sympathy is the source of the esteem we give to all the artificial virtues.

3.3.1.10 It appears, then, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature. It has a great influence on our taste for beauty, and it produces our moral sentiment in all the artificial virtues. From this we may presume that it also gives rise to many of the other virtues, and that qualities win our approval because of their tendency to the good of mankind. This presumption must become a certainty when we find that most of

1 HUME'S NOTE. A horse with tight flanks is better-looking, but it is also faster. An athlete whose muscles have been defined by exercise is beautiful to look at, and he is also better prepared for competition. Indeed, *appearance* is never separated from *usefulness*. But it takes only modest judgment to see this. *Quintilian*, book 8.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Hume quotes Quintilian (Institutio Oratoria 8.3) in Latin; it is given here in English.

the qualities we naturally approve of actually have that tendency and make a person a good member of society. The qualities we naturally disapprove of, meanwhile, have the opposite tendency and make any dealings with the person dangerous or disagreeable. For having found that such tendencies have enough force to produce the strongest moral sentiment, we can never reasonably look, in these cases, for any other cause of approval or blame. It is an inviolable maxim in philosophy that where a particular cause is sufficient for an effect, we should rest satisfied with it and not multiply causes without necessity. Fortunately, the artificial virtues give us experiments in which the tendency of qualities to the good of society is the sole cause of our approval, with no suspicion that any other principle is contributing. From these we learn the force of that principle. And where that principle can operate, and the quality approved of really benefits society, a true philosopher will never require any other principle to account for the strongest approval and esteem.

3.3.1.11 No one can doubt that many of the natural virtues have this tendency to the good of society. Meekness, beneficence, charity, generosity, clemency, moderation, and equity are the most prominent of the moral qualities. They are commonly called the social virtues, to mark their tendency to the good of society. This goes so far that some philosophers have represented all moral distinctions as the effect of artifice and education. On this view, skillful politicians tried to restrain the turbulent passions of men and make them work for the public good through the notions of honor and shame. This system, however, is not consistent with experience. For, first, there are other virtues and vices besides those that tend to public advantage and loss. Second, if people did not have a natural sentiment of approval and blame, politicians could never arouse it. The words laudable and praiseworthy, blameworthy and odious would be no more intelligible than a language completely unknown to us, as we have already observed. But though this system is mistaken, it may teach us something. Moral distinc-

tions arise largely from the tendency of qualities and characters to serve the interests of society, and it is our concern for that interest that makes us approve or disapprove of them. Now we have no such wide concern for society except through sympathy. Consequently it is that principle that takes us so far out of ourselves. It gives us the same pleasure or uneasiness from the characters of others as if they tended to our own advantage or loss.

3.3.1.12 The only difference between the natural virtues and justice is this. The good that results from the natural virtues arises from every single act and is the object of some natural passion. A single act of justice, by contrast, considered in itself, may often be contrary to the public good; what is advantageous is only the cooperation of mankind in a general scheme or system of action. When I relieve people in distress, my natural humanity is my motive, and as far as my help extends, so far have I promoted the happiness of my fellow creatures. But suppose we examine all the questions that come before any court of justice, considering each case on its own. We will find that it would as often be an act of humanity to decide against the laws of justice as in accordance with them. Judges take from a poor man to give to a rich one. They hand the labor of the industrious to the dissolute, and they put into the hands of the vicious the means of harming both themselves and others. The whole scheme of law and justice, however, is advantageous to society, and it was with this advantage in view that people established it by their voluntary conventions. Once it is established by these conventions, it is naturally accompanied by a strong moral sentiment, which can come from nothing but our sympathy with the interests of society. We need no other explanation of the esteem that accompanies those natural virtues that tend to the public good.

3.3.1.13 I must add that several circumstances make this hypothesis much more probable with regard to the natural virtues than the artificial ones. It is certain that the imagination is more affected by what is particular than by what is general. It is

equally certain that the sentiments are always moved with difficulty where their objects are at all vague and indeterminate. Now it is not every particular act of justice that benefits society, but the whole scheme or system. And perhaps the one who benefits from justice is not any individual person we care about, but the whole society alike. By contrast, every particular act of generosity, or relief of the industrious and needy, is beneficial—and beneficial to a particular person who is not undeserving of it. It is more natural, therefore, to think that the tendencies of the latter virtue will affect our sentiments and win our approval than those of the former. And so, since we find that our approval of the former arises from their tendencies, we may with better reason ascribe the same cause to our approval of the latter. Among any number of similar effects, if a cause can be discovered for one, we should extend that cause to all the other effects that it can account for. This holds much more strongly if these other effects come with particular circumstances that make it easier for that cause to operate.

3.3.1.14 Before going further, I must note two remarkable circumstances in this matter that may seem to be objections to the present system. The first can be explained as follows. When a quality or character tends to the good of mankind, we are pleased with it and approve of it, because it presents the lively idea of pleasure. This idea affects us by sympathy and is itself a kind of pleasure. But since this sympathy is highly variable, it might be thought that our moral sentiments must admit of all the same variations. We sympathize more with people near us than with people far from us; more with our acquaintances than with strangers; more with our fellow countrymen than with foreigners. Yet despite this variation in our sympathy, we give the same approval to the same moral qualities in China as in England. They appear equally virtuous and recommend themselves equally to the esteem of a judicious spectator. The sympathy varies without any variation in our esteem. Our esteem, therefore, does not come from sympathy.

3.3.1.15 To this I answer: approval of moral qualities is certainly not derived from reason or any comparison of ideas. It comes entirely from a moral taste, and from certain sentiments of pleasure or disgust that arise when we contemplate and view particular qualities or characters. Now it is evident that those sentiments, wherever they come from, must vary according to the distance or nearness of their objects. I cannot feel the same lively pleasure from the virtues of a person who lived in Greece two thousand years ago as I feel from the virtues of a close friend and acquaintance. Yet I do not say that I esteem the one more than the other. So if variation in sentiment without variation in esteem is an objection, it must tell equally against every other system as against that of sympathy. But properly considered, it has no force at all, and it is the easiest thing in the world to account for. Our situation, with respect to both persons and things, is constantly fluctuating, and a man who is at a distance from us may in a short time become a close acquaintance. Besides, each individual has a particular position in relation to others. We could never talk together on any reasonable terms if each of us considered characters and persons only as they appear from his own particular point of view. So, to prevent these constant contradictions and arrive at a more stable judgment of things, we settle on certain steady and general points of view. In our thoughts we always place ourselves in them, whatever our present situation may be. In the same way, external beauty is determined merely by pleasure. Clearly, a beautiful face cannot give as much pleasure when seen from twenty paces away as when it is brought nearer to us. Yet we do not say that it looks less beautiful to us. We know what effect it will have in such a position, and by that reflection we correct its momentary appearance.

3.3.1.16 In general, all sentiments of blame or praise vary according to how near or far we are from the person blamed or praised, and according to the present disposition of our mind. But we disregard these variations in our general verdicts. We still apply the terms that express our liking or dislike just as if

we remained at one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments—or at least of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and unchangeable. Our servant, if diligent and loyal, may arouse stronger sentiments of love and kindness in us than Marcus Brutus as history represents him. But we do not say on that account that the servant's character is more praiseworthy than Brutus's. We know that if we came equally close to that renowned patriot, he would command a much higher degree of affection and admiration. Such corrections are common with regard to all the senses. Indeed, we could never use language, or communicate our sentiments to one another, if we did not correct the momentary appearances of things and disregard our present situation.

3.3.1.17 It is, therefore, from the influence of characters and qualities on those who have dealings with a person that we blame or praise him. We do not consider whether the people affected by those qualities are our acquaintances or strangers, fellow countrymen or foreigners. Indeed, we set aside our own interest in these general judgments. We do not blame a man for opposing us in any of our claims when his own interest is particularly involved. We make allowance for a certain degree of selfishness in people, because we know it is inseparable from human nature and built into our frame and constitution. By this reflection we correct the sentiments of blame that so naturally arise whenever we meet opposition.

3.3.1.18 But however much the general principle of our blame or praise may be corrected by those other principles, it is certain that the corrections are not entirely effective. Our passions often do not correspond fully to the present theory. People seldom heartily love what is remote from them and brings them no particular benefit. It is no less rare to find people who can forgive another for opposing their interest, however justifiable that opposition may be by the general rules of morality. Here we content ourselves with saying that reason requires such impartial conduct, but that we can seldom bring ourselves to it, and

that our passions do not readily follow the determination of our judgment. This language will be easily understood if we recall what we said earlier about the kind of reason that is able to oppose our passion. We found it to be nothing but a general calm determination of the passions, founded on some distant view or reflection. Suppose we judge people merely by how their characters tend to benefit us or our friends. We then find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and so much uncertainty from the constant changes in our situation, that we look for some other standard of merit and demerit, one that does not admit of so much variation. Once loosened in this way from our first position, we cannot afterward fix ourselves so conveniently by any means as by a sympathy with those who have any dealings with the person we are considering. This sympathy is far from being as lively as when our own interest, or that of our particular friends, is involved, and it has less influence on our love and hatred. But since it is equally in line with our calm and general principles, it is said to have equal authority over our reason, and to command our judgment and opinion. We blame a bad action we read about in history just as much as one committed in our neighborhood the other day. What this means is that we know from reflection that the historical action would arouse sentiments of disapproval as strong as the recent one, if it were placed in the same position.

3.3.1.19 I now turn to the second remarkable circumstance I proposed to note. When a person has a character whose natural tendency is beneficial to society, we consider him virtuous and take delight in contemplating his character. We do so even if particular accidents prevent it from operating and make him unable to serve his friends and country. Virtue in rags is still virtue. The love it wins follows a man into a dungeon or a desert, where the virtue can no longer be exercised in action and is lost to the whole world. Now this may be considered an objection to the present system. Sympathy makes us care about the good of mankind. If sympathy were the source of our esteem for virtue, then that sentiment of approval could arise only where the vir-

tue actually achieved its end and was beneficial to mankind. Where virtue fails to reach its end, it is only an imperfect means, and so can never acquire any merit from that end. The goodness of an end can give merit only to means that are complete and actually produce the end.

3.3.1.20 To this we may reply as follows. Where an object is fitted in all its parts to attain some agreeable end, it naturally gives us pleasure and is considered beautiful, even if it lacks some external circumstances that would make it fully effective. It is enough if everything is complete in the object itself. A house designed with great judgment for all the conveniences of life pleases us for that reason, even though we may know that no one will ever live in it. A fertile soil and a favorable climate delight us when we reflect on the happiness they would give the inhabitants, though at present the country is deserted and uninhabited. A man whose limbs and build promise strength and agility is considered handsome, though he is condemned to life imprisonment. The imagination has a set of passions belonging to it, on which our sentiments of beauty largely depend. These passions are moved by degrees of liveliness and strength that are lower than belief and are independent of the real existence of their objects. Where a character is in every respect fitted to be beneficial to society, the imagination passes easily from the cause to the effect. It does not stop to consider that some circumstances are missing that would make the cause complete. General rules create a kind of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment, and always the imagination.

3.3.1.21 It is true that sometimes the cause is complete, and a good disposition is accompanied by good fortune that makes it really beneficial to society. It then gives the spectator a stronger pleasure and is attended by a livelier sympathy. We are more affected by it; and yet we do not say it is more virtuous, or that we esteem it more. We know that a change of fortune may render the benevolent disposition completely powerless, so we separate the fortune from the disposition as much as possible. The case is the same as when we correct the different senti-

ments of virtue that arise from its different distances from ourselves. The passions do not always follow our corrections. But these corrections are enough to regulate our abstract notions, and they alone are taken into account when we pronounce in general on the degrees of vice and virtue.

3.3.1.22 Critics observe that all words or sentences that are difficult to pronounce are disagreeable to the ear. It makes no difference whether a man hears them spoken or reads them silently to himself. When I run my eye over a book, I imagine I hear all of it. By the force of imagination I also enter into the uneasiness that delivering it would cause the speaker. The uneasiness is not real. But since such an arrangement of words naturally tends to produce it, this is enough to affect the mind with a painful sentiment and make the discourse harsh and disagreeable. The case is similar where some real quality is made powerless by accidental circumstances and deprived of its natural influence on society.

3.3.1.23 On these principles we can easily remove any apparent contradiction between two things. One is the extensive sympathy on which our sentiments of virtue depend. The other is the limited generosity that I have often observed to be natural to people, and that justice and property presuppose, according to the preceding reasoning. My sympathy with another person may give me a sentiment of pain and disapproval when I am presented with any object that tends to cause him uneasiness. This is so even though I may be unwilling to sacrifice anything of my own interest, or thwart any of my passions, for his satisfaction. A house may displease me by being badly designed for its owner's convenience, and yet I may refuse to give a shilling toward rebuilding it. Sentiments must touch the heart if they are to control our passions, but they need not go beyond the imagination to influence our taste. When a building looks clumsy and tottering to the eye, it is ugly and disagreeable, even though we are fully assured that the workmanship is solid. It is a kind of fear that causes this sentiment of disapproval. But the passion is not the same as the one we feel when we have to stand under a

wall that we really think is tottering and unsafe. The apparent tendencies of objects affect the mind. The emotions they arouse are of a similar kind to those that come from the real consequences of objects, but they feel different. Indeed, these emotions feel so different that they can often be contrary without destroying each other. For example, the fortifications of an enemy city are considered beautiful because of their strength, though we could wish they were completely destroyed. The imagination holds to the general views of things. It distinguishes the feelings they produce from those that arise from our particular and momentary situation.

3.3.1.24 If we examine the tributes commonly paid to great men, we will find that most of the qualities attributed to them can be divided into two kinds. Some make them perform their part in society. Others make them useful to themselves and enable them to promote their own interest. Their prudence, temperance, frugality, industry, diligence, enterprise, and skill are celebrated, as well as their generosity and humanity. If we ever make allowance for any quality that keeps a man from making his mark in life, it is for indolence. Indolence is not supposed to deprive him of his talents and abilities, but only to suspend their use. It does so without any inconvenience to the person himself, since it is to some extent his own choice. Yet indolence is always admitted to be a fault, and a very great one if extreme. A man's friends never admit that he is subject to it except to protect his character in more important respects. He could make his mark, they say, if he chose to apply himself. His understanding is sound, his grasp quick, and his memory retentive; but he hates business and is indifferent to his fortune. A man may sometimes even make this a subject of vanity, though with the air of confessing a fault. He may think that his unfitness for business implies much nobler qualities, such as a philosophical spirit, a fine taste, a delicate wit, or a relish for pleasure and society. But take any other case. Suppose a quality that always makes a man unfit for business and ruins his interest, without indicating any other good qualities. Examples are a blundering

understanding and a wrong judgment about everything in life; inconstancy and irresolution; or a lack of skill in managing people and affairs. These are all admitted to be imperfections in a character. Many men would rather confess the greatest crimes than have it suspected that they are in any degree subject to them.

3.3.1.25 It is a great stroke of luck in our philosophical research when we find the same phenomenon varied by a range of circumstances. By discovering what is common among them, we can be more confident of the truth of any hypothesis we use to explain it. Even if nothing were considered virtue except what benefited society, I am convinced that the foregoing explanation of the moral sense ought still to be accepted, and on sufficient evidence. But this evidence must grow stronger when we find other kinds of virtue that admit of no explanation except from that hypothesis. Here is a man who is not notably deficient in social qualities. His chief recommendation is his skill in business, by which he has got himself out of the greatest difficulties and handled the most delicate affairs with singular address and prudence. I immediately feel esteem for him arise in me. His company gives me satisfaction. Before I know him any better, I would rather do him a service than someone else whose character is equal in every other respect but lacks this particular quality. In this case, the qualities that please me are all regarded as useful to the person himself and as tending to promote his interest and satisfaction. They are regarded only as means to an end, and please me in proportion to how well suited they are to that end. The end, therefore, must be agreeable to me. But what makes the end agreeable? The person is a stranger. I have no stake in him and am under no obligation to him. His happiness concerns me no more than the happiness of every human being, and indeed of every sentient creature. That is, it affects me only by sympathy. Through that principle, whenever I discover his happiness and good, whether in its causes or its effects, I enter into it so deeply that it gives me a perceptible emotion. The

appearance of qualities that tend to promote it has an agreeable effect on my imagination and commands my love and esteem.

3.3.1.26 This theory may help explain two things. In all cases the same qualities produce both pride and love, humility and hatred. And the same man who is virtuous or vicious, accomplished or contemptible in his own eyes is always so in the eyes of others. Suppose we discover in a person some passion or habit that is originally inconvenient only to himself. He always becomes disagreeable to us on that account alone. On the other hand, someone whose character is dangerous and disagreeable only to others can never be satisfied with himself as long as he is aware of that disadvantage. Nor is this observable only in characters and manners; it can be seen even in the smallest details. A violent cough in someone else makes us uneasy, though in itself it does not affect us in the least. A man will be mortified if you tell him he has foul breath, though it is clearly no annoyance to himself. Our fancy easily shifts its position. We may survey ourselves as we appear to others, or consider others as they feel themselves. By that means we enter into sentiments that in no way belong to us, and in which nothing but sympathy can make us take an interest. We sometimes carry this sympathy so far that we are even displeased with a quality that is convenient to us, simply because it displeases others and makes us disagreeable in their eyes—though perhaps we can never have any interest in making ourselves agreeable to them.

3.3.1.27 Philosophers in every age have put forward many systems of morality. But if they are strictly examined, they can be reduced to two, which alone deserve our attention. Moral good and evil are certainly distinguished by our sentiments, not by reason. But these sentiments may arise either from the mere look or appearance of characters and passions, or from reflections on their tendency to the happiness of mankind and of particular persons. My opinion is that both these causes are intermixed in our moral judgments, just as they are in our decisions about most kinds of external beauty. I also think, though, that reflections on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest

influence and determine all the main lines of our duty. There are, however, instances, in matters of less importance, in which this immediate taste or sentiment produces our approval. Wit, and a certain easy and relaxed manner, are qualities immediately agreeable to others, and they command their love and esteem. Some of these qualities produce satisfaction in others through particular original principles of human nature that cannot be accounted for. Others can be traced to more general principles. This will be clearest from a particular inquiry.

3.3.1.28 Some qualities acquire their merit from being immediately agreeable to others, without any tendency to the public interest. In the same way, some are called virtuous because they are immediately agreeable to the person who has them. Each of the passions and operations of the mind has a particular feeling, which must be either agreeable or disagreeable. The first is virtuous, the second vicious. This particular feeling constitutes the very nature of the passion, and so it needs no explanation.

3.3.1.29 The distinction between vice and virtue may seem to flow directly from the immediate pleasure or uneasiness that particular qualities cause to ourselves or others. Even so, it is easy to see that it also depends considerably on the principle of sympathy we have so often stressed. We approve of a person who has qualities immediately agreeable to those he deals with, though perhaps we ourselves never got any pleasure from them. We also approve of someone who has qualities immediately agreeable to himself, though they are of no use to any living soul. To account for this we must turn to the foregoing principles.

3.3.1.30 To take, then, a general review of the present hypothesis: every quality of the mind that gives pleasure by the mere survey of it is called virtuous, just as every quality that produces pain is called vicious. This pleasure and this pain may arise from four different sources. We get pleasure from contemplating a character that is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or useful to the person himself, or that is agreeable to others, or agreeable to the person himself. One may perhaps be surprised that amid all

these interests and pleasures we should forget our own, which touch us so closely on every other occasion. But we will easily satisfy ourselves on this point when we consider the following. Since every individual's pleasure and interest are different, people could never agree in their sentiments and judgments unless they chose some common point of view. From it they could survey their object, and it would make the object appear the same to all of them. Now in judging characters, the only interest or pleasure that appears the same to every spectator is that of the person whose character is being examined, or that of people who have some connection with him. Such interests and pleasures touch us more faintly than our own. Yet because they are more constant and universal, they counterbalance our own even in practice, and in theory they alone are accepted as the standard of virtue and morality. They alone produce the particular feeling or sentiment on which moral distinctions depend.

3.3.1.31 As for the good or ill desert of virtue or vice, it is an evident consequence of the sentiments of pleasure or uneasiness. These sentiments produce love or hatred. And love or hatred, by the original constitution of human passion, is accompanied by benevolence or anger—that is, by a desire to make happy the person we love and miserable the person we hate. We have dealt with this more fully elsewhere.

GREATNESS OF MIND

Hume explains why excessive pride is blamed while well-founded self-esteem is valued.

3.3.2.1 It may now be appropriate to illustrate this general system of morals by applying it to particular instances of virtue and vice. We will show how their merit or demerit arises from the four sources explained here. We will begin by examining the passions of pride and humility, and consider the vice or virtue that lies in their excess or in their proper proportion. Excessive pride, or an overweening conceit of ourselves, is always considered vicious and is universally hated. Modesty, or a proper

sense of our weakness, is considered virtuous and wins everyone's goodwill. Of the four sources of moral distinctions, this is to be attributed to the third: the immediate agreeableness or disagreeableness of a quality to others, without any reflection on that quality's tendency.

3.3.2.2 To prove this, we must turn to two principles that are very conspicuous in human nature. The first is the sympathy, or communication of sentiments and passions, mentioned above. So close and intimate is the correspondence between human souls that as soon as anyone comes near me, he spreads all his opinions over me and draws my judgment along to a greater or lesser degree. On many occasions my sympathy with him does not go so far as to change my sentiments and way of thinking completely. Yet it is seldom so weak that it fails to disturb the easy course of my thought and to lend authority to an opinion recommended to me by his assent and approval. Nor does it matter at all what subject he and I are thinking about. Whether we are judging some uninvolved third party or my own character, my sympathy gives equal force to his verdict. And even his sentiments about his own merit make me regard him in the same light in which he regards himself.

3.3.2.3 This principle of sympathy is so powerful and insinuating by nature that it enters into most of our sentiments and passions, and it often operates under the appearance of its opposite. For it is remarkable that when someone opposes me in something I am strongly set on, and rouses my passion by contradicting me, I always have a degree of sympathy with him, and my agitation comes from no other source. Here we can observe an evident conflict or clash of opposite principles and passions. On one side there is the passion or sentiment that is natural to me. And it is noticeable that the stronger this passion is, the greater the agitation. There must also be some passion or sentiment on the other side, and this passion can come from nothing but sympathy. The sentiments of others can never affect us except by becoming, to some extent, our own. When that happens they act on us, opposing and increasing our passions, in exactly the same

way as if they had originally sprung from our own temperament and disposition. While they remain hidden in the minds of others, they can never have any influence on us. And even when they are known, suppose they went no further than the imagination, or conception. That faculty is so used to objects of every different kind that a mere idea, though contrary to our sentiments and inclinations, would never by itself be able to affect us.

3.3.2.4 The second principle I will take note of is comparison: the way our judgments about objects vary with the proportion they bear to the objects we compare them with. We judge objects more by comparison than by their intrinsic worth and value, and we regard everything as poor when it is set against something superior of the same kind. But no comparison is more obvious than comparison with ourselves. That is why it occurs on every occasion and mixes with most of our passions. This kind of comparison works in a way directly contrary to sympathy, as we observed when discussing compassion and malice.[2] *In every kind of comparison, an object makes us receive, from the other object it is compared to, a sensation contrary to the one that arises from that other object when we view it directly and immediately. Directly viewing another person's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and so it produces pain when compared with our own. His pain, considered in itself, is painful; but it enlarges the idea of our own happiness, and gives us pleasure.*

3.3.2.5 Since, then, these principles of sympathy and of comparison with ourselves are directly contrary, it may be worth asking what general rules can be formed, apart from the particular temperament of the person, about when one or the other prevails. Suppose I am now safe on land and would like to get some pleasure from this fact. I must think about the miserable condition of those who are at sea in a storm, and must try to make this idea as strong and lively as possible, so as to make myself more aware of my own happiness. But however hard I try, the comparison will never be as effective as it would be if I were really on

2 HUME'S NOTE. Book II, Part II, Section 8.

the shore,[3] and saw a ship in the distance tossed by a storm, in danger at every moment of being wrecked on a rock or sandbank. But suppose this idea becomes still more lively. Suppose the ship is driven so close to me that I can clearly see the horror on the faces of the sailors and passengers. I can hear their pitiful cries, and see the dearest friends say their last goodbyes, or embrace, resolved to die in each other's arms. No one has so savage a heart as to get any pleasure from such a spectacle, or to resist the stirrings of the tenderest compassion and sympathy. It is evident, then, that there is a middle point in this case. If the idea is too faint, it has no influence by way of comparison. If, on the other hand, it is too strong, it works on us entirely by sympathy, which is the contrary of comparison. Sympathy, being the conversion of an idea into an impression, requires more force and vivacity in the idea than comparison does.

3.3.2.6 All this applies easily to the present subject. We sink very low in our own eyes when we are in the presence of a great man, or of someone with superior genius. This humility is a considerable ingredient in the respect we pay to our superiors, according to our earlier reasoning about that passion.[4] Sometimes the comparison even gives rise to envy and hatred; but in most people it stops at respect and esteem. Since sympathy has such a powerful influence on the human mind, it gives pride, to some extent, the same effect as merit. By making us enter into the elevated sentiments the proud man has about himself, it presents us with that comparison which is so mortifying and disagreeable. Our judgment does not go all the way with him in the flattering conceit he enjoys about himself. But it is still shaken enough to receive the idea that conceit presents, and to

3 HUME'S NOTE. Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis / E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem; / Non quia vexari quenquam est jucunda voluptas, / Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est. *Lucretius*

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Lucretius, On the Nature of Things 2.1–4: "It is sweet, when winds churn the waters on the great sea, to watch from land another's great struggle; not because anyone's distress is a delight, but because it is sweet to see what ills you yourself are free from."

4 HUME'S NOTE. Book II, Part II, Section 10.

give it more influence than the loose conceptions of the imagination have. Someone who, in an idle mood, forms a notion of a person of far greater merit than his own will not be mortified by that fiction. Things are different when we are presented with a man we are really convinced has less merit than we do, and we observe in him some extraordinary degree of pride and self-conceit. His firm conviction of his own merit then takes hold of our imagination and diminishes us in our own eyes, just as if he really possessed all the good qualities he so generously attributes to himself. Our idea here sits precisely at the middle point needed to make it work on us by comparison. If it were accompanied by belief, and the person seemed to have the merit he claims for himself, it would have the contrary effect and would work on us by sympathy. The influence of that principle would then outweigh that of comparison. This is the opposite of what happens where the person's merit seems to fall short of his pretensions.

3.3.2.7 The necessary consequence of these principles is that pride, or an overweening conceit of ourselves, must be vicious, since it causes uneasiness in everyone and constantly presents them with a disagreeable comparison. It is a commonplace observation in philosophy, and even in ordinary life and conversation, that it is our own pride that makes us so displeased with other people's pride, and that vanity becomes unbearable to us simply because we are vain. The cheerful naturally keep company with the cheerful, and the amorous with the amorous. But the proud can never stand the proud, and would rather seek the company of people with the opposite disposition. Since all of us are proud to some degree, pride is universally blamed and condemned by all mankind, as having a natural tendency to cause uneasiness in others by means of comparison. And this effect follows all the more naturally because those who have an ill-founded conceit of themselves are forever making such comparisons. They have no other way of propping up their vanity. A man of sense and merit is pleased with himself independently of all outside considerations. But a fool must always find

someone more foolish, in order to stay in good humor about his own talents and understanding.

3.3.2.8 But though an overweening conceit of our own merit is vicious and disagreeable, nothing can be more praiseworthy than to value ourselves where we really have valuable qualities. The usefulness and advantage of a quality to ourselves is a source of virtue, just as its agreeableness to others is. And it is certain that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life than a proper degree of pride, which makes us aware of our own merit and gives us confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprises. Whatever abilities someone may be endowed with, they are entirely useless to him if he is not acquainted with them and does not form plans suited to them. On every occasion we need to know our own strength. If it were permissible to err on either side, it would be more advantageous to overrate our merit than to form ideas of it that fall below its true standard. Fortune usually favors the bold and enterprising, and nothing inspires us with more boldness than a good opinion of ourselves.

3.3.2.9 Add to this that though pride, or self-applause, is sometimes disagreeable to others, it is always agreeable to ourselves. Modesty, on the other hand, gives pleasure to everyone who observes it, but often produces uneasiness in the person who has it. Now, it has been observed that our own sensations determine the vice and virtue of any quality, as well as the sensations it may arouse in others.

3.3.2.10 So self-satisfaction and vanity may be not only allowable but necessary in a character. It is certain, however, that good manners and decency require us to avoid all signs and expressions that tend directly to display that passion. All of us have a wonderful partiality for ourselves. If we always gave vent to our feelings on this point, we would provoke the greatest indignation in one another. This would come not only from the immediate presence of so disagreeable a subject of comparison, but also from the clash of our judgments. We establish the laws of nature to secure property in society and prevent the clash of self-

interest. In the same way, we establish the rules of good manners to prevent the clash of people's pride and to make conversation agreeable and inoffensive. Nothing is more disagreeable than a man's overweening conceit of himself. Almost everyone has a strong propensity to this vice. No one can properly distinguish in himself between the vice and the virtue, or be certain that his esteem for his own merit is well founded. For these reasons all direct expressions of this passion are condemned, and we make no exception to this rule in favor of people of sense and merit. They are not allowed to do themselves justice openly, in words, any more than other people are. And even in their own thoughts, if they show some reserve and secret doubt in doing themselves justice, they will be applauded all the more. That impertinent and almost universal human propensity to overvalue ourselves has given us such a prejudice against self-applause that we tend to condemn it, by a general rule, wherever we come across it. It is only with some difficulty that we grant people of sense a privilege even in their most secret thoughts. At the least, it must be admitted that some disguise on this point is absolutely necessary. If we harbor pride in our hearts, we must present a fair exterior and have the appearance of modesty and mutual deference in all our conduct and behavior. We must be ready on every occasion to put others before ourselves, and to treat them with a kind of deference even if they are our equals. Wherever we are not very much distinguished above the rest of the company, we must always seem the lowest and least in it. And if we observe these rules in our conduct, people will be more indulgent toward our secret sentiments when we reveal them indirectly.

3.3.2.11 I do not believe anyone who has any experience of the world, and can see into people's inner feelings, will claim that the humility good manners and decency require of us goes deeper than the outside. Nor will he claim that complete sincerity on this point is regarded as a real part of our duty. On the contrary, a genuine and hearty pride, or self-esteem, if well concealed and well founded, is essential to the character of a man of

honor. No quality of mind is more indispensable for winning the esteem and approval of mankind. Custom requires certain forms of deference and mutual submission from the different ranks of people toward one another. Whoever goes too far on this point is accused of servility if he does it out of self-interest, or of simplemindedness if he does it out of ignorance. So it is necessary to know our rank and station in the world, whether it is fixed by our birth, fortune, employment, talents or reputation. It is necessary to feel the sentiment and passion of pride in keeping with it, and to regulate our actions accordingly. Someone may say that prudence could be enough to regulate our actions in this respect, without any real pride. In reply I would point out that the object of prudence here is to make our actions conform to general usage and custom. And those tacit airs of superiority could never have been established and sanctioned by custom unless people were generally proud, and unless that passion were generally approved when well founded.

3.3.2.12 If we pass from common life and conversation to history, this reasoning gains new force when we observe that all the great actions and sentiments that have become the admiration of mankind are founded on nothing but pride and self-esteem. "Go," says Alexander the Great to his soldiers when they refused to follow him to India, "go tell your countrymen that you left Alexander completing the conquest of the world." This passage was always particularly admired by the Prince of Condé, as we learn from Saint-Évremond. "*Alexander*," said that prince, "abandoned by his soldiers among foreign peoples not yet fully subdued, felt in himself such a dignity of right and of empire that he could not believe anyone could possibly refuse to obey him. Whether in Europe or in Asia, among Greeks or Persians, it was all the same to him: wherever he found men, he imagined he had found subjects."

3.3.2.13 In general we may observe that whatever we call heroic virtue, and admire under the name of greatness and elevation of mind, is either nothing but a steady and well-established pride

and self-esteem, or has a large share of that passion. Courage, fearlessness, ambition, love of glory, magnanimity, and all the other shining virtues of that kind plainly have a strong mixture of self-esteem in them, and derive a great part of their merit from that source. Accordingly we find that many religious preachers denounce those virtues as purely pagan and natural. They set before us the excellence of the Christian religion, which places humility among the virtues and corrects the judgment of the world, and even of philosophers, who so generally admire every effort of pride and ambition. Whether this virtue of humility has been rightly understood I will not presume to decide. I am content with the concession that the world naturally esteems a well-regulated pride, which secretly drives our conduct without breaking out into such indecent expressions of vanity as may offend the vanity of others.

3.3.2.14 The merit of pride or self-esteem comes from two circumstances, namely its usefulness and its agreeableness to ourselves. It equips us for business and at the same time gives us immediate satisfaction. When it goes beyond its proper bounds, it loses the first advantage and even becomes harmful. That is why we condemn an extravagant pride and ambition, however much it is regulated by the proprieties of good manners and politeness. But such a passion is still agreeable, and conveys an elevated and sublime sensation to the person moved by it. Our sympathy with that satisfaction therefore considerably lessens the blame that naturally goes with its dangerous influence on his conduct and behavior. Accordingly we may observe that excessive courage and magnanimity contribute greatly to the character of a hero, especially when displayed under the frowns of fortune, and will make a person the admiration of posterity. This happens even while they ruin his affairs and lead him into dangers and difficulties he would otherwise never have known.

3.3.2.15 Heroism, or military glory, is much admired by most people. They consider it the most sublime kind of merit. People of cool reflection are not so enthusiastic in praising it. The endless confusion and disorder it has caused in the world greatly

diminish its merit in their eyes. When they want to oppose the popular notions on this subject, they always depict the evils this supposed virtue has produced in human society: the overthrow of empires, the devastation of provinces, the sacking of cities. As long as these are before our minds, we are more inclined to hate than to admire the ambition of heroes. But when we fix our view on the person himself, the author of all this harm, there is something so dazzling in his character, and the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration. The pain we get from its tendency to harm society is overpowered by a stronger and more immediate sympathy.

3.3.2.16 So our explanation of the merit or demerit that goes with the degrees of pride or self-esteem may serve as a strong argument for the preceding hypothesis. It shows the effects of the principles explained above in all the variations of our judgments about that passion. This reasoning shows that the distinction between vice and virtue arises from four principles: the advantage and the pleasure of the person himself, and of others. But that is not its only use. It may also give us strong proof of some subordinate parts of that hypothesis.

3.3.2.17 No one who properly considers this matter will hesitate to grant that any piece of ill manners, or any expression of pride and haughtiness, displeases us simply because it shocks our own pride. It leads us by sympathy into a comparison that causes the disagreeable passion of humility. Now insolence of this kind is blamed even in someone who has always been civil to us in particular, and even in someone whose name we know only from history. It follows that our disapproval comes from a sympathy with others. It comes from the reflection that such a character is highly displeasing and odious to everyone who talks with, or has any dealings with, the person who has it. We sympathize with those people in their uneasiness. And since their uneasiness comes partly from a sympathy with the person who insults them, we can observe here a double rebound of sympathy, a principle very similar to one we have observed before.[5]

5 HUME'S NOTE. Book II, Part II, Section 5.

GOODNESS AND BENEVOLENCE

Hume shows how sympathy explains the merit of the kind and benevolent virtues.

3.3.3.1 Having thus explained the origin of the praise and approval that go with everything we call great in human affections, we now proceed to give an account of their goodness, and to show where its merit comes from.

3.3.3.2 Once experience has given us an adequate knowledge of human affairs, and has taught us how they relate to human passion, we see that people's generosity is very limited. It seldom extends beyond their friends and family, or at most beyond their native country. Knowing human nature this way, we do not expect impossibilities of anyone. To form a judgment of someone's moral character, we confine our view to the narrow circle in which he moves. When the natural tendency of his passions leads him to be helpful and useful within his sphere, we approve of his character and love him. We do so through a sympathy with the feelings of those who have a closer connection with him. We are soon forced to forget our own interest in judgments of this kind. This is because of the constant contradictions we meet with in society and conversation from people who are not placed in the same situation as ourselves and do not share our interests. There is only one point of view in which our sentiments agree with those of others. It is when we consider the tendency of a passion to benefit or harm those who have some immediate connection or dealings with the person who has it. And though this benefit or harm is often very remote from us, it is sometimes very near, and engages us strongly by sympathy. We readily extend this concern to other, similar cases. When these are very remote, our sympathy is proportionally weaker, and our praise or blame fainter and more doubtful. The case here is the same as with our judgments about external bodies. All objects seem to shrink with distance. The way objects appear to our senses is the original standard by which

we judge them, but we do not say that they actually shrink with distance. Instead, we correct the appearance by reflection and arrive at a more constant and settled judgment about them. In the same way, sympathy is much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and sympathy with people far from us is much fainter than sympathy with people near and close at hand. Yet we ignore all these differences in our calm judgments about people's characters. Besides the fact that we ourselves often change our situation in this respect, every day we meet people whose situation differs from ours. They could never converse with us on any reasonable terms if we stayed fixed in the situation and point of view peculiar to ourselves. So the exchange of sentiments in society and conversation makes us form some general, unalterable standard by which we can approve or disapprove of characters and manners. The heart does not always side with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them. Still, they are sufficient for discussion, and serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, in the theater, and in the schools.

3.3.3.3 From these principles we can easily account for the merit commonly ascribed to generosity, humanity, compassion, gratitude, friendship, fidelity, zeal, disinterestedness, liberality, and all the other qualities that make up the character of the good and benevolent person. A propensity to the tender passions makes a man agreeable and useful in every area of life. It gives the right direction to all his other qualities, which might otherwise become harmful to society. Courage and ambition, when not regulated by benevolence, are fit only to make a tyrant and a public robber. It is the same with judgment and ability, and all qualities of that kind. In themselves they are indifferent to the interests of society. They tend toward the good or ill of mankind according to how these other passions direct them.

3.3.3.4 Love is immediately agreeable to the person moved by it, and hatred immediately disagreeable. This may also be a considerable reason why we praise all the passions that partake of the former, and blame all those that have any considerable share of

the latter. It is certain that we are touched immensely by a tender sentiment, as well as by a great one. Tears naturally come to our eyes at the thought of it, and we cannot help giving free rein to the same tenderness toward the person who shows it. All this seems to me proof that our approval, in these cases, has an origin different from the prospect of usefulness and advantage, either to ourselves or to others. To this we may add that people naturally, without reflection, approve of the character most like their own. The man of mild disposition and tender affections, in forming a notion of the most perfect virtue, mixes more benevolence and humanity into it than does the man of courage and enterprise. The latter naturally regards a certain elevation of mind as the most accomplished character. This must evidently come from an immediate sympathy that people have with characters similar to their own. They enter more warmly into such sentiments, and feel more keenly the pleasure that arises from them.

3.3.3.5 It is remarkable that nothing touches a humane person more than an instance of extraordinary delicacy in love or friendship. Here someone is attentive to his friend's smallest concerns and willing to sacrifice his own most considerable interests to them. Such delicacies have little influence on society, since they make us attend to the greatest trifles. But the smaller the concern, the more engaging they are, and they prove the highest merit in anyone capable of them. The passions are so contagious that they pass with the greatest ease from one person to another, and produce corresponding movements in every human heart. Where friendship shows itself in very striking instances, my heart catches the same passion and is warmed by the warm sentiments displayed before me. Such agreeable movements must give me an affection for everyone who arouses them. This is the case with everything agreeable in any person. The transition from pleasure to love is easy, and here it must be easier still. The agreeable sentiment aroused by sympathy is love itself, and all that is required is to change the object.

3.3.3.6 Hence the special merit of benevolence in all its shapes and appearances. Hence even its weaknesses are virtuous and lovable. A person whose grief at the loss of a friend was excessive would be esteemed for that very reason. His tenderness gives his melancholy a merit, as it gives it a pleasure.

3.3.3.7 We should not imagine, however, that all the angry passions are vicious, though they are disagreeable. A certain indulgence is owed to human nature in this respect. Anger and hatred are passions built into our very frame and constitution. On some occasions, lacking them may even be a sign of weakness and feebleness. And where they appear only in a low degree, we not only excuse them because they are natural, but even applaud them, because they fall short of what appears in most people.

3.3.3.8 Where these angry passions rise to cruelty, they form the most detested of all vices. All the pity and concern we have for the miserable victims of this vice turns against the person guilty of it. It produces a stronger hatred than we feel on any other occasion.

3.3.3.9 Even when the vice of inhumanity does not rise to this extreme degree, our sentiments about it are strongly influenced by reflection on the harm that results from it. And we may observe in general that we always count a quality a fault or blemish, without any further examination, if it makes someone troublesome to those who live and deal with him. On the other hand, when we list someone's good qualities, we always mention the parts of his character that make him a safe companion, an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, or an indulgent father. We consider him in all his relations in society, and love or hate him according to how he affects those who have any immediate dealings with him. And it is a most certain rule that if there is no relation of life in which I could not wish to stand toward a particular person, his character must to that extent be granted to be perfect. If he fails himself as little as he fails others, his character is entirely perfect. This is the ultimate test of merit and virtue.

NATURAL ABILITIES

Hume argues that talents like good sense and wit differ little from moral virtues.

3.3.4.1 No distinction is more common in all systems of ethics than the one between natural abilities and moral virtues. The former are put on the same footing as bodily endowments and are supposed to carry no merit or moral worth. Anyone who considers the matter carefully will find that a dispute on this point would be merely a dispute about words. These qualities are not entirely of the same kind, but they agree in the most important circumstances. Both are equally mental qualities. Both equally produce pleasure, and so both have an equal tendency to win the love and esteem of mankind. There are few people who are not as protective of their reputation for sense and knowledge as of their reputation for honor and courage, and much more so than of their reputation for temperance and sobriety. People are even afraid of being taken for good-natured, in case that is taken for a lack of understanding. And they often boast of more debauches than they have really engaged in, to give themselves an air of fire and spirit. In short, consider the figure a man cuts in the world, the reception he meets in company, the esteem his acquaintances pay him. All these advantages depend almost as much on his good sense and judgment as on any other part of his character. Let a man have the best intentions in the world and be as far as possible from all injustice and violence. He will still never be able to get himself much regarded without at least a moderate share of talent and understanding. Natural abilities may perhaps be inferior, but they are on the same footing as the qualities we call moral virtues, both in their causes and in their effects. Why, then, should we make any distinction between them?

3.3.4.2 Though we deny natural abilities the title of virtues, we must grant that they win the love and esteem of mankind and give a new luster to the other virtues. A man who has them is

much more entitled to our goodwill and services than one entirely without them. It may indeed be claimed that the sentiment of approval these qualities produce is not only inferior to, but also somewhat different from, the one that goes with the other virtues. But this, in my opinion, is not a sufficient reason to exclude them from the list of virtues. Each of the virtues, even benevolence, justice, gratitude and integrity, arouses a different sentiment or feeling in the spectator. The characters of Caesar and Cato, as drawn by Sallust, are both virtuous in the strictest sense of the word, but in different ways, and the sentiments that arise from them are not entirely the same. The one produces love, the other esteem. The one is lovable, the other awe-inspiring. We could wish to find the one character in a friend, while the other we would aspire to in ourselves. In the same way, the approval that goes with natural abilities may feel somewhat different from the approval that arises from the other virtues, without making them an entirely different species. And indeed we may observe that the natural abilities, like the other virtues, do not all produce the same kind of approval. Good sense and genius give rise to esteem; wit and humor arouse love.[6]

3.3.4.3 Those who present the distinction between natural abilities and moral virtues as very important may say that the former are entirely involuntary. On this view they carry no merit, since they do not depend on liberty and free will. To this I answer, first, that many of the qualities all moralists include under the title of moral virtues, especially the ancient moralists, are just as involuntary and necessary as the qualities of the judgment and imagination. Of this nature are constancy, fortitude, magnanimity: in short, all the qualities that make up the great man.

6 HUME'S NOTE. Love and esteem are at bottom the same passion, and arise from similar causes. The qualities that produce both are agreeable and give pleasure. Sometimes this pleasure is severe and serious; sometimes its object is great and makes a strong impression; sometimes it produces some degree of humility and awe. In all these cases the passion arising from the pleasure is more properly called esteem than love. Benevolence goes with both, but is connected with love to a greater degree.

I might say the same, to some extent, of the others. It is almost impossible for the mind to change its character in any considerable respect, or to cure itself of a passionate or irritable temper when these are natural to it. The greater the degree of these blameworthy qualities, the more vicious they become, and yet the less voluntary they are. Second, I would like someone to give me a reason why virtue and vice cannot be involuntary, just as beauty and ugliness are. These moral distinctions arise from the natural distinctions of pain and pleasure. When we get those feelings from the general consideration of some quality or character, we call it vicious or virtuous. Now I do not believe anyone will claim that a quality can produce pleasure or pain in the person who considers it only if it is perfectly voluntary in the person who has it. Third, as for free will, we have shown that it has no place with regard to people's actions, any more than with regard to their qualities. It does not follow that what is voluntary is free. Our actions are more voluntary than our judgments, but we have no more liberty in the one than in the other.

3.3.4.4 This distinction between voluntary and involuntary is not enough to justify the distinction between natural abilities and moral virtues. But it will give us a plausible reason why moralists invented the latter distinction. People have observed that natural abilities and moral qualities are on the whole on the same footing, but that there is nevertheless one difference between them. The former can hardly be changed by any art or effort. The latter, or at least the actions that come from them, can be changed by the motives of reward and punishment, praise and blame. That is why legislators, clergy, and moralists have mainly applied themselves to regulating these voluntary actions, and have tried to supply additional motives for being virtuous in that respect. They knew that punishing a man for foolishness, or urging him to be prudent and shrewd, would have little effect, while the same punishments and exhortations might have considerable influence where justice and injustice are concerned. But people in common life and conversation do not have those ends in view; they naturally praise or blame

whatever pleases or displeases them. So they do not seem to pay much attention to this distinction. They count prudence as a virtue just as they count benevolence, and penetration just as they count justice. Indeed, we find that all moralists whose judgment is not warped by strict adherence to a system share the same way of thinking. The ancient moralists in particular had no hesitation in placing prudence at the head of the cardinal virtues. Any faculty of the mind, in its perfect state and condition, can arouse to some degree a sentiment of esteem and approval, and to account for this sentiment is the business of philosophers. It belongs to grammarians to examine which qualities are entitled to be called virtues. When they try, they will not find this as easy a task as they might at first be inclined to think.

3.3.4.5 The main reason natural abilities are esteemed is their tendency to be useful to the person who has them. It is impossible to carry out any plan successfully unless it is conducted with prudence and discretion. The goodness of our intentions alone will not be enough to bring our enterprises to a happy outcome. Humans are superior to animals mainly by the superiority of their reason, and it is degrees of that same faculty that make such an infinite difference between one person and another. All the advantages of the arts are owed to human reason. Where fortune is not very capricious, the greater part of these advantages must fall to the prudent and shrewd.

3.3.4.6 Suppose someone asks whether a quick or a slow grasp is more valuable. Is it better to penetrate a subject at first glance but accomplish nothing by study, or to have the opposite character, which must work everything out through sheer application? Is a clear head better, or a rich inventiveness? A profound genius, or a sure judgment? In short, what character or particular kind of understanding is more excellent than another? It is evident that we can answer none of these questions without considering which of those qualities best equips a man for the world and carries him furthest in any of his undertakings.

3.3.4.7 There are many other qualities of mind whose merit comes from the same source. Industry, perseverance, patience,

activity, vigilance, application, constancy, and other virtues of that kind which are easy to recall, are valued for no other reason than their advantage in the conduct of life. It is the same with temperance, frugality, economy and resolution. On the other hand, extravagance, luxury, irresolution and uncertainty are vicious simply because they bring ruin on us and unfit us for business and action.

3.3.4.8 Wisdom and good sense are valued because they are useful to the person who has them. Wit and eloquence, by contrast, are valued because they are immediately agreeable to others. Good humor, again, is loved and esteemed because it is immediately agreeable to the person himself. It is evident that the conversation of a witty man is very satisfying, just as a cheerful, good-humored companion spreads joy over the whole company through a sympathy with his gaiety. Since these qualities are agreeable, then, they naturally give rise to love and esteem, and meet all the marks of virtue.

3.3.4.9 It is often hard to say what makes one man's conversation so agreeable and entertaining, and another's so dull and distasteful. Conversation is a transcript of the mind just as books are, so the same qualities that make the one valuable must give us esteem for the other. We will consider this later. In the meantime it may be affirmed in general that all the merit a man may get from his conversation arises from nothing but the pleasure it gives to those present, and that merit can no doubt be very considerable.

3.3.4.10 In this light, cleanliness too should be regarded as a virtue, since it naturally makes us agreeable to others and is a very considerable source of love and affection. No one will deny that negligence in this respect is a fault. Faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation it arouses in others. So in this instance, trivial as it seems, we can clearly discover the origin of the moral distinction of vice and virtue in other instances.

3.3.4.11 Besides all the qualities that make a person lovable or valuable, there is also a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi* of agreeableness

and grace that contributes to the same effect. In this case, as in that of wit and eloquence, we must appeal to a certain sense that acts without reflection and takes no account of the tendencies of qualities and characters. Some moralists account for all the sentiments of virtue by this sense. Their hypothesis is very plausible. Nothing but a detailed inquiry can give the preference to any other hypothesis. We find that almost all the virtues have such particular tendencies. We also find that these tendencies alone are enough to produce a strong sentiment of approval. After this, we cannot doubt that qualities are approved of in proportion to the advantage that results from them.

3.3.4.12 The propriety or impropriety of a quality, with regard to age, character or station, also contributes to its praise or blame. This propriety depends to a great extent on experience. It is usual to see people lose their levity as they get older. So a certain degree of seriousness and a certain age are connected in our thoughts. When we see them separated in someone's character, this does a kind of violence to our imagination, and is disagreeable.

3.3.4.13 Of all the faculties of the soul, one matters least to character and carries the least virtue or vice in its various degrees, even though it admits a great variety of degrees. That faculty is memory. Unless it rises to such a stupendous height as to surprise us, or sinks so low as to affect the judgment to some extent, we usually take no notice of its variations. We never mention them in praising or criticizing anyone. Far from its being a virtue to have a good memory, people generally make a show of complaining of a bad one. They try to persuade the world that what they say is entirely their own invention, and so they sacrifice memory to the praise of genius and judgment. Yet considering the matter abstractly, it would be hard to explain why the faculty of recalling past ideas truly and clearly should not have as much merit as the faculty of arranging our present ideas in such an order as to form true propositions and opinions. The reason for the difference must surely be that memory is exercised without any sensation of pleasure or pain, and in all

its middling degrees serves almost equally well in business and affairs. But the slightest variations in judgment are keenly felt in their consequences. And that faculty is never exercised to any eminent degree without extraordinary delight and satisfaction. Sympathy with this usefulness and pleasure gives merit to the understanding. The absence of such sympathy makes us regard memory as a faculty quite indifferent to blame or praise.

3.3.4.14 Before leaving this subject of natural abilities, I must note one more possible source of the esteem and affection that go with them: the importance and weight they give the person who has them. He becomes of greater consequence in life. His decisions and actions affect a greater number of his fellow creatures. Both his friendship and his enmity matter. And it is easy to see that whoever is raised in this way above the rest of mankind must arouse in us the sentiments of esteem and approval. Whatever is important engages our attention, fixes our thought, and is contemplated with satisfaction. The histories of kingdoms are more interesting than domestic stories. The histories of great empires are more interesting than those of small cities and principalities, and the histories of wars and revolutions more interesting than those of peace and order. We sympathize with the people who suffer, in all the various sentiments that belong to their fortunes. The mind is occupied by the multitude of objects and by the strong passions on display. And this occupation or agitation of the mind is usually agreeable and entertaining. The same theory accounts for the esteem and regard we pay to people of extraordinary talents and abilities. The good and ill of multitudes are connected with their actions. Whatever they undertake is important and demands our attention. Nothing that concerns them is to be overlooked and despised. And where someone can arouse these sentiments, he soon gains our esteem, unless other circumstances of his character make him odious and disagreeable.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURAL VIRTUES

Hume extends his account to the advantages of the body and of fortune.

3.3.5.1 It was observed, in discussing the passions, that pride and humility, love and hatred, are aroused by any advantages or disadvantages of mind, body or fortune. These advantages or disadvantages have that effect by producing a separate impression of pain or pleasure. The pain or pleasure that arises from the general survey or view of any action or quality of the mind constitutes its vice or virtue. It gives rise to our approval or blame, which is nothing but a fainter and less perceptible love or hatred. We have identified four different sources of this pain and pleasure. To justify that hypothesis more fully, it may be appropriate here to observe that the advantages or disadvantages of the body and of fortune produce pain or pleasure from exactly the same principles. An object may tend to be useful to the person who has it, or to others; it may tend to give pleasure to him or to others. All these circumstances give an immediate pleasure to the person who considers the object, and command his love and approval.

3.3.5.2 To begin with the advantages of the body, we may observe a phenomenon that might seem somewhat trivial and ludicrous, if anything could be trivial that supports a conclusion of such importance, or ludicrous that is used in a philosophical argument. It is commonly remarked that those we call ladies' men are well received by women. These are men who have either distinguished themselves by their amorous exploits, or whose build promises some extraordinary vigor of that kind. They naturally win the affection even of women whose virtue rules out any intention of ever putting those talents to use. Here it is evident that such a man's ability to give enjoyment is the real source of the love and esteem he meets with among women. Yet the women who love and esteem him have no prospect of receiving that enjoyment themselves. They can be affected only

through their sympathy with someone who has a love affair with him. This instance is unusual, and deserves our attention.

3.3.5.3 Another source of the pleasure we get from considering bodily advantages is their usefulness to the person who has them. It is certain that a considerable part of the beauty of human beings, as of other animals, consists in a build of limbs that experience shows us goes along with strength and agility, and that fits the creature for any action or exercise. Broad shoulders, a flat belly, firm joints, tapering legs: all these are beautiful in our species because they are signs of strength and vigor. Since these are advantages we naturally sympathize with, they give the onlooker a share of the satisfaction they produce in their possessor.

3.3.5.4 So much for the usefulness that may go with any quality of the body. As for immediate pleasure, it is certain that an air of health, as well as of strength and agility, makes up a considerable part of beauty. It is equally certain that a sickly air in someone else is always disagreeable, because of the idea of pain and discomfort it conveys to us. On the other hand, we are pleased with the regularity of our own features, even though it is useful neither to ourselves nor to others. For it to give us any satisfaction, we have to view it from a distance, as it were. We commonly consider ourselves as we appear in the eyes of others, and sympathize with the favorable sentiments they have toward us.

3.3.5.5 How far the advantages of fortune produce esteem and approval from the same principles, we can satisfy ourselves by recalling our earlier reasoning on that subject. We observed that our approval of those who possess the advantages of fortune may be ascribed to three different causes. First, to the immediate pleasure a rich man gives us through the sight of the beautiful clothes, carriages, gardens, or houses he owns. Second, to the advantage we hope to gain from him through his generosity and liberality. Third, to the pleasure and advantage he himself gets from his possessions, which produce an agreeable sympathy in us. Whether we ascribe our esteem for the rich and

great to one of these causes or to all of them, we can clearly see traces of the principles that give rise to the sense of vice and virtue. I believe most people, at first sight, will be inclined to ascribe our esteem for the rich to self-interest and the prospect of advantage. But our esteem or deference certainly extends beyond any prospect of advantage to ourselves. So it is evident that this sentiment must come from a sympathy with those who depend on the person we esteem and respect, and who have an immediate connection with him. We regard him as someone capable of contributing to the happiness or enjoyment of his fellow creatures, and we naturally take on their sentiments toward him. This consideration will justify my hypothesis in preferring the third principle to the other two, and in ascribing our esteem for the rich to a sympathy with the pleasure and advantage they themselves get from their possessions. Even the other two principles cannot operate to their full extent, or account for all the phenomena, without appealing to a sympathy of one kind or another. So it is much more natural to choose the sympathy that is immediate and direct than the one that is remote and indirect. We may add that where the wealth or power is very great, and makes the person significant and important in the world, the esteem attending it may be ascribed in part to another source, distinct from these three. This source is that such wealth or power engages the mind with a prospect of the great number and importance of its consequences. To account for how this principle operates, however, we must also appeal to sympathy, as we observed in the preceding section.

3.3.5.6 It may be worthwhile here to note how flexible our sentiments are, and how readily they are altered by the objects they are joined with. All the sentiments of approval that attend any particular kind of object closely resemble each other, even though they come from different sources. On the other hand, those sentiments feel different when they are directed at different objects, even though they come from the same source. Thus the beauty of all visible objects causes much the same pleasure. Yet this pleasure sometimes comes from the mere kind and

appearance of the objects, and sometimes from sympathy and an idea of their usefulness. Likewise, whenever we survey the actions and characters of people without any particular interest in them, the pleasure or pain that arises from the survey is basically of the same kind, apart from some minute differences. This holds even though there may be a great variety in the causes it comes from. On the other hand, a convenient house and a virtuous character do not produce the same feeling of approval. In both cases our approval has the same source, flowing from sympathy and an idea of their usefulness. There is something quite inexplicable in this variation in our feelings; but it is something we experience with regard to all our passions and sentiments.

CONCLUSION OF BOOK III

Hume sums up sympathy as the chief source of moral distinctions and compares the anatomist and the painter.

3.3.6.1 On the whole, then, I am hopeful that nothing is lacking for an accurate proof of this system of ethics. We are certain that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature. We are also certain that it has a great influence on our sense of beauty, both when we regard external objects and when we judge of morals. We find that it is strong enough to give us the strongest sentiments of approval when it operates alone, without the help of any other principle. This is the case with justice, allegiance, chastity, and good manners. We may observe that all the circumstances needed for its operation are found in most of the virtues, which for the most part tend toward the good of society or the good of the person who has them. If we compare all these circumstances, we will not doubt that sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions. This is especially clear when we reflect that no objection can be raised against this hypothesis in one case that will not extend to all cases. Justice is certainly approved of for no other reason than that it tends toward the public good. And the public good is a matter of indifference to

us, except insofar as sympathy makes us care about it. We may presume the same about all the other virtues that tend in a similar way toward the public good. They must get all their merit from our sympathy with those who gain some advantage from them. In the same way, the virtues that tend toward the good of the person who has them get their merit from our sympathy with him.

3.3.6.2 Most people will readily grant that the useful qualities of the mind are virtuous because of their usefulness. This way of thinking is so natural, and comes up on so many occasions, that few will hesitate to admit it. Once this is admitted, the force of sympathy must necessarily be acknowledged. Virtue is regarded as a means to an end. Means to an end are valued only insofar as the end is valued. But the happiness of strangers affects us through sympathy alone. To that principle, therefore, we must ascribe the sentiment of approval that arises from surveying all the virtues that are useful to society, or to the person who has them. These make up the most considerable part of morality.

3.3.6.3 If it were proper on such a subject to bribe the reader's assent, or to use anything but solid argument, we would have plenty of topics here to engage the feelings. All lovers of virtue must surely be pleased to see moral distinctions derived from so noble a source, one that gives us a just notion of both the generosity and the capacity of human nature. (And we are all lovers of virtue in theory, however much we may fall short in practice.) It takes very little knowledge of human affairs to see that a sense of morals is a principle inherent in the soul, and one of the most powerful in its makeup. But this sense must surely gain new force when, reflecting on itself, it approves of the principles it comes from, and finds nothing but what is great and good in its rise and origin. Those who reduce the sense of morals to original instincts of the human mind may defend the cause of virtue with enough authority. But they lack an advantage enjoyed by those who account for that sense by an extensive sympathy with mankind. According to this latter system, we must approve not only of virtue but also of the sense of virtue, and not only of

that sense but also of the principles it comes from. So nothing appears on any side but what is praiseworthy and good.

3.3.6.4 This observation may be extended to justice and the other virtues of that kind. Though justice is artificial, the sense of its morality is natural. It is people's combining together in a system of conduct that makes any act of justice beneficial to society. But once it has that tendency, we naturally approve of it. If we did not, no combination or convention could ever produce that sentiment.

3.3.6.5 Most human inventions are subject to change. They depend on mood and whim. They are in fashion for a while and then sink into oblivion. It might perhaps be feared that if justice were granted to be a human invention, it would have to be put on the same footing. But the cases are very different. The interest on which justice is founded is the greatest imaginable, and extends to all times and places. It cannot possibly be served by any other invention. It is obvious, and reveals itself at the very first formation of society. All these causes make the rules of justice steadfast and unchangeable, or at least as unchangeable as human nature. And if they were founded on original instincts, could they be any more stable?

3.3.6.6 The same system may help us form a just notion of the happiness as well as the dignity of virtue. It may also engage every principle of our nature in embracing and cherishing that noble quality. Consider knowledge and ability of every kind. Besides the advantages that immediately result from acquiring them, they also give a person a new luster in the eyes of mankind, and are universally attended with esteem and approval. Indeed, who does not feel an added eagerness in pursuing them when he considers this? And who can think any advantages of fortune enough to make up for the slightest breach of the social virtues? Not only his reputation with others, but also his peace and inner satisfaction, depend entirely on his strict observance of them. A mind that has failed in its duty to mankind and society will never be able to bear examining itself. But I refrain from pressing this subject. Such reflections call for a separate work,

very different in character from the present one. The anatomist should never try to rival the painter. In his exact dissections and drawings of the smaller parts of the human body, he should not attempt to give his figures any graceful and appealing pose or expression. There is even something hideous, or at least minute, in the views of things he presents. The objects need to be set farther off, and more covered from sight, to make them appealing to the eye and the imagination. An anatomist, however, is admirably suited to advise a painter. It is even impossible to excel in painting without the help of anatomy. We must have an exact knowledge of the parts, and of their position and connection, before we can draw with any elegance or correctness. In the same way, the most abstract speculations about human nature, however cold and unentertaining, come to serve practical morality. They may make that science more correct in its precepts and more persuasive in its exhortations.

Appendix and Abstract

Hume's Appendix of 1740 on belief and personal identity, and his anonymous Abstract of the Treatise.

APPENDIX

App.1 There is nothing I would more gladly seize than an opportunity to confess my errors. I would consider such a return to truth and reason more honorable than the most unerring judgment. A man who is free from mistakes can claim no praise except for the soundness of his understanding. But a man who corrects his mistakes shows at once the soundness of his understanding and the candor and honesty of his temper. I have not yet been lucky enough to discover any very considerable mistakes in the reasoning presented in the preceding volumes, except on one point. But I have found by experience that some of my expressions were not chosen well enough to guard readers against every misunderstanding. It is chiefly to remedy this defect that I have added the following appendix.

App.2 We can never be brought to believe any matter of fact except where its cause or its effect is present to us. But few have been curious enough to ask themselves what the nature is of the belief that arises from the relation of cause and effect. In my opinion, the following dilemma is inescapable. Either belief is some new idea, such as that of reality or existence, which we join to the simple conception of an object; or it is merely a peculiar feeling or sentiment. That it is not a new idea added to the simple conception can be shown by these two arguments. First, we have no abstract idea of existence that can be distinguished and separated from the idea of particular objects. It is

impossible, therefore, for this idea of existence to be added to the idea of any object, or to make the difference between a simple conception and belief. Second, the mind has command over all its ideas, and can separate, unite, mix, and vary them as it pleases. So if belief consisted merely in a new idea added to the conception, a person could believe whatever he pleased. We may conclude, therefore, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment. It is something that does not depend on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles over which we have no control. When we are convinced of any matter of fact, all we do is conceive it along with a certain feeling, different from the one that attends the mere daydreams of the imagination. And when we express our disbelief in some fact, we mean that the arguments for it do not produce that feeling. Suppose belief did not consist in a sentiment different from our mere conception. Then whatever objects the wildest imagination presented would be on an equal footing with the most established truths founded on history and experience. Nothing but the feeling or sentiment distinguishes the one from the other.

App.3 Let us take it, then, as an undoubted truth that belief is nothing but a peculiar feeling, different from simple conception. The next question that naturally arises is: what is the nature of this feeling or sentiment, and is it analogous to any other sentiment of the human mind? This question is important. If it is not analogous to any other sentiment, we must give up hope of explaining its causes, and must regard it as an original principle of the human mind. If it is analogous, we may hope to explain its causes by analogy, and trace it back to more general principles. Now everyone will readily admit that there is greater firmness and solidity in the conceptions that are objects of conviction and assurance than in the loose, idle daydreams of someone building castles in the air. They strike us with more force; they are more present to us; the mind has a firmer hold on them, and is more moved and driven by them. The mind settles on them, and in a way fixes itself and rests on them. In short,

they come closer to the impressions that are immediately present to us, and are therefore analogous to many other operations of the mind.

App.4 In my view, the only possible way to evade this conclusion is to claim that belief consists, besides the simple conception, in some impression or feeling distinguishable from the conception. On this view, belief does not modify the conception and make it more present and intense. It is merely added to it, in the same way that will and desire are added to particular conceptions of good and pleasure. But the following considerations will, I hope, be enough to dispose of this hypothesis. First, it is directly contrary to experience and to our immediate consciousness. Everyone has always granted that reasoning is merely an operation of our thoughts or ideas. However those ideas may vary in how they feel, nothing ever enters into our conclusions but ideas, or our fainter conceptions. For instance, I now hear the voice of a person I know, and the sound comes from the next room. This impression of my senses immediately carries my thoughts to the person, along with all the surrounding objects. I picture them to myself as existing now, with the same qualities and relations I formerly knew them to have. These ideas take a firmer hold on my mind than the ideas of an enchanted castle. They feel different, but no distinct or separate impression accompanies them. It is the same when I recall the various incidents of a journey, or the events of any history. Every particular fact there is an object of belief. Its idea is modified differently from the loose daydreams of someone building castles in the air. But no distinct impression accompanies each distinct idea or conception of matter of fact. This is a matter of plain experience. If this experience can ever be disputed, it is in one kind of case. The mind has been agitated by doubts and difficulties. Then, on seeing the object from a new point of view, or on being given a new argument, it fixes itself and rests in one settled conclusion and belief. In this case there is a feeling distinct and separate from the conception, because the passage from doubt and agitation to calm and rest gives the mind satis-

faction and pleasure. But take any other case. Suppose I see the legs and thighs of a person in motion, while some object in between hides the rest of his body. Here the imagination certainly fills out the whole figure. I give him a head and shoulders, a chest and a neck. I conceive and believe him to have these parts. Nothing could be more evident than that this whole operation is carried out by thought or imagination alone. The transition is immediate. The ideas strike us at once. Their customary connection with the present impression varies and modifies them in a certain way. But it produces no act of the mind distinct from this peculiar manner of conception. Let anyone examine his own mind, and he will clearly find this to be true.

App.5 Second, whatever the truth about this distinct impression, it must be granted that the mind has a firmer hold, or a steadier conception, of what it takes to be matter of fact than of fictions. Why then look any further, or multiply suppositions unnecessarily?

App.6 Third, we can explain the causes of the firm conception, but not the causes of any separate impression. And not only that: the causes of the firm conception exhaust the whole subject, and nothing is left over to produce any other effect. An inference concerning a matter of fact is nothing but the idea of an object that is frequently conjoined, or associated, with a present impression. That is all there is to it. Every part is needed to explain the steadier conception by analogy, and nothing remains that could produce any distinct impression.

App.7 Fourth, the effects of belief in influencing the passions and the imagination can all be explained from the firm conception, and there is no need to appeal to any other principle. These arguments, along with many others set out in the earlier volumes, sufficiently prove that belief only modifies the idea or conception. It makes the idea feel different without producing any distinct impression.

App.8 Taking a general view of the subject, then, there appear to be two important questions that we may venture to recommend to philosophers' consideration. Is there anything besides the

feeling or sentiment that distinguishes belief from simple conception? And is this feeling anything but a firmer conception, or a firmer hold that we take of the object?

App.9 Suppose that, after impartial inquiry, philosophers agree with the conclusion I have reached. Then the next task is to examine the analogy between belief and other acts of the mind, and to find the cause of the firmness and strength of conception. I do not consider this a difficult task. The transition from a present impression always enlivens and strengthens any idea. When any object is presented, the idea of its usual companion immediately strikes us as something real and solid. It is felt rather than conceived, and in force and influence it approaches the impression it derives from. I have proved this at length. I cannot add any new arguments.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

Hume admits that he cannot explain what binds our perceptions into one self.

App.10 I had entertained some hope that our theory of the intellectual world, however deficient it might be, would be free of the contradictions and absurdities that seem to attend every explanation human reason can give of the material world. But on a stricter review of the section on personal identity, I find myself caught in such a labyrinth that I must confess I know neither how to correct my former opinions nor how to make them consistent. If this is not a good general reason for skepticism, it is at least a sufficient reason for me to be diffident and modest in all my decisions, if I were not already amply supplied with such reasons. I will set out the arguments on both sides, beginning with those that led me to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being.

App.11 When we talk of self or substance, we must have an idea attached to these terms; otherwise they are completely unintelligible. Every idea is derived from preceding impressions, and

we have no impression of self or substance as something simple and individual. We therefore have no idea of them in that sense.

App.12 Whatever is distinct is distinguishable, and whatever is distinguishable is separable by thought or imagination. All perceptions are distinct. They are therefore distinguishable and separable. They may be conceived as existing separately, and they may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity.

App.13 When I look at this table and that chimney, nothing is present to me but particular perceptions, which are of the same nature as all other perceptions. This is the doctrine of philosophers. But this table that is present to me, and the chimney, can and do exist separately. This is the doctrine of ordinary people, and it implies no contradiction. So there is no contradiction in extending the same doctrine to all perceptions.

App.14 In general, the following reasoning seems satisfactory. All ideas are borrowed from preceding perceptions. Our ideas of objects, therefore, come from that source. Consequently, no proposition can be intelligible or consistent with regard to objects unless it is also intelligible and consistent with regard to perceptions. But it is intelligible and consistent to say that objects exist as distinct and independent, without any common simple substance or subject in which they inhere. This proposition, therefore, can never be absurd with regard to perceptions.

App.15 When I turn my reflection on myself, I can never perceive this self without one or more perceptions, and I can never perceive anything but the perceptions. It is the composition of these, therefore, that forms the self.

App.16 We can conceive a thinking being as having either many perceptions or few. Suppose the mind reduced even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it has only one perception, such as thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive anything but that perception alone? Do you have any notion of self or substance? If not, adding other perceptions can never give you that notion.

App.17 Some people suppose that annihilation follows death, and that it entirely destroys this self. That annihilation is nothing but the extinction of all particular perceptions: love and hatred, pain and pleasure, thought and sensation. These, therefore, must be the same as the self, since the one cannot survive the other.

App.18 Is the self the same as substance? If so, how can the question even arise whether the self continues through a change of substance? If they are distinct, what is the difference between them? For my part, I have a notion of neither when they are conceived as distinct from particular perceptions.

App.19 Philosophers are beginning to accept the principle that we have no idea of external substance distinct from the ideas of particular qualities. This must pave the way for a similar principle regarding the mind: that we have no notion of it distinct from the particular perceptions.

App.20 So far I seem to have enough evidence on my side. Having thus loosened all our particular perceptions, I go on to explain the principle of connection that binds them together and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity. But when[1] I do so, I realize that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the apparent evidence of the preceding reasoning could have led me to accept it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But the human understanding can never discover any connections among distinct existences. We only feel a connection, or determination of thought, to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that thought alone finds personal identity. It does so when, reflecting on the train of past perceptions that make up a mind, it feels the ideas of them to be connected together and to lead naturally into each other. However extraordinary this conclusion may seem, it need not surprise us. Most philosophers seem inclined to think that personal identity

1 HUME'S NOTE. Vol. I, page 452.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. That is, the section on personal identity (Book I, Part IV, Section 6).

arises from consciousness, and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. So far, then, the present philosophy looks promising. But all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot find any theory that satisfies me on this point.

App.21 In short, there are two principles that I cannot make consistent, and yet I cannot renounce either of them. The first is that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences. The second is that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences. If our perceptions inhered in something simple and individual, or if the mind perceived some real connection among them, there would be no difficulty. For my part, I must claim the privilege of a skeptic and confess that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I do not claim, however, that it is absolutely insurmountable. Others, perhaps, or I myself on more mature reflection, may discover some hypothesis that will reconcile these contradictions.

App.22 I will also take this opportunity to confess two other, less important errors in my reasoning that more mature reflection has revealed to me. The first can be found in Vol. I, page 106. There I say that the distance between two bodies is known, among other things, by the angles that the rays of light coming from the bodies make with each other. It is certain that these angles are not known to the mind, and so they can never reveal the distance. The second error can be found in Vol. I, page 144. There I say that two ideas of the same object can differ only in their degrees of force and vivacity. I believe there are other differences among ideas that cannot properly be covered by these terms. Had I said that two ideas of the same object can differ only in how they feel, I would have been nearer the truth.

THE ABSTRACT: PREFACE

The anonymous author explains that he summarizes the Treatise to make it easier to follow.

Abs.Pref.1 My hopes for this small work may seem somewhat extraordinary when I declare that I intend to make a larger work more intelligible to ordinary readers by abridging it. Yet it is certain that those who are not used to abstract reasoning tend to lose the thread of an argument when it is drawn out at great length. This is especially so when each part is fortified by every argument, guarded against every objection, and illustrated by every view that occurs to a writer in the careful survey of his subject. Such readers will more easily grasp a chain of reasoning that is simpler and more concise. In it only the chief propositions are linked to each other, illustrated by a few simple examples, and confirmed by a few of the more forceful arguments. When the parts lie closer together, they can be compared more easily, and the connection can be traced more readily from the first principles to the final conclusion.

Abs.Pref.2 The work of which I here present the reader with an abstract has been criticized as obscure and hard to understand. I am inclined to think this came as much from the length of the argument as from its abstractness. If I have remedied this problem to any degree, I have achieved my aim. The book seemed to me to have such an air of originality and novelty as to deserve the public's attention. This is especially so if it turns out, as the author seems to suggest, that if his philosophy were accepted, we would have to change most of the sciences from the ground up. Such bold attempts are always beneficial in the republic of letters. They throw off the yoke of authority, accustom people to think for themselves, and offer new hints that people of genius may carry further. By the very opposition they provoke, they also shed light on points where no one had suspected any difficulty before.

Abs.Pref.3 The author must be content to wait patiently for some time before the learned world can agree in its opinion of his work. It is his misfortune that he cannot appeal to the people, who in all matters of common reason and eloquence prove to be so infallible a tribunal. He must be judged by the Few, whose verdict is more liable to be corrupted by partiality and prejudice. This is especially so because no one is a proper judge of these subjects who has not often thought about them, and such people tend to form systems of their own, which they are determined not to give up. I hope the author will excuse me for meddling in this affair. My only aim is to enlarge his audience by removing some difficulties that have kept many from grasping his meaning.

Abs.Pref.4 I have chosen one simple argument, which I have carefully traced from beginning to end. This is the only point I have taken care to finish. The rest consists only of hints of particular passages that seemed to me curious and remarkable.

THE ABSTRACT

A summary of the Treatise's account of ideas, causation and belief.

Abs.1 This book seems to be written on the same plan as several other works that have been very popular in *England* in recent years. The philosophical spirit has made great progress all over *Europe* in the last eighty years, and it has been carried as far in this kingdom as in any other. Our writers even seem to have started a new kind of philosophy, which promises more for both the entertainment and the benefit of mankind than any other the world has yet known. Most of the ancient philosophers who wrote about human nature showed more delicacy of sentiment, a just sense of morals, or greatness of soul than depth of reasoning and reflection. They were content to present the common sense of mankind in the strongest light, with the best turn of thought and expression. They did not steadily follow out a chain of propositions or form the various truths into a regular science. But it is at least worth trying whether the science of *man* will

allow of the same accuracy that several parts of natural philosophy have been found capable of. There seems to be every reason in the world to think that it can be carried to the highest degree of exactness. In examining various phenomena, we may find that they resolve into one common principle, and we may trace this principle back to another. If so, we will eventually arrive at those few simple principles on which all the rest depend. And though we can never reach the ultimate principles, it is satisfying to go as far as our faculties allow.

Abs.2 This seems to have been the aim of our recent philosophers, and, among others, of this author. He proposes to anatomize human nature methodically, and promises to draw no conclusions except where experience authorizes him. He speaks with contempt of hypotheses. He suggests that those of our countrymen who have banished them from moral philosophy have done the world a more remarkable service than *Lord Bacon*, whom he regards as the father of experimental physics. On this occasion he mentions *Mr. Locke*, *Lord Shaftesbury*, *Dr. Mandeville*, *Mr. Hutcheson*, and *Dr. Butler*. Though they differ among themselves on many points, they all seem to agree in basing their careful inquiries into human nature entirely on experience.

Abs.3 Besides the satisfaction of knowing what concerns us most closely, it can safely be said that almost all the sciences are included in the science of human nature and depend on it. *The sole aim of* logic *is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas;* morals *and* criticism *concern our tastes and sentiments; and* politics *considers people as united in society and dependent on one another.* This treatise of human nature therefore seems intended as a system of the sciences. The author has finished the part concerning logic, and has laid the foundations of the other parts in his account of the passions.

Abs.4 The celebrated *Leibniz* has pointed out a defect in the usual systems of logic. They are very full when they explain the operations of the understanding in forming demonstrations. But they are too brief when they deal with probabilities and the

other standards of evidence on which life and action entirely depend, and which guide us even in most of our philosophical speculations. In this criticism he includes the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, the *Recherche de la vérité*, and the *Art de penser*. The author of the *Treatise of Human Nature* seems to have been aware of this defect in these philosophers, and has tried, as far as he can, to make up for it.[2] Since his book contains a great many very new and remarkable speculations, it will be impossible to give the reader a just notion of the whole. We will therefore confine ourselves mainly to his explanation of our reasonings from cause and effect. If we can make this intelligible to the reader, it may serve as a sample of the whole.

Abs.5 Our author begins with some definitions. He calls a *perception* whatever can be present to the mind, whether we use our senses, are moved by passion, or exercise our thought and reflection. He divides our perceptions into two kinds, namely *impressions* and *ideas*. When we feel a passion or emotion of any kind, or have images of external objects conveyed by our senses, the perception of the mind is what he calls an *impression*. He uses this word in a new sense. When we reflect on a passion or an object that is not present, this perception is an *idea*. *Impressions*, therefore, are our lively and strong perceptions; *ideas* are the fainter and weaker ones. This distinction is evident—as evident as the distinction between feeling and thinking.

Abs.6 The first proposition he puts forward is that all our ideas, or weak perceptions, are derived from our impressions, or strong perceptions. We can never think of anything we have not seen outside us or felt in our own minds. This proposition seems equivalent to the one Mr. *Locke* took such pains to establish, namely *that no ideas are innate*. But it may be noted, as an inaccuracy on the part of that famous philosopher, that he includes all our perceptions under the term "idea." In that sense it is false that we have no innate ideas. For it is evident that our stronger perceptions, or impressions, are innate, and that natural affec-

2 The three works are Locke's Essay, Malebranche's Search after Truth, and the Port-Royal Logic of Arnauld and Nicole.

tion, love of virtue, resentment, and all the other passions arise directly from nature. I am convinced that anyone who looked at the question in this light would easily be able to reconcile all parties. *Father Malebranche* would be at a loss to point to any thought of the mind that did not represent something it had felt beforehand, either internally or through the external senses. He would have to admit that however we may combine, mix, enlarge, and diminish our ideas, they are all derived from these sources. *Mr. Locke*, on the other hand, would readily acknowledge that all our passions are a kind of natural instinct, derived from nothing but the original constitution of the human mind.

Abs.7 Our author thinks that no discovery could have been more fortunate for settling all controversies about ideas than this one. Impressions always come before ideas, and every idea the imagination is furnished with first appears in a corresponding impression. These latter perceptions are all so clear and evident that they allow of no controversy. Many of our ideas, by contrast, are so obscure that it is almost impossible even for the mind that forms them to say exactly what their nature and composition are. Accordingly, wherever an idea is ambiguous, he always turns to the impression, which must make it clear and precise. And when he suspects that a philosophical term has no idea attached to it (as is all too common), he always asks, *From what impression is that supposed idea derived?* If no impression can be produced, he concludes that the term is completely meaningless. It is in this way that he examines our idea of *substance* and *essence*. One could wish that this rigorous method were practiced more in all philosophical debates.

Abs.8 It is evident that all reasonings concerning *matter of fact* are founded on the relation of cause and effect. We can never infer the existence of one object from another unless they are connected, either indirectly or directly. So in order to understand these reasonings, we must be thoroughly acquainted with the idea of a cause. To do that, we must look around us to find something that is the cause of something else.

THE BILLIARD BALLS

Hume analyzes one ball striking another to show that causal inference rests on custom.

Abs.9 Here is a billiard ball lying on the table, and another ball moving quickly toward it. They strike, and the ball that was at rest now acquires a motion. This is as perfect an instance of the relation of cause and effect as any we know, whether by sensation or reflection. Let us therefore examine it. It is evident that the two balls touched each other before the motion was communicated, and that there was no interval between the impact and the motion. *Contiguity* in time and place is therefore a necessary circumstance for the operation of all causes. It is evident likewise that the motion that was the cause comes before the motion that was the effect. *Priority* in time is therefore another necessary circumstance in every cause. But this is not all. Let us try any other balls of the same kind in a similar situation. We will always find that the impulse of one produces motion in the other. Here, then, is a *third* circumstance, namely a *constant conjunction* between the cause and the effect. Every object like the cause always produces some object like the effect. Beyond these three circumstances of contiguity, priority, and constant conjunction, I can discover nothing in this cause. The first ball is in motion; it touches the second; immediately the second is in motion. When I try the experiment with the same or similar balls, in the same or similar circumstances, I find that motion always follows in the one ball upon the motion and touch of the other. However I turn this matter around, and however I examine it, I can find nothing further.

Abs.10 This is how things stand when both the cause and the effect are present to the senses. Let us now see what our inference rests on when we conclude from the one that the other has existed or will exist. Suppose I see a ball moving in a straight line toward another. I immediately conclude that they will collide, and that the second will be set in motion. This is the infer-

ence from cause to effect. All our reasonings in the conduct of life are of this kind, all our belief in history rests on it, and all philosophy is derived from it, with the sole exceptions of geometry and arithmetic. If we can explain the inference from the collision of two balls, we will be able to account for this operation of the mind in every instance.

Abs.11 Suppose a man like *Adam* were created with his understanding in full vigor, but without experience. He would never be able to infer motion in the second ball from the motion and impulse of the first. It is not anything that reason sees in the cause that makes us *infer* the effect. Such an inference, if it were possible, would amount to a demonstration, since it would be founded merely on the comparison of ideas. But no inference from cause to effect amounts to a demonstration. Here is an evident proof of this. The mind can always *conceive* any effect following from any cause, and indeed any event following upon another. Whatever we *conceive* is possible, at least in a metaphysical sense. But wherever there is a demonstration, the contrary is impossible and implies a contradiction. There is, therefore, no demonstration of any conjunction of cause and effect. And this is a principle that philosophers generally accept.

Abs.12 So *Adam* (unless he was inspired) would have needed *experience* of the effect that followed the impact of these two balls. He must have seen, in several instances, that when one ball struck the other, the second always acquired motion. If he had seen enough instances of this kind, then whenever he saw one ball moving toward the other he would always conclude without hesitation that the second would acquire motion. His understanding would run ahead of his sight and form a conclusion suited to his past experience.

Abs.13 It follows, then, that all reasonings concerning cause and effect are founded on experience, and that all reasonings from experience are founded on the supposition that the course of nature will continue uniformly the same. We conclude that like causes, in like circumstances, will always produce like effects. It

may now be worthwhile to consider what leads us to form a conclusion of such infinite consequence.

Abs.14 It is evident that *Adam*, with all his knowledge, would never have been able to *demonstrate* that the course of nature must continue uniformly the same, and that the future must conform to the past. What is possible can never be demonstrated to be false. And it is possible that the course of nature may change, since we can conceive such a change. Indeed, I will go further and assert that he could not even prove by any *probable* arguments that the future must conform to the past. All probable arguments are built on the supposition that the future and the past conform in this way, and so they can never prove it. This conformity is a *matter of fact*, and if it has to be proved, it admits of no proof except from experience. But our past experience can prove nothing about the future except on the supposition that the two resemble each other. This, then, is a point that admits of no proof at all, and that we take for granted without any proof.

Abs.15 It is custom alone that determines us to suppose the future conforms to the past. When I see a billiard ball moving toward another, my mind is immediately carried by habit to the usual effect, and runs ahead of my sight by conceiving the second ball in motion. There is nothing in these objects, considered abstractly and independently of experience, that leads me to form any such conclusion. And even after I have experienced many repeated effects of this kind, there is no argument that determines me to suppose the effect will conform to past experience. The powers by which bodies operate are entirely unknown. We perceive only their sensible qualities. And what *reason* do we have to think that the same powers will always be conjoined with the same sensible qualities?

Abs.16 It is not reason, then, that is the guide of life, but custom. Custom alone determines the mind, in every instance, to suppose the future conforms to the past. However easy this step may seem, reason would never, in all eternity, be able to take it.

Abs.17 This is a very curious discovery, but it leads us to others that are more curious still. *When I see a billiard ball moving toward another, my mind is immediately carried by habit to the usual effect, and runs ahead of my sight by conceiving the second ball in motion.* But is this all? Do I do nothing but conceive the motion of the second ball? Surely not. I also believe that it will move. What, then, is this *belief*? And how does it differ from the simple conception of anything? Here is a new question that philosophers have never thought of.

Abs.18 When a demonstration convinces me of a proposition, it not only makes me conceive the proposition but also makes me aware that it is impossible to conceive anything contrary to it. What is demonstratively false implies a contradiction, and what implies a contradiction cannot be conceived. But with regard to any matter of fact, however strong the proof from experience may be, I can always conceive the contrary, though I cannot always believe it. Belief, therefore, makes some difference between the conception we assent to and the one we do not.

Abs.19 There are only two hypotheses that could account for this. It may be said that belief joins some new idea to those we can conceive without assenting to them. But this hypothesis is false. *First*, no such idea can be produced. When we simply conceive an object, we conceive it in all its parts. We conceive it as it might exist, though we do not believe it exists. Believing in it would reveal no new qualities. We can picture the entire object in imagination without believing it. We can set it, so to speak, before our eyes, with every circumstance of time and place. It is the very object, conceived as it might exist; and when we believe it, we can do no more.

Abs.20 *Second*, the mind has a faculty of joining together any ideas that do not involve a contradiction. So if belief consisted in some idea that we add to the simple conception, a person would have it in his power, by adding this idea to it, to believe anything he can conceive.

Abs.21 Belief, then, implies a conception and yet is something more, and it adds no new idea to the conception. It follows that

it is a different manner of conceiving an object: *something* distinguishable to the feeling, and not dependent on our will, as all our ideas are. My mind runs by habit from the visible object of one ball moving toward another to the usual effect of motion in the second ball. It not only conceives that motion but also *feels* something in the conception of it that differs from a mere reverie of the imagination. The presence of this visible object, together with the constant conjunction of that particular effect, makes the idea different to the *feeling* from those loose ideas that come into the mind without any introduction. This conclusion seems a little surprising, but we are led to it by a chain of propositions that admit of no doubt. To ease the reader's memory, I will briefly recap them. No matter of fact can be proved except from its cause or its effect. Nothing can be known to be the cause of another thing except by experience. We can give no reason for extending our past experience to the future. We are entirely determined by custom when we conceive an effect as following from its usual cause. But we also believe that an effect will follow, as well as conceive it. This belief joins no new idea to the conception. It only varies the manner of conceiving, and makes a difference to the feeling or sentiment. Belief, therefore, in all matters of fact arises only from custom, and is an idea conceived in a peculiar *manner*.

Abs.22 Our author goes on to explain the manner, or feeling, that makes belief different from a loose conception. He seems aware that this feeling cannot be described in words, though everyone must be conscious of it in his own breast. He sometimes calls it a *stronger* conception, sometimes a more *lively*, a more *vivid*, a *firmer*, or a more *intense* conception. And indeed, whatever name we give to this feeling that constitutes belief, our author thinks it evident that it has a more forceful effect on the mind than fiction and mere conception. He proves this by its influence on the passions and on the imagination, which are moved only by truth or by what is taken to be truth. Poetry, with all its art, can never produce a passion like one in real life. It

falls short in the original conception of its objects, which never *feel* the same way as those that command our belief and opinion.

Abs.23 Our author presumes he has sufficiently proved that the ideas we assent to feel different from other ideas, and that this feeling is firmer and livelier than our ordinary conception. He next tries to explain the cause of this lively feeling by an analogy with other acts of the mind. His reasoning seems curious, but it could hardly be made intelligible to the reader, or at least probable, without a long and detailed account, which would go beyond the limits I have set myself.

Abs.24 I have likewise omitted many arguments he offers to prove that belief consists merely in a peculiar feeling or sentiment. I will mention only one. Our past experience is not always uniform. Sometimes one effect follows from a cause, sometimes another. In that case we always believe that the most common one will occur. I see a billiard ball moving toward another. I cannot tell whether it is spinning on its axis or was struck so as to skim along the table. In the first case, I know it will not stop after the collision. In the second, it may stop. The first is the most common, and so I count on that effect. But I also conceive the other effect, and conceive it as possible and as connected with the cause. If the one conception did not differ from the other in feeling or sentiment, there would be no difference between them.

Abs.25 Throughout this whole reasoning we have confined ourselves to the relation of cause and effect as it is discovered in the motions and operations of matter. But the same reasoning extends to the operations of the mind. Consider the influence of the will either in moving our body or in governing our thought. Either way, it can safely be affirmed that without experience we could never predict the effect merely by considering the cause. And even after we have experience of these effects, it is custom alone, not reason, that determines us to make that experience the standard of our future judgments. When the cause is presented, the mind, from habit, immediately passes to the conception and belief of the usual effect. This belief is something different

from the conception. It does not, however, join any new idea to it. It only makes the conception felt differently, and makes it stronger and more lively.

Abs.26 Having dealt with this important point about the nature of the inference from cause and effect, our author retraces his steps and examines the idea of that relation afresh. In considering motion communicated from one ball to another, we could find nothing but contiguity, priority in the cause, and constant conjunction. But besides these circumstances, it is commonly supposed that there is a necessary connection between the cause and the effect, and that the cause possesses something we call a *power*, or *force*, or *energy*. The question is: what idea is attached to these terms? If all our ideas or thoughts are derived from our impressions, this power must reveal itself either to our senses or to our internal feeling. But so little does any *power* reveal itself to the senses in the operations of matter that the *Cartesians* have had no qualms about asserting that matter is utterly devoid of energy, and that all its operations are performed merely by the energy of the supreme Being. But the question still comes back: *What idea do we have of energy or power even in the supreme Being?* Our whole idea of a Deity (according to those who deny innate ideas) is nothing but a compound of the ideas we acquire from reflecting on the operations of our own minds. Now our own minds give us no more notion of energy than matter does. When we consider our will or volition *a priori*, in abstraction from experience, we are never able to infer any effect from it. And when we call on experience for help, it only shows us objects that are contiguous, successive, and constantly conjoined. On the whole, then, there are two possibilities. Either we have no idea at all of force and energy, and these words are entirely meaningless, or they can mean nothing but that determination of thought, acquired by habit, to pass from the cause to its usual effect. But whoever wants to understand this thoroughly must consult the author himself. It is enough if I can make the learned world see that there is some difficulty here,

and that whoever solves it must say something very new and extraordinary—as new as the difficulty itself.

Abs.27 From all that has been said, the reader will easily see that the philosophy contained in this book is very skeptical, and tends to give us a sense of the imperfections and narrow limits of human understanding. Almost all reasoning is there reduced to experience. And the belief that accompanies experience is explained as nothing but a peculiar sentiment, or lively conception produced by habit. Nor is this all. When we believe anything about *external* existence, or suppose an object to exist a moment after it is no longer perceived, this belief is nothing but a sentiment of the same kind. Our author dwells on several other skeptical topics, and on the whole concludes that we assent to our faculties and employ our reason only because we cannot help it. Philosophy would make us entirely *Pyrrhonian*, if nature were not too strong for it.

Abs.28 I will conclude this author's logic with an account of two opinions that seem to be peculiar to him, as indeed most of his opinions are. He asserts that the soul, as far as we can conceive it, is nothing but a system or train of different perceptions: those of heat and cold, love and anger, thoughts and sensations. These are all united together, but without any perfect simplicity or identity. *Descartes* maintained that thought was the essence of the mind—not this thought or that thought, but thought in general. This seems absolutely unintelligible, since everything that exists is particular. And so it must be our various particular perceptions that compose the mind. I say *compose* the mind, not *belong* to it. The mind is not a substance in which the perceptions inhere. That notion is as unintelligible as the *Cartesian* one, that thought or perception in general is the essence of the mind. We have no idea of substance of any kind. We have no idea that is not derived from some impression, and we have no impression of any substance, either material or spiritual. We know nothing but particular qualities and perceptions. Our idea of any body—a peach, for instance—is only that of a particular taste, color, shape, size, consistency, *etc.* In the same way, our

idea of any mind is only that of particular perceptions, without the notion of anything we call substance, either simple or compound.

Abs.29 The second principle I proposed to mention concerns geometry. Having denied the infinite divisibility of extension, our author finds himself obliged to refute the mathematical arguments that have been offered for it; and these are indeed the only arguments of any weight. He does this by denying that geometry is a science exact enough to admit of conclusions as subtle as those regarding infinite divisibility. His arguments may be explained as follows. All geometry is founded on the notions of equality and inequality. So the science itself will admit of great exactness only if we have an exact standard of those relations. Now there is an exact standard of equality if we suppose that quantity is composed of indivisible points. Two lines are equal when the numbers of points composing them are equal, and when for each point in one there is a corresponding point in the other. But though this standard is exact, it is useless, since we can never count the number of points in any line. Besides, it is founded on the supposition of finite divisibility, and so can never yield any conclusion against it. If we reject this standard of equality, we have none with any claim to exactness. I find two that are commonly used. Two lines longer than a yard, for instance, are said to be equal when they contain some smaller quantity, such as an inch, an equal number of times. But this runs in a circle. The quantity we call an inch in the one is supposed to be *equal* to what we call an inch in the other. So the question remains: by what standard do we proceed when we judge them equal? Or, in other words, what do we mean when we say they are equal? If we take still smaller quantities, we go on *in infinitum*. So this is no standard of equality. Most philosophers, when asked what they mean by equality, say that the word admits of no definition, and that it is enough to place two equal bodies before us, such as two diameters of a circle, to make us understand the term. Now this is taking the *general appearance* of the objects as the standard of that proportion, and

it makes our imagination and senses its ultimate judges. But such a standard admits of no exactness, and can never yield any conclusion contrary to the imagination and senses. Whether this reasoning is sound or not must be left to the learned world to judge. It would certainly be desirable to hit on some means of reconciling philosophy and common sense, which have waged the cruelest wars with each other over the question of infinite divisibility.

THE PASSIONS AND FREE WILL

The Abstract sketches the account of pride, the doctrine of necessity, and the association of ideas.

Abs.30 We must now go on to give some account of the second volume of this work, which treats of the passions. It is easier to understand than the first, but contains opinions just as new and extraordinary. The author begins with *pride* and *humility*. He observes that the objects that excite these passions are very numerous, and seemingly very different from one another. Pride or self-esteem may arise from qualities of the mind: wit, good sense, learning, courage, integrity. It may arise from those of the body: beauty, strength, agility, a fine bearing, skill in dancing, riding, fencing. And it may arise from external advantages: country, family, children, relatives, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, clothes. He then goes on to find the common circumstance in which all these objects agree, and which causes them to act on the passions. His theory likewise extends to love and hatred, and to other affections. These questions are curious, but they could not be made intelligible without a long discussion, so we will omit them here.

Abs.31 It may perhaps be more welcome to the reader to learn what our author says about *free will*. He has laid the foundation of his doctrine in what he said about cause and effect, as explained above. It is universally acknowledged that the operations of external bodies are necessary. In the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and in their mutual cohesion,

there is not the slightest trace of indifference or liberty.—Whatever, therefore, is on the same footing as matter in this respect must be acknowledged to be necessary. To find out whether this is the case with the actions of the mind, we may examine matter. We may consider what the idea of necessity in its operations is founded on, and why we conclude that one body or action is the infallible cause of another.

Abs.32 It has already been observed that in no single instance can the ultimate connection of any objects be discovered, either by our senses or by reason. We can never penetrate so far into the essence and construction of bodies as to perceive the principle on which their mutual influence is founded. It is only their constant union that we are acquainted with. And it is from the constant union that the necessity arises, when the mind is determined to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and to infer the existence of one from that of the other. Here, then, are two particulars that we must regard as essential to necessity, namely the constant *union* and the *inference* of the mind. Wherever we discover these, we must acknowledge a necessity. Now nothing is more evident than the constant union of particular actions with particular motives. Not all actions are constantly united with their proper motives. But this uncertainty is no more than what may be observed every day in the actions of matter, where the effect is often variable and uncertain because the causes are mixed and uncertain. Thirty grains of opium will kill any man who is not accustomed to it, though thirty grains of rhubarb will not always purge him. In the same way, the fear of death will always make a man go twenty paces out of his way, though it will not always make him do a bad action.

Abs.33 There is often a constant conjunction of the actions of the will with their motives. And so the inference from the one to the other is often as certain as any reasoning about bodies, and there is always an inference proportioned to the constancy of the conjunction. On this are founded our belief in witnesses, our trust in history, and indeed all kinds of moral evidence, and almost the whole conduct of life.

Abs.34 Our author claims that this reasoning puts the whole controversy in a new light by giving a new definition of necessity. And indeed, the most zealous advocates of free will must grant this union and inference with regard to human actions. They will only deny that this makes up the whole of necessity. But then they must show that we have an idea of something else in the actions of matter—which, according to the foregoing reasoning, is impossible.

Abs.35 Throughout this whole book there are great claims to new discoveries in philosophy. But if anything can entitle the author to so glorious a name as that of an *inventor*, it is the use he makes of the principle of the association of ideas, which enters into most of his philosophy. Our imagination has great authority over our ideas. There are no ideas different from each other that it cannot separate, join, and compose into all the varieties of fiction. But despite the imagination's sovereignty, there is a secret tie or union among particular ideas. This tie causes the mind to conjoin them more frequently, and makes the one, when it appears, introduce the other. From this arises what we call the *apropos* of conversation; from this, the connectedness of writing; and from this, that thread or chain of thought that a person naturally keeps up even in the loosest *reverie*. These principles of association are reduced to three. *Resemblance*: a picture naturally makes us think of the man it was drawn of. *Contiguity*: when *St. Denis* is mentioned, the idea of *Paris* naturally occurs. *Causation*: when we think of the son, we are apt to turn our attention to the father. It will be easy to see how vastly important these principles must be in the science of human nature, if we consider that, as far as the mind is concerned, these are the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object outside ourselves. It is only by means of thought that anything acts on our passions, and these are the only ties of our thoughts. So they are really *to us* the cement of the universe, and all the operations of the mind must, to a great extent, depend on them.