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Reid and Hume: the dispute over skepticism

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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Reid a Hume: spor o skepticismus

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that the thesis is an original work written by myself, except where due references are made in the text. The thesis was not used to obtain any other title, degree, or diploma.

Date: .... Signature: ....

Acknowledgement:

Words cannot express my gratitude to my supervisor, PhDr. Tomáš Kunca, Ph.D., for his invaluable patience and feedback. I could not have undertaken this journey without him. I am also grateful to my friend Vlad for support and assistance throughout my academic journey. Without his guidance and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this thesis. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my friend David for editing this thesis; his meticulous attention to detail and insightful suggestions have greatly improved the quality of my work. Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my mom who gave me the opportunity to study abroad and my husband who was always there for me. Their belief in me has kept my spirits and motivation high during this process.

Abstract:

This bachelor thesis is designed to examine the meaning of skepticism in David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) and to analyze the criticism of his skepticism by Thomas Reid in his work *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense.* The thesis focuses on the key arguments of both philosophers, analyzes the concept of skepticism, and compares their philosophical positions with the intention of better comprehending the substance of the discussion. For the approach for this analysis I chose to highlight Reid's key points on Hume's skepticism and the critique of the ideal system, and to therefore outline Hume's skepticism in his *Enquiry*.

The first part of this thesis focuses primarily on Thomas Reid and his philosophical stance on common sense. It helps us understand why Reid does not agree with the ideal system and why he criticizes Hume's view. The second part revolves around Hume's skepticism and its main arguments. Therefore, it gives us an insight into the opposite of Reid's position. Finally, the third part ties it all together, providing a comparative analysis of the views on skepticism of these two philosophers, resulting in a better understanding of the main points of dispute.

Keywords: skepticism, ideal system, idea, David Hume, Thomas Reid, common sense

Abstrakt v českém jazyce:

Bakalářská práce zkoumá pojetí skepticismu u Davida Huma a analyzuje kritiku Humeova skepticismu od Thomase Reida v jeho díle *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*. Práce se zaměřuje na klíčové argumenty obou filozofů, provádí rozbor pojetí skepticismu a srovnává jejich filozofické postoje s cílem lépe porozumět jádru sporu o skepticismus. Přístupem použitým pro tuto analýzu je vyzdvihnout Reidovy klíčové body Humova skepticismu a kritiky ideálního systému a ukázat Humův skepticismus v jeho *Enquiry*.

První část této práce se zaměřuje především na Thomase Reida a jeho filozofický postoj zdravého rozumu. Pomáhá nám to pochopit, proč Reid nesouhlasí s ideálním systémem a kritizuje Humeův názor. Druhá část se věnuje Humeovu skepticismu a jeho hlavním argumentům, pro porozumění těch dvou pozic. V závěrečné třetí části dochází k porovnání dvou filozofů, což vede ke pochopení hlavních bodů sporu.

Klíčová slova: skepticismus, "ideal system", idea, David Hume, Thomas Reid, zdravý rozum

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Introduction

The problem of objectivity of human knowledge has existed since the origins of philosophy, and it has scientific and cultural significance. Every person has the need to search for objectivity and a critical assessment of knowledge. Critical reflection is necessary to determine truth and falsity, likelihood, and necessity in changing cultural and social contexts. It is believed that philosophical skepticism is opposed to intuitive belief in the existence of an external world, consciousness in other people, and objective criteria for distinguishing between good and evil. The skeptic argues that intuitive evidence cannot be knowledge in the strict sense.

The purpose of this work is to shed light on the position of skepticism and its criticism. As the subject of research for this thesis, I chose the work of one of the most famous skeptical philosophers, David Hume, and his book *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. To highlight the counterpoint to his arguments, I used *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* by Thomas Reid, which is full of criticism of skepticism.

The evaluation will be completed by first defining Reid's position on skepticism, followed by examining Hume's skeptical stance. Their positions then will serve as the foundation for the final part of this thesis, which is a comparison of these two views. To note, I will not declare either philosopher's stance to be correct or incorrect. Instead, the examination and analysis is the main goal of this thesis.

Notes

To enhance readability and efficiency, I have opted to employ abbreviations for the titles of books referenced throughout this work. Below is a guide to the abbreviations utilized:

- Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, United States: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997 = Reid, IHM.
- Paul Wood, "Thomas Reid and the Common Sense School," in *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century Volume I: Morals, Politics, Art, Religion*, ed. Aaron Garrett and James A. Harris, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 = Wood, TRCSS.
- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by P. Millican Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 = Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican.
- Millican, Peter. "Hume's Sceptical Doubts Concerning Induction." In Peter Millican (Ed.), *Reading Hume on Human Understanding*, Cambridge University Press, 2006 = = P. Millican, RHHU.
- Fogelin, R. J. "Hume's Skepticism." In David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press, 2009 = Fogelin in Norton & Taylor (Eds.), TCCH.
- David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 = Hume, EHU.
- HUME, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 = = T.
- David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 = Hume, EHU ed. by Tom L. Beauchamp.

Note on Style

I have retained all direct quotes in their original language so the translation does not compromise comprehension.

Section I: Reid's Philosophical Standpoint

This opening section concentrates on Thomas Reid and his philosophical perspective. By closely working with the primary text, A*n Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, I point out the arguments that criticize or contradict skepticism. Additionally, to highlight Reid's philosophical perspective, I have divided this section into different parts to promote focus and deeper understanding of each key point. The section ends with conclusions that provide a comprehensive summary.

1.1 Common Sense vs. Idealism

Reid posits particular emphasis on the concept of the ideal system, highlighting its implications for the philosophical framework. The ideal system proposes that simple apprehension precedes judgment, belief, or knowledge. These arise only after comparing and perceiving agreements or disagreements between the simple apprehensions. Reid disagrees with this sequence, describing it as "fiction"[1] without basis in nature. He argues that, in certain cases, "...sensation must go before memory and imagination; and hence it necessarily follows, that apprehension accompanied with belief and knowledge, must go before simple apprehension."[2] By challenging the notion that simple apprehension precedes belief, judgment, or knowledge, Reid introduces an alternative perspective that highlights the importance of intuitive judgment and innate beliefs in shaping our understanding of the world. He suggests that the process of rationally observing something, without endorsing or disapproving anything about it, is actually "performed by resolving and analyzing a natural and original judgment,"[3] rather than being derived from comparing simple apprehensions. In other words, the mind's initial engagement with ideas involves judgment and belief, and the process of breaking down or analyzing these judgments leads to simple apprehension. To illustrate his point, Reid draws an analogy between mental operations and natural bodies. He argues that, akin to how nature presents elements "mixed and compounded in concrete bodies"[4], the mind's operations involve a complex interplay of judgment, belief, and simple apprehension.

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[1] Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, United States: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 29.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

This departure from the ideal system reflects Reid's commitment to a more experiential and empirically grounded approach to philosophy, one that emphasizes the role of common sense and practical wisdom in human cognition.

1.2 The Primacy of Common Sense in Reid's Philosophy

By arguing for the primacy of intuitive judgment and innate beliefs, Reid undermines the idealists' sequence of mental operations. He states:

> Such original and natural judgements are therefore a part of that furniture which nature hath given to the human understanding…They serve to direct us in the common affairs of life, where our reasoning faculty would leave us in the dark. They are part of our constitution, and all the discoveries of our reason are grounded upon them. They make up what is called *the common sense of mankind*.[5]

To show his rejection of the new system and his opposite position, he continues by saying that "what is manifestly contrary to any of those first principles, is what we call *absurd.*" [6] Reid underscores the significance of common sense in philosophical inquiry, asserting, "These facts are phenomena of human nature, from which we may justly argue against any hypothesis, however generally received."[7] He suggests that philosophical hypotheses should align with observable phenomena and common-sense understanding. Reid acknowledges that common sense principles are non-negotiable in his philosophy when he states he would "give up all pretence to reconcile reason to common sense."[8] In essence, Reid argues that any philosophical system must align with the aforementioned common-sense principles to be considered reasonable and valid. If a system contradicts these principles, as he suggests the ideal system does, then it cannot be reconciled with reason. This highlights the epistemic priority that Reid assigns to common sense, viewing it as a reliable guide in evaluating philosophical hypotheses. Furthermore, Reid's position is consistent with a larger philosophical belief that common sense protects against both radical philosophical skepticism and skepticism in general. Reid aims to create a strong basis for philosophical inquiry that is

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[5] Reid, IHM, p. 215.
[6] Reid, IHM, ibid.
[7] Reid, IHM, p.76.
[8] Reid, IHM, p.70.

deeply established in our everyday experience and intuition about the universe by aligning his arguments with common sense.

1.3 First Principles and Critique of Reductionism

In examining Reid's emphasis on the principles of common sense, it becomes evident that he advocates for a more intuitive and experiential approach to understanding human cognition, stating, "All reasoning must be from first principles; and for first principles no other reason can be given but this, that, by the constitution of our nature, we are under a necessity of assenting to them."[9] This portrayal contrasts sharply with previous philosophers such as Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke,[10] who provided ideas with "decent accommodation"[11] and treated them as representatives of things. Reid emphasizes the consequences of rejecting the Peripatetic system while retaining the principles of ideas, stating:

> For such things on the principles we are now supposing, can neither operate upon us, nor we upon them. They cannot be immediate objects of thought because they are not present ideas; nor can they be mediate objects of thought because our ideas & minds are no ways connected with them.[12]

This argument underscores the implications of adopting certain philosophical frameworks. In this case, the rejection of the Peripatetic system in favor of the principles of ideas leads to a drastic narrowing of the intellectual world. If perception and memory are reduced to mere consciousness of present ideas, then our understanding of the world becomes severely constrained. Building on this point, Reid argues, "if we will resolve perception & memory into consciousness of present ideas, we must necessarily exclude from the intellectual world every thing which we are not presently conscious of."[13] This reductionism not only limits our understanding of the world but also raises questions about the nature of reality itself.

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[9] Reid, IHM, p. 71.

[10] Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Locke: These philosophers represent key figures in early modern philosophy. René Descartes is known for his dualism, which posited the existence of both material and immaterial substances. For more information on Descartes, see René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. For more information on Malebranche, see Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*. For more information on Locke, see John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

[11] Reid, IHM, p. 35.

[12] Reid, IHM, p.313.

[13] Reid, IHM, p.313.

Moreover, when we limit the scope of our intellectual world in this way, we risk missing the relationship between phenomena and the larger context of our experience. Reid criticizes the separation of the medium of perception from external objects. He writes:

> For it is evident, that if a medium is at all necessary, it must lay hold on both the mind & object & pass all the way between them without any chasm or interruption, otherwise it remains as impossible for the mind & object to affect each other, as if there was no medium at all.[14]

By highlighting the necessity of a medium that links the mind and the object of perception, Reid challenges the validity of philosophical frameworks that detach the medium from external objects. This separation, Reid argues, creates a significant gap that undermines the fundamental interaction between the mind and the external world. He uses the analogy of holding a ship at anchor, explaining,

> That the mind & object should act upon each other by means of an idea which is in the mind only, is as absurd as it would be to pretend to hold a ship at anchor by the medium of a cable which is not tyed to the anchor, but yes coyled up in the hold.[15]

This analogy vividly illustrates the nonsense of the separation between the mind and external objects within the ideal system. He emphasizes the profound implications of this separation by suggesting that it reduces all aspects of reality to mere impressions and ideas, devoid of any substantive existence.

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[14] Reid, IHM, p. 312.
[15] Ibid.

1.4 Reid's Critique of the Material World as a Reflection of Sensations

Reid acknowledges that people have certain beliefs that are inherent to human nature. In his words,

> …All mankind have a fixed belief of an external material world, a belief which is neither got by reasoning nor education, and a belief which we cannot shake off, even when we seem to have strong arguments against it, and no shadow of argument for it, is likewise a fact, for which we have all the evidence that the nature of the things admits.[16]

Stressing that this belief is not acquired through reasoning or education but is rather inherent to human nature, Reid challenges the notion that all knowledge is derived from sensory experience or rational reflection alone. Furthermore, the admission that this assumption endures despite opposing evidence emphasizes how resilient some parts of human cognition may be. This tenacity is a serious obstacle to philosophical skepticism, which questions the veracity of our claims to knowledge. By asserting the persistence of belief in an external world despite philosophical doubts, skepticism may fail to fully account for the complexity and robustness of human cognitive processes. Reid's emphasis on the universal acceptance of the external material world suggests that skepticism, which questions the existence of such a world, faces significant hurdles in undermining deeply rooted beliefs. This resilience to skepticism indicates that human cognition operates within a framework that includes foundational beliefs about the external world, resisting radical skepticism's attempts to dissolve these beliefs. Therefore, Reid's recognition of the fixed belief in an external world poses a challenge to extreme skeptical positions that seek to undermine the certainty of our knowledge about reality.

Reid disagrees with the view that every object of thought must come from an impression or idea, although this belief is widespread in philosophical discourse. In discussing the existence of the material world, there is an assumption that is supported by philosophers on both sides of the debate: "that this same material world, if any such there be, must be the express image of our sensations." [17] Reid criticizes the postulation that the material world must mirror our sensations. The argument is that *if* this assumption is true, *then* the philosophers'

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[16] Reid, IHM, p. 76.
[17] Reid, IHM, p. 69.

arguments are irrefutable. But if this is not the case, their argument falls apart. [18] His examination of this premise extends to his critique of the traditional view linking sensations of touch to direct representations of external qualities. His skepticism arises from his own introspection and comparison of sensations. He asserts, "I have as clear a conception of extension, hardness, and motion, as I have of the point of a sword; and, with some pains and practice, I can form as clear a notion of the other sensations of touch, as I have of pain." [19] Indeed, upon careful examination, Reid concludes that touch sensations do not correspond to the qualities they are supposed to represent. He argues, "When I do so, and compare them together, it appears to me clear as day-light, that the former are not of kin to the latter, nor resemble them in any one feature. They are as unlike, yea as certainly and manifestly unlike, as pain is to the point of a sword." [20] That means that the sensation of pain does not resemble the physical point of a sword. Similarly, sensations of touch do not resemble the material qualities of extension, hardness, or motion. Thus, he concludes that the philosophical arguments against the existence of a material world are based on a false hypothesis—that material qualities must be like sensations. He characterizes this assumption as an idol of the imagination of philosophers, asserting that "their proof touches not matter, or any of its qualities; but strikes directly against an idol of their own imagination, a material world made of ideas and sensations, which never had nor can have an existence." [21] He states that philosophers have erred by placing too much faith in this assumption without solid proof. Moreover, Reid highlights that "the very existence of our conceptions of extension, figure, and motion, since they are neither ideas of sensation nor reflection, overturns the whole ideal system, by which the material world hath been tried and condemned." [22] This undermines the ideal system that tries to reduce the material world to mere ideas or sensations. He says that if these material qualities are not ideas of sensation, then the ideal system fails. He links the existence of our conceptions of these qualities to common sense, saying:

> The conception of extension, motion, and the other attributes of matter, cannot be the
> effect of error or prejudice; it must be the work of nature. And the power or faculty, by

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid
[21] Ibid
[22] Ibid.

which we acquire those conceptions, must be something different from any power of the human mind that hath been explained, since it is neither sensation nor reflection.[23]

This criticism illuminates how Reid questions the very nature of ideas. Having shown his skepticism about the correspondence between sensations and external qualities, this prior section provides a framework for understanding his broader critique of philosophical theories about ideas.

1.5 Reid's exploration of the of ideas

Thomas Reid states that he is "as much at a loss to conceive the use of ideas as the nature of them."[24] He cannot understand what these ideas are supposed to be, other than mere thoughts themselves. This position is directed at the philosophical tradition that holds that ideas are intermediate entities between the mind and the objects it perceives or thinks about. He rejects this notion, arguing that all objects of thought are immediate; when we think of something, it immediately becomes the object of our thought, without the need for an intermediate idea. [25] Reid argues that it is illogical to assert that we cannot think about something without thinking about it. He considers "this is not philosophy, it is trifleing." [26] The concept of ideas does not clarify their nature, nor their necessity. If an idea is to be the object of thought, Reid argues, then we are not thinking about the thing itself but simply about its idea. [27] This means that the mind never directly interacts with a real object, which Reid considers nonsensical.

Reid critiques the explanations provided by other philosophers regarding the nature of ideas. He asserts, "The existence of ideas in the mind which are images or representations of all external and past objects of thought has been taken for granted, without any solemn proof by all the Philosophers I am acquainted with." [28] Reid argues that terms like "picture," "image," or "representation" are inadequate and unnecessary, as they don't clarify the concept but rather add unnecessary complexity.[29] Reid questions the nature of images or representatives of things, particularly in the context of the phantasm of a smell. He expresses skepticism about the idea that this phantasm exists in the mind as a picture, image, or

[23] Reid, IHM, p. 70.
[24] Reid, IHM, p. 306.
[25] Ibid.
[26] ibid
[27] ibid
[28] Reid, IHM, p. 307.
[29] Reid, IHM, p. 306.

representation of a smell. Reid argues that, "If this phantasm of a smell do presently exist in my mind, I ought to be acquainted with it, no less than I am with the smell itself when I have the sensation of it." [30] He questions the existence and nature of the supposed smell phantom in the mind. If such a representation does exist, he argues that people would be aware of it in the same way that they are aware of the actual sensation of smell. However, upon careful examination, Reid "can neither find it in my mind, nor form a conception, what kind of thing it is."[31] He criticizes the explanation of a phantom as a picture or image, arguing that such terms provide no additional insight. Reid insists that the concept of smell is limited to the actual sensory perception of the smell itself.[32] Thus, Reid concludes:

> If any one should say that the philosophers mean no more by the idea of smell, but the thought of it, that is, the act of the mind by which we remember or imagine it; this I understand perfectly; but why so many hard words of ideas, species, representations and images, to express improperly what every man understands and can express in plain english.[33]

Reid contends that "It is a fundamental principle of the ideal system, That every object of thought must be an impression, or an idea, that is, a faint copy of some preceding impression." He disagrees with the notion that ideas are copies of impressions. In the letter to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, we can see Reid's direct criticism of the notion of ideas being copies of impressions. Reid argues that "there are many of our Ideas that do not seem to have had any preceding impressions of which they are copies. Space void of Body is a thing of which we can have no impression since it can neither be seen nor felt nor be the Object of any Sense." [34] In the second version of this manuscript, Reid extended the group of certain ideas that cannot be considered copies of any impressions. He asserts, "We have undoubtedly Ideas of Number Space Duration past & future Resemblance Identity Existence & many others which cannot be with any propriety called copys of any Impressions either of Sensation or Reflexion." [35] Reid further contends that it is unproductive to debate whether ideas are accurately described as images or copies of impressions. He states, "It is not worth while to dispute Whether Ideas are

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[30] Reid, IHM, p. 305.
[31] Ibid
[32] Ibid
[33] Reid, IHM, p. 306.
[34] Reid, IHM, p. 291.
[35] Reid, IHM, p. 294.

properly called Images or Copys of Impressions whether they resemble or are like them." [36] He emphasizes the unique nature of these ideas and argues against reasoning from other similitudes about the consequences of them. Reid says, "It must certainly be allowed that if an Idea be a copy of the object and has a Resemblance, it is a Resemblance sui generis, nor can we reason from the Consequences of other Similitudes to the consequence of this without shocking common Sense or abusing Language." [37] Reid underscores that ideas, such as the idea of a horse or heat, cannot possess the qualities of their corresponding objects. He explains, "The Idea of a horse is a Thought and can resemble a Horse onely as a thought can resemble a horse. The Idea of heat is not hot the Idea of Extension is not extended nor the Idea of colour coloured." [38] Moreover, Reid distinguishes between the ideas of pain and pleasure and the actual experiences of pain and pleasure. He states, "Pain & pleasure are real things. Yet can onely exist in a Mind capable of pleasure and pain. The Ideas of Pleasure and Pain are as different from the things as the Idea of Extension is from Extension." [39]

Furthermore, Reid draws an analogy between ideas and spirit, and impressions and body, to emphasize the point about their qualitative difference. The spirit and the body are completely different: one is about consciousness and thoughts, the other is about the physical world. Likewise, ideas and impressions are very different from each other. Ideas are our thoughts and ideas, and impressions are what we feel through our senses, such as sight or hearing. He states that "ideas are not like to impressions or copies of them, but differ from them as much as Spirit does from body." [40] This analogy shows us why it's problematic to think of ideas as mere copies of impressions.

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Reid, IHM, p. 291.

1.6 Reid's objections to the ambiguity of the term ' idea' in the ideal system

The fundamental principles of an ideal system define its terminology and concepts. However, when we study these terms, problems often arise due to the ambiguity of those keywords. For example, the concept of "*idea*," which plays an important role in many ideal systems, has different interpretations and does not have a clear definition. This uncertainty creates serious problems for the agreement and application of an ideal system because different interpretations of the "idea" can lead to contradictions in the understanding of the basic concepts of that system.

Reid's criticism delves into the various senses in which philosophers employ the term "idea," highlighting the ambiguity and lack of clarity it introduces into philosophical discourse. He begins his critique by elucidating the ambiguity inherent in the usage of the term "idea" among philosophers. Reid notes that philosophers often employ "idea" in multiple senses without clear distinction or definition, leading to confusion in the interpretation of their writings. He identifies four main senses in which the term "idea" is used, each contributing to the overall ambiguity surrounding its meaning.

Firstly, Reid challenges the notion that "idea" equates to mere thinking or remembering of something, saying that "to have the idea of any thing sometimes signifies no more than to think of it," [41] dismissing it as a linguistic embellishment devoid of substantive meaning. The author dismisses this usage as a pleonasm, emphasizing that in this context, ideas are mere linguistic embellishments without a distinct role in the mind: "In this sense of the word, ideas are not either the mediate of immediate objects of the mind. They are indeed nothing at all but an useless implement of speech."[42]

Secondly, Reid critiques the usage of "idea" as a general term to denote any object of thought, akin to words like "thing" or "object": "Thus I understand that common saying of philosophers, That words are the signs of ideas, For words are surely the signs of every thing we think about."[43] He contends that this broad usage fails to capture the distinct nature of ideas and serves only as a nominal designation without contributing to a deeper understanding of mental operations: "Thus mind is the sign of a thinking being; Sun, the sign of that vast globe which enlightens our planetary system." [44] Reid's critique suggests a skepticism towards this

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[41] Reid, IHM, p. 314.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

reductionist view of mental phenomena and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding regarding the nature of ideas.

Thirdly, Reid examines the conception of "idea" as representing what one conceives or comprehends about an object, distinct from the entire nature of that object: "...where my idea of Pekin is when I take the word in this sense. I answer it is in China, or wherever the object is & it cannot be otherwise, for it is a part of the object or something belonging to it." [45] The author contends that this kind of idea is located wherever the object itself is situated: "My idea of an object often signifies what I conceive or comprehend of it as distinguished from the whole nature of that Object."[46]

Lastly, Reid challenges the notion of "idea" as applied to objects of thought that have no real existence, often termed "creatures of the mind." [47] He argues that while the word is often used to refer to mental constructs or images, such as the ideal commonwealths of Utopia or Oceana, these constructs have no real existence outside of the mind.[48] Reid suggests that, while these ideas may exist as thoughts, they do not have a tangible or independent existence.

All things considered, Reid's criticism challenges long-held beliefs about the nature of cognition and knowledge. Reid's critique provides a route towards a more complex and all-encompassing understanding of mental events and their implications for philosophical discourse by drawing attention to the ambiguity in the term "idea" and calling for clearer and more precise use of terminology in philosophical discourse to avoid confusion and misinterpretation..

1.7 The Inductive Principle and Dual Pathways of Knowledge

Reid recognizes that there are two ways in which knowledge reaches the mind: "the perception of external things by our senses, and the information which we receive upon human testimony."[49] The author argues that both perception and testimony involve signs, which always suggest the thing they signify and create belief in. [50] Reid distinguishes between original innate perceptions and acquired perceptions learned through experience. Similarly, he distinguishes between natural language and artificially learned language. For acquired

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[45] Reid, IHM, p. 315.
[46] Reid, IHM, ibid.
[47] Reid, IHM, ibid.
[48] Reid, IHM, ibid.
[49] Reid, IHM, p. 190
[50] Reid, IHM, p. 191

perceptions and artificial language, Reid posits that humans learn to associate signs with their meanings through experience. [51] This learning relies on both innate principles and previously acquired knowledge.

Furthermore, Reid proposes that belief in the continuity of natural laws arises from an instinctive principle of human nature, which he names the inductive principle:

> It is an instinctive prescience of the operations of nature, very like to that prescience of human actions which makes us rely upon the testimony of our fellow-creatures; and as, without the latter, we should be incapable of receiving information from men by language; so, without the former, we should be incapable of receiving the information of nature by means of experience.[52]

This principle is essential for interpreting natural signs and gaining knowledge from experience. Reid states that "all our knowledge of nature, beyond our original perceptions, is got by experience, and consists in the interpretation of natural signs."[53] According to Reid, this inductive principle links the sign to the thing signified, which makes us think that past experience dictates that certain events will follow others. He notes that this principle is the basis of all inductive and analogical reasoning, as well as our acquired perceptions. This is critical to our understanding of nature and the development of natural laws. Reid insists that we do not perceive actual causality or efficiency in natural causes. We only perceive a connection established by nature. [54] He further explains that "The constancy of nature's laws connects the sign with the thing signified, and, by the natural principle just now explained, we rely upon the continuance of the connections which experience hath discovered." [55] Thus, this connection forms the basis of our belief in the continuity of these connections.

Moreover, Reid touches on the topic of the association of ideas. He argues that by the inductive principle, "natural signs are not associated with the idea only, but with the belief of the things signified."[56] The association of ideas would mean simply remembering that two events were linked together in the past. But taking Reid's statement into account, it would mean that belief, as part of the inductive principle, implies a trust that this link is a reliable

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[51] Reid, IHM, ibid
[52] Reid, IHM, 198
[53] Reid, IHM, ibid
[54] Ibid.
[55] Reid, IHM, p. 199
[56] Ibid.

indicator of future occurrences. It's the difference between recalling an association and confidently expecting the association to hold true in the future. To illustrate his point, Reid gives the example of a child who learns that a pinprick hurts. [57] He explains that this belief is not simply an association between the ideas of "pin" and "pain," but an understanding of a natural connection that allows one to predict future events. Reid argues that the foresight that events will occur as they have in the past "is not the effect of reasoning, but of an original principle of human nature, which I have called the inductive principle."[58]

1.8 The Foundations of Reid's Common Sense Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment

To understand Reid's point of view, it is important to examine the origins of his thoughts. Paul Wood provides an overview of Reid's philosophy and its roots. He notes that Reid's philosophy arose within the significant intellectual movement of the 18th century known as the Scottish Enlightenment. This movement brought significant achievements to philosophy, science, and art. The Scottish Enlightenment emphasized the role of reason, experience, and the application of scientific principles to life. [59] Thomas Reid, one of the key figures in this movement, was educated and formed as a philosopher at Marischal College in Aberdeen. A significant influence on Reid was his regent, George Turnbull, a Scottish philosopher and theologian.[60] In his teachings, Turnbull stressed the importance of common sense in moral philosophy and Newton's approach to natural philosophy, which inspired Reid to adopt a similarly empirical approach to the study of the mind and perception. Reid drew extensively on the Newtonian corpus for the methodological weapons he used to counter the ideal system, it can clearly be seen when he "deployed Newton's strictures on hypotheses against the proponents of the theory of ideas, and he gave Newton's anti-hypotheticalism." [61] He believed that philosophical conjectures should not distort the empirical evidence provided by nature. Inspired by Newton's experiments with light, Reid proposed introspective experiments to demonstrate that our conceptions of extension, figure, and motion are not derived from ideas

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Paul Wood, "Thomas Reid and the Common Sense School," in *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century Volume I: Morals, Politics, Art, Religion*, ed. Aaron Garrett and James A. Harris, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 404.
[60] Wood, TRCSS, p. 405.
[61] Wood, TRCSS, p. 426.

of sensation or reflection. [62] This was intended to refute the ideal system and validate common sense beliefs about the external world.

Thomas Reid's philosophy is based on the idea of common sense. Reid argued that common sense is not just a subjective perception but a principle inherent in human nature. His ideas developed in the classrooms of the Royal and Marischal Colleges, when he gradually began to include discussions of common sense principles in his lectures. During lectures, Reid expressed rejection of the theory of ideas because "the theory contradicted common sense and led to absurd and irreligious consequences."[63]

The concept of common sense then spread to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and continued its development through printed publications. Reid's writings were part of the rise of common-sense philosophy. His *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* served as a response to skepticism and a defense of traditional religious beliefs. [64] Reid's *Inquiry* can be understood as an expression of the views of the Moderate Party within the Church of Scotland. The Moderates, like Reid, sought to defend religion from the problems caused by skepticism, especially rejecting the "ideal philosophy" promoted by Hume and other modern philosophers. Reid criticized the ideal system, pointing out that it was irrelevant to everyday life and undermined religion. According to P. Wood, in his *Inquiry*, "Reid sought to counter the irreligious consequences of Humean skepticism by illustrating the harmonious design exhibited by the faculties of the mind."[65]

Tom L. Beauchamp writes that in *An Inquiry into the Human Mind,* Reid primarily addresses Hume's philosophy. Reid believes Hume's philosophical failures stem from adhering to what he terms the "theory of ideas" or the "ideal theory," which posits that human thought and perception are mediated by ideas rather than directly engaging with objects and events. [66] According to Beauchamp, Reid challenges Hume's doctrine of impressions, arguing that it ruins "the connection between perceiver and perceived (real objects, events, and powers)," [67] leading to skepticism about the material world's existence. Beauchamp notes that instead of distinguishing between Hume's types of skepticism, Reid paid attention only to "Hume's view that philosophical reasoning reaches conclusions opposed to instinct and common belief."[68]

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[62] Wood, TRCSS, p. 427.
[63] Wood, TRCSS, p. 422.
[64] Wood, p. 425.
[65] Wood, p. 426.
[66] David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. xciv
[67] Hume, EHU ed. by Tom L. Beauchamp, p. xcv.
[68] Ibid.

Conclusions

Considering the points discussed above, it becomes apparent that Reid advocates for common-sense philosophy. This position supports innate beliefs and intuitive judgments as the basis of our perception of the world. They are beyond doubt and do not require further confirmation.

According to Reid, any philosophical system must align with common sense. Otherwise, it can lead us to radical skepticism and doubts about everything that surrounds us. He critiques the ideal system for its inaccuracy in philosophical discourse. Reid argues for a more direct and immediate understanding of perception and cognition when he questions the nature and necessity of ideas as intermediate entities between the mind and the objects of thought. His inductive principle lies in the cornerstone of his philosophy, linking the interpretation of natural signs with the belief in the continuity of natural laws.

It was in the intellectual context of the Scottish Enlightenment that Reid created his empirical, common-sense approach. It was intended to preserve traditional beliefs and everyday experiences. His philosophy remains a testament to the enduring importance of common sense and practical wisdom in solving the complex problems of human cognition and the external world.

Section II: Hume's Philosophical Standpoint

The following section focuses on David Hume's main ideas. As mentioned in the introduction, this analysis does not aim to judge or validate the truth of his arguments. Therefore, this section presents Hume's main skeptical arguments objectively, primarily relying on *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (ed. by P. Millican).

2.1 Skeptical Challenges to Perception in Hume's Philosophy

Hume acknowledges that some philosophers challenge the validity of our senses by pointing out situations in which they can be deceived or misled. He gives examples such as how an oar in water can appear bent or how the distance or angle at which we view an object can affect its appearance.[69] Looking at these examples, we can understand that we should not rely only on our feelings to see the truth. Hume argues that, despite this, these skeptics demonstrate how flawed our senses are, but they don't completely deny their value. Instead, he argues that:

> We must correct their evidence by reason and by considerations, derived from the nature of the medium, the distance of the object, and the disposition of the organ, in order to render them, within their sphere, the proper criteria of truth and falsehood.[70]

Hume appeals, despite the skeptics' arguments, to the innate human tendency to believe in the existence of an external world that exists independently of our perception. He describes this belief as "natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses."[71] This instinct is so strong that we often accept, without question, that the sensory images we perceive are direct representations of external objects.

He argues that our perceptions of external objects are mental images created by the mind, rather than direct contact with reality. Hume cites the example of a table: "But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration; it was, therefore, nothing but its image,

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[69] D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by P. Millican, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 110.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

which was present to the mind.[72] This suggests that what we perceive is an interpretation formed by our senses. Hume further argues that the senses act as vehicles for the transmission of these mental images but do not establish a direct connection with external objects. He notes: "The table, which we see, seems to diminish as we remove farther from it; but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration."[73] This difference highlights the complexity of perception and the role of interpretation. Hume challenges instinctive ideas about perception by recognizing the fallibility of our senses. He suggests: "So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses." [74] Hume recognizes that philosophical reasoning forces us to question our innate assumptions about the data provided by our senses. The abandonment of instinctive beliefs has consequences for philosophy because "philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed when she would justify this new system and obviate the cavils and objections of the sceptics." [75] The traditional confidence in the infallibility of our senses is no longer justified, as Hume states: "She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature, for that led us to a quite different system, which is acknowledged fallible and even erroneous." [76] However, Hume admits that it is difficult to provide convincing arguments that would support this new view, stating: "And to justify this pretended philosophical system, by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity." [77] Hume's studies highlight the problem of reconciling philosophical reasoning with our instinctive beliefs about the external world.

Hume questions the generally accepted idea that properties such as hardness or color exist independently of how we perceive them. Hume states:

It is universally allowed by modern enquirers that all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, &c. are merely secondary and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind.[78]

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[72] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 111.
[73] Ibid
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 112.

This claim undermines the difference between main and secondary qualities and implies that all experienced attributes are mental creations. Moreover, Hume criticizes the use of abstraction to preserve the concept of primary qualities. He argues that trying to give abstract concepts qualities - such as extension and concrete attributes - without a basis in reality leads to absurdity. Thus, if "any man try to conceive a triangle in general... and he will soon perceive the absurdity of all the scholastic notions with regard to abstraction and general ideas."[79] Hume doubts that abstract concepts can be the basis for understanding the external world. He makes philosophical arguments against the belief that the external world exists, arguing that it is contrary to both natural instinct and reason. He believes that using natural instinct to confirm the existence of the external world is not consistent with reason, and trying to justify this belief using reason is not consistent with natural instinct. He clarifies: "if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason, and if referred to reason, is contrary to natural instinct, and at the same time carries no rational evidence with it, to convince an impartial enquirer."[80] Moreover, he argues that if we assume that all sensations exist only in the mind, then belief in external existence is contrary to reason.

2.2 Skepticism and Its Limits

In addition to questioning sensory experience, Hume discusses skeptical objections to moral evidence and reasoning concerning matters of fact. Hume argues that there are two kinds: popular and philosophical. First are popular objections, which are derived from the everyday weaknesses of human understanding. Then follows philosophical objections, which arise from more profound inquiries. Hume argues that popular objections, such as the variability of human judgment or the contradictions in individual opinions, are weak and that "in common life, we reason every moment concerning fact and existence, and cannot possibly subsist, without continually employing this species of argument, any popular objections, derived from thence, must be insufficient to destroy that evidence." [81] He asserts that action and engagement in common life are the great subverters of excessive skepticism. When faced with real-world situations that engage our passions and sentiments, skeptical doubts "vanish like smoke and leave the most determined sceptic in the same condition as other mortals."[82]

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[79] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 113.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 115.
[82] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 116.

However, Hume recognizes that philosophical questions concerning causation, effects, and the limits of human understanding pose a more serious problem. These questions can undermine our confidence and conviction because they relate to the limitations of our knowledge and our dependence on habits and instincts.

Ultimately, Hume criticizes excessive skepticism when he states:

> For here is the chief and most confounding objection to excessive skepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it . . . On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge any thing, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail.[83]

Skepticism undermines the basis for discussion and decision-making. Hume argues that if skepticism is taken to the extreme, people will simply be unable to act because they will have nothing to rely on.

Nevertheless, Hume says that even though excessive skepticism can be problematic due to undistinguished doubts, it can also be durable and useful, but only if set right by common sense and reflection.[84] He introduces this kind of corrected skepticism as mitigated skepticism or academic philosophy; this form of skepticism is less severe compared to the Pyrrhonian one.[85] Hume further delves into the discussion of two specific forms of mitigated skepticism. Hume suggests that one form of mitigated skepticism involves restricting our inquiries to subjects that align with the narrow capacity of human understanding. He writes:

> Another species of mitigated skepticism, which may be of advantage to mankind and which may be the natural result of the Pyrrhonian doubts and scruples, is the limitation of our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding.[86]

Regarding the second form, Hume says that instead of fantasizing about great ideas, we should focus on questions related to what we know from our everyday experiences. Skepticism does not deny everything, but recognizes that we cannot be completely certain of many things

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 117.
[85] For more information on Pyrrhonian skepticism, see Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, translated by R.G. Bury, Harvard University Press, 1933.
[86] Ibid.

because of the limitations of our minds and the uncertainty of philosophical inquiry. He states: "But they will never be tempted to go beyond common life, so long as they consider the imperfection of those faculties which they employ, their narrow reach, and their inaccurate operations."[87] By stating that philosophy may be interesting to the mind, he says it should not make us doubt how much we can trust our opinions or how much we know. The concept of mitigated skepticism that Hume advocates emphasizes the importance of one being critical of knowledge. This means that we must carefully examine our beliefs. This approach is consistent with Hume's claim that the basis for proving the existence of objects rests on our experience. Hume discredits a priori reasoning; he argues, "If we reason à priori, any thing may appear able to produce any thing." [88] He presents the idea that, without experience, "the falling of a pebble may, for ought we know, extinguish the sun; the wish of a man control the planets in their orbits."[89] While acknowledging skepticism's limitations, Hume argues excessive skepticism offers no benefit, whereas mitigated skepticism promotes critical thinking within human experience.

2.3 Theory of Ideas: Impressions, Ideas, and Principles of Connection

Section II of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (ed. by P. Millican) is devoted to David Hume's theory of ideas. Peter Millican notes that Hume was inspired by Locke in creating his theory.[90] However, unlike Locke, Hume used the word *idea* clearly for its intended purpose. While previous philosophers used the term idea for "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks,"[91] Hume distinguished perceptions - on the basis of different degrees of force and vivacity - into two groups: ideas and impressions. [92] As Millican puts it, ideas and impressions are "two quite distinct mental operations—namely the awareness of sensations or feelings, and the consideration of thoughts." [93] By the term *idea*, Hume means "the less forcible and lively are commonly denominated thoughts," [94] and by the term *impression*, he means "all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or

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[87] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 118.
[88] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 119.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxii.
[91] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, Essay, I. i. 8
[92] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 17.
[93] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxiii.
[94] Ibid.

love, or hate, or desire, or will.[95]   Milican highlights that the term perception, in Hume's theory of ideas, describes a wide category of mental objects, including impressions and ideas together.

Hume argues that we cannot have ideas of something we have never experienced before because "all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience."[96] The imagination enables us to modify and recombine sensory information to generate new ideas. Even seemingly fantastical or imaginary ideas, like a golden mountain or a virtuous horse, are constructed by combining and rearranging elements that we have previously encountered through our senses or feelings.[97] Additionally, Hume states that there are "only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause or Effect."[98]

According to Hume, all general ideas are related to specific examples. Hume gives an example of a horse in his writings. When we think of the word "horse," we remember specific horses that we have met, their color and size, not some abstract horse.   [99] By adopting such a non-abstractionist perspective, we ground our understanding in particular experiences and perceptions. This means our thoughts about something are always linked to specific instances we have perceived, not to abstract essences or forms. This leads Hume to conclude that "all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones." [100] He provides two examples to defend his hypothesis.

Hume asserts that any idea or thought can be broken down into simpler ideas that are derived from impressions, even those ideas that seem independent of our senses are actually based on sensory experience. [101] To illustrate this principle, Hume provides a specific example of the idea of God. He writes: "The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom." [102] The concept of God is formed by multiplying the attributes we have observed in ourselves or others to an unlimited degree. This process entails reflecting on these characteristics, imagining them without constraints, and

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[95] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 13.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 16.
[99] Ibid.
[100] bid.
[101] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 13.
[102] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 14.

therefore developing the concept of a perfect creature. Hume challenges anyone who disagrees with his claim that all thoughts originate from sensory sensations, by saying that if someone disagrees with this hypothesis and believes that there are ideas that do not come from sensory impressions, "have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea."[103] He is confident enough in his position to require his opponents to do the work of finding an exception. He knows that they will fail to do so because any purported example will still be traceable back to a sensory impression, as we have already seen it with the example of the idea of a God. To support his point, Hume gives examples to show that ideas do depend on sense experience. He explains that if a person lacks a specific sensory organ, they cannot form the corresponding ideas.[104] Hume states, "A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds."[105] Furthermore, he underscores the significance of sensory input for forming ideas: "Restore either of them that sense, in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet for the ideas; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects."[106]

2.4 Unraveling the Nature of Inductive Reasoning

To get to Hume's main argument on skepticism, we must first look at Hume's fork. Hume's fork refers to the distinction between "*relations of ideas*" and "*matters of facts*." As Hume puts it, the former "are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is any where existent in the universe." [107] Simply put, these are abstract truths that can be known a priori through reason alone. For example, consider "Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic."[108] While the latter "can be known only a posteriori (i.e., by consulting past experience), since they do not concern just the internal relations between our ideas but rather how those ideas go together in the actual world,"[109] Hume contends that "All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of Cause and Effect. By means of

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[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p.18.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxvi.

that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses." [110] The philosopher then introduces the idea of two different types of reasoning, which is essential for his main skeptical argument. There is demonstrative reasoning, which we can call 'deductive', because each step in the argument is certain. The second type of reasoning is called factual reasoning or 'inductive' reasoning, which is "encompassing all sorts of everyday reasoning in which we draw apparently reasonable (but less than logically certain) conclusions based on our personal experience, testimony, our understanding of how people and things behave, and so forth."[111] Since factual or inductive reasoning concerns matters of fact, we may ask, "What is the nature of that evidence, which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses or the records of our memory?" [112] and the answer to this question led Hume to formulate his famous argument.

The skeptical Argument Concerning Induction is an attempt to understand how people form their beliefs about unobserved matters of fact. To be precise, it is an attempt to understand how people predict the outcome of events based on past experiences. Hume articulates this inquiry by stating:

> As to past Experience, it can be allowed to give direct and certain information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance: But why this experience should be extended to future times, and to other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar; this is the main question on which I would insist.[113]

Hume shows an example where we predict what will happen based on observed matters of fact in the past. He says, "When I see, for instance, a Billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse." [114] We have a belief that it will do so, which stems from causation. Our experience of some part of objects or phenomena must extend to the totality of these objects or phenomena; in other words, Hume states that "when a new object, endowed with similar sensible qualities, is produced, we expect similar powers and forces, and look for

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[110] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 19.
[111] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxvii.
[112] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 18.
[113] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 24.
[114] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 21.

a like effect."[115] This leads to the general principle of uniformity, which means that "all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities." [116] Hume points out that we can never learn about these powers through our senses or reasoning but through experience of their effects. Indeed, with the help of experience, we learn about objects' powers in the past, but it cannot give grounds for anything apart from past experience. But the problem is that when trying to prove that induction is reliable, we always use past experience as evidence. Due to relying on past experience to prove the reliability of induction, which is based on past experience, it is always going to result in circular reasoning. [117] This means that we always assume that the future will be like the past, which undermines the validity of using past experiences to draw conclusions about the future. Ultimately, in the attempt to find a rational foundation for the principle of uniformity, Hume eliminates well-recognized sources of evidence that cannot provide a foundation for the principle of uniformity. He argues that we cannot take intuition as the basis of uniformity. We cannot intuitively know that the future will be the same as the past, because that would mean predicting something that has not yet happened based on what has already happened. Moreover, sensory experience cannot be the foundation of this principle, "since this tells us nothing about objects' underlying powers." [118] Elimination concerns demonstration and factual inference. The former may be useful in mathematics or logical reasoning, but it is not suitable for the real world, where our observations about the sequence of events over time are probable. The latter leads to circular reasoning, as was mentioned above.

2.5 Exploration of Causation and Skeptical Inquiry into Necessary Connection

At the end of chapter 4, Hume states, "It is not reasoning which engages us to suppose the past resembling the future, and to expect similar effects from causes, which are, to appearance, similar,"[119] concluding all his exploration of the foundation for the principle of uniformity. It simply tells us that we cannot find any reasonable foundation of any kind for our only method

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[115] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 27.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 26.
[118] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxviii.
[119] Hume, EHU. p. 28.

of ascertaining facts. This goes beyond our present experience through the senses or the records of memory and this conclusion is Hume's skeptical argument about induction.[120]

Then, Hume introduces the principles of custom and habit. He states that "without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact, beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses." [121] Millican, in his introduction to *Enquiry*, emphasizes that custom answers the skeptical doubts raised by Hume by *not* paying attention to them.[122] When we repeatedly observe two things occurring together, for example, flame and heat or snow and cold, our minds become accustomed to expecting one when presented with the other, and our minds believe that one should follow another. [123] This association leads us naturally to make inferences from what is observed to what is unobserved due to the established custom or habit of the mind. Hume points out that this is a natural instinct, and while skepticism may challenge the validity of reasoned inference, it cannot undermine the instinctual beliefs formed through habitual associations with past experiences.

Then discussion moves on to how customs are formed. He emphasizes the ability of the human imagination to perform various operations on ideas, including the creation of visions and fictions. He argues that the difference between fiction and belief "lies in some sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure." [124] Beliefs arise from sensations or feelings that appear in the mind when we are in a certain situation and recall objects or feelings associated with them. At that time, we have ideas usually associated with those objects, and we feel them explicitly, differently from ordinary thoughts. [125] Millican notes that it's evident that "custom is somewhat analogous to the association of ideas,[126] as Hume described it in Section VIII of Enquiry. [127] Hume says that our beliefs are formed when our ideas or things are associated with each other in the mind, especially when they appear in memory or through sensation. The same thing happens with associations of ideas, as mentioned in Section 2.2: different thoughts or ideas are linked together regularly, often through "three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause or Effect."[128]

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[120] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxix.
[121] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 32.
[122] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, xl.
[123] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 33.
[124] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 34.
[125] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 35.
[126] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xl.
[127] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 55
[128] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 23.

Later on, in Section VII,[29] Hume proceeds to review philosophical ideas such as power, force, energy, or necessary connection. Millican emphasizes that Hume uses all of these definitions interchangeably . That means Hume is interested in the idea of connection in general, or how one thing follows another in sequential order. [130] To clarify these metaphysical concepts, we must recognise that all our ideas are copies of our impressions and that "it is impossible for us to think of any thing, which we have not antecedently felt, either by our external or internal senses." [131] Hume suggests that attempting to define these concepts through complex ideas (i.e. breaking down these concepts into smaller components or specifying various circumstances under which they apply), does not eliminate ambiguity or obscurity. However, to understand these ideas, Hume proposes, we need to see where they come from; we need to find "the impressions or original sentiments, from which the ideas are copied." [132] The exploration of these metaphysical ideas starts with Hume arguing that when we observe external objects and the operation of causes, we never perceive any inherent power or necessary connection between them. Instead, we only observe that one event follows another in succession. In these operations, we cannot perceive power or necessity connecting the events. To emphasize this point, Hume argues:

> From the first appearance of an object, we never can conjecture what effect will result from it. But were the power or energy of any cause discoverable by the mind, we could foresee the effect, even without experience; and might, at first, pronounce with certainty concerning it, by the mere dint of thought and reasoning.[133]

This supports Hume's skeptical argument. Hume mentioned before in Section IV of Enquiry that we learn about causes and effects only after we have experience. [134] We cannot know about causes and effects in advance, before something happens. He rules out sensory experience as the source of the impression of a necessary connection. Millican concludes,

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[129] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 44
[130] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xlii.
[131] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 45.
[132] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 46.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 18

If we perceived an impression of a necessary connexion between A and B, he reasons, then we could know a priori that A causes B. But we cannot know a priori that A causes B. So it follows that we perceive no such impression of their necessary connexion.[135]

Since sensory experience fails to prove the impression of a necessary connection, Hume analyzes other options, such as awareness of the mind's powers or consciousness of the actions of our will, that could provide the impression of necessity. At the end of his examination, he comes to the conclusion that, based on his argument regarding experience, these options cannot provide what he was looking for. According to Hume, the process by which our will generates ideas is not aided by any actual sense of power or energy, but rather by a system that is only understood by experience and one that we will never fully understand. This leads Hume to the skeptical conclusion that "we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings, or common life."[136]

However, later on, Hume proposes that we have the impression of a necessary connection from the recurrence of an event, and that is when we start to think that it causes another event: "This connexion, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression, from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion."[137]

For example, we observe A and B consistently occurring together. We then naturally expect B when we see A. What is important is that we are conscious of this mental transition. Hume says that our causal claims are not based on a real connection between events A and B but on our habit of inferring that B happens because of A. This idea of necessary connection is ultimately derived from our internal awareness of our inferential behavior rather than from any external reality: "When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they have acquired a connexion in our thought."[138] Since the concept of cause is indeed the foundation upon which the impression of a necessary connection is built, Hume proceeds to give definitions of cause. Firstly, he says that it is "an object, followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects similar to the second. In other words, *if* the first object had not been, *then* the second never had existed."[139] Then

[135] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xliii.
[136] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 54.
[137] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 55.
[138] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xliv.
[139] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 56.

follows the second definition, which states that it is "an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other." [140] These two definitions do not provide a comprehensive understanding of causation in terms of its essence or inherent qualities. Instead, "they seem to be intended to capture the circumstances under which we come to ascribe causal connexion."[141] But none of these definitions point to a specific intrinsic property of the cause that would explain its relation to the result. According to Hume, "We have no idea of this connexion; nor even any distinct notion what it is we desire to know when we endeavor at a conception of it."[142]

In conclusion, Hume shows that we do not base our conception of the relation between events on some special property of cause but on the habit of assuming that one event follows another. The concept of cause is important to our perception, but Hume emphasizes that our definitions are limited by how we explain causal relations, not by their actual properties. Hume suggests that while we will never fully understand the essence of causality, our experience and our habits of thought that shape our view of the world are important.

2.6 Exploring Hume's Skepticism: Perspectives from Millican and Fogelin

Millican provides a comprehensive analysis that significantly enhances our understanding of Hume's position. Millican asserts that Hume's conclusion in the *Enquiry* is fundamentally skeptical, undermining every possible source of rational evidential authority for the Uniformity Principle, thus leading to the conclusion that our inductive inferences lack rational support. Millican emphasizes that "Hume's conclusion must be significantly more radical than what is attributed to him by either the 'anti-deductivist' or the 'no argument' interpretation." [143] Hume's skepticism does not merely deny deductive certainty but claims that there is 'no reason whatever' to justify inductive inferences. This is a significant departure from the views of his contemporaries, such as Locke, who accepted the fallibility of probable reasoning but still believed in a rational basis for it. Despite this skeptical conclusion, Hume proposes a *skeptical solution* where custom or habit replaces reason as the foundation of our inductive practices:

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[140] Ibid.
[141] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xlv.
[142] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xlvi.
[143] Millican, Peter. "Hume's Sceptical Doubts concerning Induction." In Peter Millican (Ed.), *Reading Hume on Human Understanding*, Cambridge University Press, 2006. p. 162.

This principle is CUSTOM or HABIT . . . By employing that word, we pretend not to have given the ultimate reason of such a propensity. We only point out a principle of human nature, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects.[144]

Millican emphasizes that Hume's skeptical conclusion is not merely a negative result.[145] Instead, it provides a foundation for understanding how inductive reasoning operates in practice. By grounding induction in custom, Hume offers a way to explain why we continue to rely on inductive inferences despite their lack of rational justification.

Millican notes that Hume's discussions in *Enquiry* allow for distinguishing between reliable and less rigorous inductive inferences, which is essential for scientific inquiry. He states, "Hume in the *Enquiry* makes numerous comparative judgments about inductive inferences which are clearly inconsistent with thoroughgoing deductivist skepticism."[146] Thus, Hume supports empirical science by advocating for 'methodological consistency' and systematic inquiry based on custom. Hume's theory posits that when we observe consistent events following each other, we tend to believe this pattern will always hold. This belief extends beyond mere factual expectation to a matter of moral standards. Millican observes, "But such refusal or incapacity is unambiguously a failing of rationality, thus providing an entirely appropriate basis for normative judgment."[147] This perspective enables us to differentiate between scientifically sound practices and less rigorous methods based on empirical evidence.

In summary, Millican's interpretation of Hume's theory discusses a complex view of issues of inductive skepticism. This shows that although Hume denies the rational basis of induction, he simultaneously attaches importance to experimental research through the principle of custom. This dual perspective helps to further understand Hume's philosophy by overcoming skepticism and promoting practical scientific inquiry.

R. J. Fogelin, in "Hume's Skepticism," in D. F. Norton & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, identifies two primary sources of Hume's skepticism: "one based on arguments, the other based on accounts of how human beings actually form beliefs."[148] The first theme is shown in Section IV of *Enquiry*. Similarly to Millican, Fogelin argues that

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[144] David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford University Press, 2006.
[145] Millican, RHHU, p. 164.
[146] Millican, RHHU, p 163.
[147] Millican, RHHU, p 165.
[148] Fogelin, R. J. "Hume's Skepticism." In David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 219.

Hume's "core thesis - is that no argument can justify this assumption" [149] that the future will be like the past. There can be no demonstrative argument to prove it, and no probable argument can escape circularity, which leads to a significant skeptical conclusion about the foundation of inductive reasoning. The second source of skepticism is discussed in the following section of Enquiry. Fogelin notes that Hume's Section V of *Enquiry* does not provide a solution to these skeptical doubts, as it says in the title, because "*skeptical solution* is no solution at all; instead, it is a mere description of the mechanisms that lead the mind to operate as it does. The descriptions of these mechanisms will not resolve skeptical doubts…"[150] Instead of providing a rational justification, Hume suggests that custom or habit compels us to make inductive inferences. This solution explains the psychological mechanism behind our belief formation but does not resolve the philosophical skepticism:

> A recognition that all our inferences beyond present or past experience derive from this source may or may not make us more skeptical concerning them, but this discovery, at the very least, deflates our intellectual pretensions by revealing that some of our most important modes of inference are made in the complete absence of rational insight. [151]

Both Fogelin and Millican highlight Hume's skepticism regarding reason, but they do so from complementary perspectives. Fogelin focuses on the cognitive faculties, emphasizing Hume's view that the operations of understanding, reason, and the senses are ultimately grounded in the imagination. Fogelin states that "Hume's general strategy is to argue that the operations of the first three faculties are ultimately grounded in the operations of the fourth: the imagination or, as he sometimes calls it, the fancy."[152] According to this, the imagination plays a key role in generating beliefs, particularly when rational justification is lacking. Fogelin explains that Hume is skeptical about the information we receive from our senses, noting that "by the senses, Hume has in mind that faculty that (seemingly) gives us information about a surrounding world."[153] He points out that Hume sees the senses as one of the faculties that cannot be fully trusted to provide accurate knowledge of the material world. Fogelin details Hume's regression and diminution arguments, which show that any claim to knowledge leads to an infinite regress of probability judgments, ultimately leading to the extinction of belief.

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[149] Fogelin in Norton & Taylor (Eds.), TCCH, p. 214.
[150] Fogelin in Norton & Taylor (Eds.), TCCH, p. 220.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Fogelin in Norton & Taylor (Eds.), TCCH, p. 222.
[153] Fogelin in Norton & Taylor (Eds.), TCCH, p. 221.

According to Hume, "We must, therefore, in every reasoning form a new judgment, as a check or controul on our first judgment or belief." [154] But despite these skeptical conclusions, Hume acknowledges that beliefs persist due to habits and instincts.[155]

Millican, on the other hand, leans towards Hume's naturalistic view. He explains that Hume shifted from a traditional view of reason to a naturalistic one, "continuing to acknowledge a faculty of Reason that embraces 'probable inference,' but reinterpreting its nature."[156] This naturalistic view sees inductive reasoning as an essential and unavoidable part of human cognition. Hume says that humans cannot help but rely on inductive reasoning as a natural and irresistible part of their cognitive processes. This habitual reliance is considered a norm of factual reasoning, even without rational insight. [157] Due to this shift, Hume's reason is no longer about achieving ultimate rational insight but about recognizing patterns and correlations in experience. Millican emphasizes Hume's view that "Our belief in body, just like our confidence in induction, turns out to be an irresistible natural instinct with no basis in rational insight,"[158] meaning that humans are naturally inclined to believe in the existence and persistence of the material world.

Fogelin provides a detailed account of the skeptical arguments undermining reason, while Millican emphasizes the naturalistic adaptation of reason as an instinctual process grounded in habit. Both analyses together offer a thorough understanding of Hume's nuanced position on reason, skepticism, and the material world.

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[154] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford University Press, 2007. 1.4.1.1
[155] T 1.4.7.7
[156] Millican, RHHU, p. 167.
[157] Millican, RHHU, p. 166.
[158] Millican, RHHU, p. 168.

Conclusions

Ultimately, Hume presents a subtle view of how we understand and experience the world, acknowledging both the limitations of our senses   as well as their practical applications. This approach exemplifies his mitigated skepticism, which seeks to refine our knowledge rather than reject it outright. The mitigated approach provides a more intelligent, practical way of interacting with the world. Hume doubts that our senses represent external reality correctly. He argues that the activity of our minds does indeed create a representation of sense perception and imagery using information from all five senses, thus giving rise to cognitive bias that is both partial and subjective because such experience exists. He also believes that there is no basis in logic to believe that the future will be like the past. Instead, our confidence in the causality and order of nature rests on habit rather than reason. Although he himself is skeptical of the idea, he admits that our habits greatly influence what we believe. We notice patterns in the world that lead us to assume that the future will be similar to the past, although we often have no clear evidence for this.

Section III: Philosophical Contrasts: Reid and Hume

This thesis has laid out different positions and approaches of Hume and Reid to skepticism. It has provided an analysis of each philosopher's position, illuminating Reid's in the first section and Hume's position in the second. This final section is the culmination of this work, showing closely the dispute between these two philosophers and providing a better understanding into it.

3.1 Perspectives on Perception and Reality

In Section II, we saw that Hume's skepticism led him to assert that our perceptions of external objects are mental images created by the mind. He calls attention to the unreliability of our senses and challenges the idea that they provide direct access to an external reality. Yet, despite recognizing the flaws of our senses, he doesn't completely dismiss the value of them. Hume states that "we must correct their evidence by reason and by considerations." [159] That is why based on Hume's position we cannot always trust our feelings and thoughts, they are limited and not always accurate. Hume challenges the belief in the existence of an external world independent of our perception. He says that we cannot simply trust our natural instincts to understand the world and that using reason to explain it is not consistent with natural instinct. Moreover, Hume questions the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. He believes that all properties of objects are created by our mind and are not their own aspects.[160]

Reid, on other hand, as discussed in Section 1.4, rejects the notion that we only perceive mental images and not external realities. He disapproves the assumption that sensations directly represent external qualities, arguing that sensations of touch do not necessarily resemble the qualities they are believed to represent. [161] Reid criticizes Hume's position on this matter. He argues that Hume did not provide any proof for this hypothesis and "have not so much as tempted to do it,"[162] simply accepting the views of previous philosophers without adding anything new. Moreover, Reid argues that reason must correspond to common sense. He believes that if philosophers reject common sense, they become enslaved to it rather than

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[159] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 110.
[160] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 111.
[161] Reid, IHM, p. 69.
[162] Ibid

serving it.[163] He contends that Hume's skepticism undermines common sense without providing a satisfactory alternative, leaving philosophical reasoning disconnected from the intuitive understanding of the world that common sense provides. This criticism of Hume's skepticism culminates in Reid's observation of inconsistency in Hume's approach. Reid sees Hume's "belief of existence of his own impressions and ideas"[164] as a failure because it represents a departure from the rigorous skepticism that Hume otherwise applies to philosophical inquiry. Reid argues that Hume's skepticism is inconsistent. Hume doubts many fundamental beliefs, but he also acknowledges the existence of his own mental state without questioning them to the same degree.

Reid shows reluctance to accept Hume's skepticism saying that: "He hath built a system of skepticism, which leaves no ground to believe any one thing rather than its contrary."[165] He calls Hume "the greatest metaphysician"[166] because he primarily views him as primarily concerned with metaphysical questions and principles rather than practical or empirical matters.

3.2 Perspectives on Impressions and Ideas

Both Hume and Reid investigate the nature and function of ideas from different points of view. Hume's theory of ideas, detailed in Section 2.2, emphasizes the difference between the two mental states. Between *ideas*, which he describes as "the less forcible and lively are commonly denominated thoughts,"[167] and *impressions*, described as "all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will." [168] Hume's standpoint is that ideas are always copies of impressions and it is not possible to have an idea of something we have never experienced. According to him, the mind's operations are limited to "compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience."[169] Hume argues that all ideas stem from sensory experiences. Even abstract concepts, like the idea of God, are built by reflecting on and amplifying human qualities observed through our senses. He challenges anyone to find an idea not rooted in sensory impressions, confident that any example will trace back to sensory input. Hume

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[163] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican,. p. 68.
[164] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 69.
[165] Reid, IHM, p. 4.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. xxxiii.
[168] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 13.
[169] Hume, EHU ed. by P. Millican, p. 34.

illustrates this by noting that a blind person cannot conceive of colors and a deaf person cannot conceive of sounds. If their sensory ability is restored, they can then form these ideas, proving that sensory experience is essential for forming ideas.

Hume's defense of his skeptical position further sheds light on the foundational principles of his philosophy. In a letter to Hugh Blair dated July 1762, Hume asserts that he has been accused by Reid of being hasty and unsupported by any argument in claiming that all our ideas are copied from impressions. He explains that he has tried to establish this principle based on two arguments:

> The first is desiring any one to make a particular Detail of all his Ideas, where he woud always find that every Idea had a correspondent & preceding Impression. If no Exception can ever be found, the Principle must remain incontestible. The second is, that if you exclude any particular Impression, . . . as Colours to the blind, Sound to the Deaf, you also exclude the Ideas.[170]

These arguments support Hume's skeptical view by reinforcing the idea that human knowledge is constrained by the bounds of sensory experience. His perspective challenges traditional notions of rationalism and suggests that our understanding of the world is contingent upon empirical observation rather than innate reasoning or intuition. Hume acknowledges that these were the main remarks that occurred to him in defense of his principle.

In contrast, Reid questions the existence and nature of supposed mental representations. Answering Hume's theory, Reid uses the example of smell to show the absurdity of this statement. He argues that if he followed Hume's theory, then the idea of smell would be a very faint odor.[171] To which Reid responds: "But I am sure there is no such thing in my mind, and that I can think of the smell of the tuberose when I have not the least degree of the sensation."[172] He contends that the concept of smell is limited to the actual sensory perception itself, without the need for additional mental representations. Reid also disputes the idea that all ideas are copies of impressions, pointing out that there are many ideas, such as those of space, number, or existence, that cannot be traced back to preceding impressions.[173] He

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[170] Reid, IHM, p. 256.
[171] Reid, IHM, p. 305
[172] Ibid.
[173] Reid, IHM, p. 294

emphasizes the unique nature of these ideas and argues against reasoning from other analogies about them.

Furthermore, by comparing ideas to spirit and impressions to body, Reid highlights the qualitative difference between them. Just as spirit and body belong to completely different realms, ideas and impressions are fundamentally different in nature. [174] Ideas are our thoughts and ideas, and impressions are what we feel through our senses, such as sight or hearing. This analogy underscores Reid's argument against viewing ideas as mere copies of impressions.

3.3 Hume's Skepticism vs. Reid's Innate Principles

Hume and Reid examine how we learn about the world and how our ideas are formed. Hume is skeptical and empirical, while Reid emphasizes the role of innate instincts in our understanding.

Hume questions how we come to conclusions about things we have not seen based on our experience. He says that we expect the future to be like the past not because of an innate principle, but because we are accustomed to such scenarios due to repetition of similar situations. Hence, the philosopher outlines that our habits and customs build into beliefs.What we come to expect to work in a cause-and-effect relationship is in itself based upon the repetition of observation, rather than any quality inherent within the object linking the cause-and-effect. Experience gives rise to knowledge of, or the idea of, causes and effects, and hence of induction. Neither previously existed as knowledge, nor are the connections themselves innate. Hume argues that it is neither that we directly perceive or possess innately nor in some way we stand in relation to direct access to a necessity of connection. Still, such is a construct of the mind from experience and habit. He doubts that an argument based on inductive reasoning can be soundly justified by reason since we cannot show that future events will resemble the past without reasoning in a circle.

On the other hand, Reid based his position on the inductive principle as a characteristic of human nature that is inborn. He argues that this principle, similar to a prescience of natural operations, gives us the ability to interpret natural signs and, hence, acquire knowledge from experience. According to Reid, all our understanding beyond our original perceptions is obtained through experience, which involves the interpretation of natural signs. The inductive

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[174] Reid, IHM, p. 291.

principle connects the sign to the item signified and serves as the foundation for our conviction that the past determines the future. He believes that in natural causes, something not immediately seen by us—it is a natural way in which it allows us to take everything for granted. Unlike Hume, who doubts the rational basis of inductive reasoning, Reid believes that innate cognitive principles underpin our capacity to make reliable inductive inferences, thus providing a more optimistic view of human cognition.

Conclusions

This chapter has contrasted Hume's and Reid's views on how the nature of ideas may be perceived and of how one may come to know things. Hume's mitigated skepticism casts doubt on such a thing as direct access to a world outside us. At worst, Hume's happier version suggested that our understanding was, at least in principle, bound by the limitations of sensory experience. It is a positive feature of Reid to defend an appeal to common sense and the use of principles familiar from the beginning in framing what we believe we know about things. These various perspectives on the issue lead to divergent conclusions about sense reliability, the nature of ideas, and the very foundation of inductive reasoning.

Hume's skepticism clearly shows through his making the point that, from his discussion of impressions and ideas, it is amenable to his argument that our perceptions of external objects are fabricated mental structures under the influence of our sensory experiences. He doubts the existence of a reality independent of our senses and believes that all ideas are based on sensory impressions. Hume criticizes induction because it cannot rationally explain belief in what we do not directly see. Reid, however, refutes skepticism by reinstating the importance of original principles in explaining our comprehension of the world. The philosopher maintains that the inductive principle - since it is representative of human nature - is sufficient ground to make inferences from previous experience. The argument by Reid places heavy importance on common reason and intuition in human cognition, opposed to the reductionist approach to knowledge and perception by Hume.

In conclusion, the conflicting stances of David Hume and Thomas Reid posit just how complex human knowledge is. Hume's skeptical midpoint is the basis upon which knowledge, perception, and the logical justification of induction are called into question. Conversely, Reid argues that innate principles and common sense play a role in the development of our cognitive powers. It leads us to consider the constraints of what sensory experience can

achieve and recognize the intuitive faculties on which the groundwork for our ability to work within the world is based.

Final Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that the dispute over skepticism between David Hume and Thomas Reid centers on their differing philosophical views. Examining key chapters in Reid's *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* and Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (edited by P. Millican) revealed the core of their disagreement: the nature of knowledge, the trustworthiness of our cognitive faculties, and the attainability of certainty about the external world.

The meaning of skepticism for Hume lies in its bearing on how our knowledge is limited, particularly about the attainability of absolute certainty regarding the external world and to what degree we know the nature of causality. While his work emphasizes the foundational role of empirical evidence, it simultaneously critiques the rational justifications for many of our established beliefs and assumptions. The work gives a place to empirical evidence while simultaneously raising criticism of rational justifications for most of our established beliefs and presuppositions. These very aspects of Hume's philosophy became the object of Reid's forceful critique. Reid posits an alternative perspective grounded in common-sense realism. He emphasizes that our cognitive faculties can be trusted and relied upon, the self-evident character of fundamental beliefs, and the highly unrealistic and practically impossible character of assuming a posture of universal doubt. The philosophical work of Reid tries to establish basic principles for knowledge and inquiry that are soundly intuitive and demonstrably necessary for practical life.

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