HUME'S FACULTY-BASED ACCOUNT OF REASONING

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ABSTRACT

I resolve several longstanding disputes about Hume's view of reasoning and his faculty psychology by clarifying Hume's use of terms related to reasoning. After first arguing that Hume uses many terms in more than one sense without alerting his reader to this fact, I present a novel interpretation that takes the activity term "reasoning" and the faculty term "reason" each to have two distinct uses. I use this framework, along with my explication of why Hume posits the faculties that he does, to explain why the understanding–or, the faculty of conception–should be seen as the chief cognitive faculty. This means that all other faculties (e.g., imagination, memory, and both faculties of reason) should be seen as subfaculties of the understanding for Hume. Having explicated Hume's faculty psychology, I explain why his insights in this arena remain relevant today; put simply, I argue that Hume's claims about the mind stem directly from his scientific naturalism and that the theses derived from this naturalism fit together to form a coherent framework for studying the mind. I conclude by showing how this same framework appears in the Humean views recently articulated by Jerry Fodor, Peter Carruthers, and Jesse Prinz.

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Introduction: Hume, Reason

David Hume is a pivotal scholar in the English-speaking philosophical tradition. Hume's training in logic–a general term that captures aspects of today's conception of logic as well as the psychological processes that underlie cognition–was Aristotelian in character, but he was also educated in the new mechanical sciences and had access to the accompanying natural philosophy. This mix of influences makes him unique amongst the prominent figures from the Early Modern period in Great Britain: his philosophical education was scholastic, but his scientific education was notably Modern. That Edinburgh's curriculum for young students so heavily endorsed Scholastic logic separates Hume from Berkeley, whose philosophical training was primarily Modern.[1]

Hume was familiar with and deeply influenced by the new science and mechanistic philosophy of his time. Hume's attempt to apply this new scientific method to novel subjects bequeaths us a number of problems, both philosophical and interpretational. Early interpreters of Hume, typified by Reid and Beattie, took it to be obvious that Hume was skeptical and that his arguments rendered our inductive inferences unjustified (or at least attempted to do so).

Reid says of the author of the *Treatise of Human Nature*–Reid does not identify Hume by name–that

> It seems to be a peculiar strain of humour in this author, to set out in his introduction by promising, with a grave face, no less than a complete system of the sciences, upon a foundation entirely new–to wit, that of human nature–when the intention of the whole work is to shew, that there is neither human nature nor science in the world. (Reid 1983, 8)

[1] Regarding Hume's intellectual background, M.A. Stewart (2005) presents a very careful overview; sections I and II cover Hume's time at college in Edinburgh. See Echelbarger (1997) for a discussion of Hume's training in and influence by both Scholastic and Modern logics. Barfoot (1990) covers Hume's training in natural science; particularly instructive is the emphasis placed on Boyle. See Downing (2011) regarding Berkeley's education.

On Reid's interpretation, Hume carries Berkeley's principles "to their full length." In so doing, Hume undermines personal identity and he "leaves nothing in nature but ideas and impressions, without any subject on which they may be impressed." Science is thus undermined because induction has been undermined, compromised in part by Hume's radical view of personal identity. The question of whether induction can be justified or its conclusions warranted came to be known as "Hume's Problem."[2]

Later interpreters contested the conclusion that Hume's goal was to render induction unjustified, and the early interpretive consensus gave way to a scholarly debate, beginning with Kemp Smith (1905), about whether and to what extent Hume should be interpreted as skeptical. Within this larger debate about skepticism generally, there were debates about skepticism with respect to more particular issues: the senses, reason, causation, *&c*.[3] These debates continued well into the latter half of the 20th century.

In the last half of the 20th century, however, a new genus of interpretation arrived, started by Beauchamp & Mappes (1975). This view takes it that one of Hume's key concern in the sections often taken to be the *loci classici* for skepticism about induction–*Treatise* 1.3.6 and section 4 of the first *Enquiry*–is to *describe* the features of induction as it is practiced by humans, and give an explanation of the mental mechanisms by which it works. This genus of view is further developed by Beauchamp & Rosenberg (1981) and others.[4] Hume's arguments about the

[2] Loeb (2006), particularly the first section, surveys nicely the history of interpretation. In my account here, I draw heavily on this work.

[3] An admittedly incomplete–though chronological–catalog of statements in the debates over how skeptical Hume is, what the contours and limits of the skepticism are, and with respect to which issues Hume is skeptical includes Kemp Smith (1905, 1941), Ducasse (1926), Russell (1945), Quine (1946), Will (1947), Popkin (1951), Flew (1961), Ayer (1963), Stove (1973), Robison (1973), Stroud (1977), Penelhum (1979), and Wilson (1984).

[4] Particularly of note is Arnold (1983). Broughton (1983) and Baier (1991) develop and extend this class of view as well.

inferences that generate human beliefs regarding unobserved matters of fact, they took it, depend crucially on his view of what human reasoning is and how it works. Apropos of his position with respect to the new mechanistic physics and its explanatory successes in astronomy, ballistics, physiology, *&c*., this view sees Hume as trying to determine how the unseen springs, pulleys and levers of the human mind eventuate in the fantastic variety of behaviors we see humans evince on a daily basis. Still, though, the proponents of this view agreed that Hume was concerned about whether the inductive inferences we regularly engage in could be justified or how the conclusions reached could be warranted.

In the late 1990s, a new species of this view emerged, one that doubled down on the descriptive character of Hume's project. It is not just *Treatise* 1.3.6, they argued, that is free of normative epistemological content. This new species of view, articulated both by Don Garrett and by David Owen, eschews the supposition held by prior interpreters that Hume was worried about whether induction was justified at all in part 3 of Book I, instead claiming that concerns about the justificatory status of our reasonings were put off until part 4 of Book I.[5]

One place where prior interpreters faltered, Garrett and Owen each claimed, was in not adequately distinguishing Hume's categories of *demonstrative* and *probable* reasoning from the contemporary categories of *deductive* and *inductive* reasoning. Nor was Hume's conception of argument like the conception philosophers have now. Instead, they argued, Hume's view of argumentation arises more directly from his theory of impressions, ideas, and the dynamics that obtain between them. This new understanding of Hume's view of reasoning, they took it, would

[5] Key texts include Garrett's *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* (1997) and Owen's *Hume's Reason* (1999). See also their exchange of comments about these works in Garrett (2000), Owen (2000), Garrett (2001) and Owen (2001).

prove to be the key to understanding his views regarding the nature and limitations of human reason.

Like these prior interpreters that take Hume's aim to be primarily descriptive, in this dissertation I argue that Hume is involved in a very early form of cognitive science in *Treatise* 1.3 and *Enquiry* 4. I provide an interpretation that depicts Hume as articulating a descriptive psychology that, building on our observations, gives us a picture of how the mind works that is consistent with the new science he finds himself embedded in (while, at the same time, rebuffing more traditional conceptions). Each of the descriptive views I have described takes it that Hume's adventure into the workings of the mind would lead him to conclusions about the nature of reasoning and, more broadly, the nature of inference itself. These conclusions in turn had consequences for thinking about causal reasoning, objects, ourselves, morality, *&c*. Determining the character of reasoning and inference was just one part of this larger project, but a particularly interesting and fruitful one. My view mirrors the more extreme descriptive views of Garrett and Owen, claiming that Hume's project in this part of the *Treatise* (and the corresponding parts of the first *Enquiry*) is *primarily* one of cognitive science.[6]

In this dissertation, I correct and bring to final fruition the new direction in Hume scholarship originated by Beauchamp & Mappes. I show how the weaknesses of Garrett and Owen's more thoroughly descriptive interpretation of Hume can be fixed and the disagreements within its ranks quelled. I focus primarily on Hume's view of human reasoning and faculty psychology, eschewing discussions of justification and inductive skepticism. I further the interpretive tradition in two ways. First, I make extensive use of Hume's widely ignored or

[6] Though just because it is primarily descriptive does not mean that it is purely descriptive: Garrett sees Hume as engaging in a partially descriptive, partially normative project that seeks to show what could possibly underpin or justify the practice of induction. This point is dealt with at much greater depth later.

neglected sections on non-human animal reasoning. These texts give us new information on Hume's view of reasoning that prior interpretations have not dealt with adequately. Second, I take a close and direct view of Hume's terms themselves. Aside from some attention to how many senses of "reason" Hume deploys and some disagreement over the nature of the phrase "founded on," Hume's individual terms have not been interrogated with respect to their univocity or consistency. I show that several key terms have either been misinterpreted or not properly disambiguated.

Over the course of the dissertation, I develop and defend what I take to be the correct interpretation of Hume's view of reasoning and the faculties of the mind. I articulate the basis on which Hume posits psychological faculties, suggesting that they result from observed mental activity. These mental activities come in sets and sub-sets, and by determining the defining activity for a faculty, we can determine that faculty's place in the overall structure. I argue that, for Hume, "the understanding" picks out the faculty of conception; that is, that the faculty of the understanding's primary activity is coming to conceive. All other cognitive (i.e., non-passionate) actions of the mind are more specific ways of coming to conceive, I argue; thus all other cognitive faculties–imagination, memory, reason, *&c*.–are subfaculties of the understanding.

My interpretation is that Hume aims to do just what the subtitle of the *Treatise* claims: show how new ideas about what reasoning consists in can help investigate and clarify how the mind works. In the final chapter, I show how the science of mind Hume develops is still relevant by illustrating its influence over contemporary philosophers of psychology and cognitive science. Hume's view, I argue, comprises five distinct theses that, taken together, articulate a consistent and coherent specification of his scientific naturalism about the mind. By so doing, Hume makes available a framework for understanding the human mind that is still being deployed today.

Chapter 1: Terminological Inexactitude

Hume's discussion of human reason has deep roots in the philosophy that came before him, and the vocabulary that he uses reflects this. Hume was versed in the Scholastic tradition, along with Early Modern responses to and reformulations of this tradition. Hume's vocabulary for human reasoning is quite complex. It includes terms for certain mental activities, the results of those activities and the faculties that produce those activities, e.g., respectively, "reasoning," "proofs" and "the understanding." Hume does not simply appropriate the vocabulary of his predecessors, and doing so would be difficult anyway: some key terms change in meaning in the shift between the Scholastics and the Early Moderns. Hume will often use terms in novel ways or disambiguate them in ways different than his predecessors did. Hume also introduces definitions for some terms (e.g., "proof") and taxonomies of kinds within the larger kinds (e.g., his taxonomy of the "province of intuition," which is itself nested within the division of knowledge, which is in turn within human reason).

This inventive and complex vocabulary is appropriate for a system of works–Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and Book I of his *A Treatise of Human Nature*[1]– focused on giving a substantially new account of human understanding and the capabilities and limits of human reason. Hume's writing seems very clear but I will argue that the smoothness of Hume's writing obscures the unclarities and inconsistencies in Hume's use of these terms related to human reasoning. The way several of Hume's key terms have been understood is insufficiently exact to sustain an interpretation. Any attempt to explicate Hume's view will be

[1] Hereafter, I will refer to the *Enquiry* as *EHU* (or "the first *Enquiry*") and *A Treatise…* as the *Treatise.* I will also follow common practice and cite Hume's works by section and paragraph number, with the appropriate preceding initials, e.g., *Treatise* Bk. I, Part 4, Section 1, paragraph 2 would be rendered as T 1.4.1.2. All citations are to the Norton & Norton edition of the *Treatise* and the Oxford edition of *EHU*, ed. T.L. Beauchamp, cited in the bibliography as Hume (2000) and Hume (1999), respectively.

subject to counterexamples from the text or will lack significant interpretational *desiderata* if it does not first attend to the meanings of these key terms. Hume's usage of key terms related to human reasoning is inexact in a number of ways; in this chapter alone I will show how Hume leaves crucial terms undefined, how there is systemic unclarity about how terms in "or" constructions are related, and how the terms he does define are often used in a sense inconsistent with the definition.

After I address some methodological concerns and explicate the first two of these kinds of inexactitude, I will suggest that, in light of this inexactitude, we must determine the different senses and carefully vet the arguments that make use of these terms: by attending to the implicit meanings of these terms, we can resolve the difficulties Hume's inexact usage presents to us.[2] In the latter half of the chapter, I will show how one group of terms suffers from the last species of inexactitude, work to identify the different senses, and recover their meanings.

I. Prima facie methodological concerns addressed

Before I move to the examples, I want to clear up two potential issues. First, why should we assume that Hume's use of these terms is coherent? The first *Enquiry* and Bk. I of the *Treatise* are primarily concerned with how human reasoning works, starting with the most basic

[2] I mean "terminological inexactitude" throughout to be read literally, not in the–perhaps more common–sense of dissembling or lying. All I mean to accuse Hume of, in saying that his texts evince this sort of inexactitude, is that his use of terms suffers various defects that make interpretation difficult, such as un-noted or un-noticed polysemy of important terms, ambiguous constructions that cannot be uniformly disambiguated, obscure meanings for technical terms, *&c*. Basically, I mean to say that Hume's writing, while mellifluous, needs its terms to be systematically disambiguated, precisified and have their meanings made explicit in order to sustain an interpretation of the text. As such, I will use "terminological inexactitude" as a blanket term for all of these faults, and identify more specific faults (such as ambiguity) as appropriate.

cognitive capacities of humans[3] and concluding by examining reason's limitations.[4] Given that the focus of these books is human reasoning, to assume from the outset that Hume's usage of reasoning terms is intractably inconsistent or equivocal would be supremely uncharitable. Charity demands we take Hume's view to be broadly consistent unless we find insurmountable philosophical problems. If interpreting Hume's terms univocally leads to problems, though, charity demands we abandon univocal use of terms in search of a consistent, coherent view. It is this latter path I will follow, reverse-engineering a set of definitions by carefully attending to Hume's (admittedly untidy) usage.[5]

The second worry is one that is particular to Hume. One might worry that comparing the *Treatise* and the first *Enquiry* is what generates the inconsistency in Hume's use of his terms. If this is the source of the inconsistency, why should we think that matters? Each work, this concern would conclude, could have its own interpretive vocabulary. My response is that while there are no doubt issues to be found by relating Hume's usage of certain terms in the early work to his usage in the later work, these are not the issues that I will be exploring.[6] That is, though there are some clear shifts in how certain words get used between the two works these shifts do not generate the tensions I will explicate. So, though the *Treatise* and *EHU* do differ in the arguments they provide–sometimes substantially–my investigation concerns Hume's usage of

[3] Both works begin their discussion of the human mind with its simple constituents, impressions and ideas (T 1.1.1.1, EHU 2.3).

[4] Both works conclude with discussion of skepticism with regard to reason (T 1.4, EHU 12).

[5] Hume's occasional unclarity is useful in evaluating the text, too: it enables us to delineate the areas where Hume's thinking is less clear and focus on these areas as possible sources of interpretational disputes or sources of error in Hume's arguments or logic. Assuming that Hume's view is largely consistent and coherent and that this consistency is covered up by some infelicitous usages grants us additional interpretational opportunities.

[6] e.g., "knowledge," which is used just to mean something like 'certainty resulting from the comparison of ideas' in the *Treatise* is used in a sense much closer to the contemporary sense in *EHU*. I do discuss "knowledge" very briefly in note 22 below.

the terms on which the arguments are based, not the arguments themselves; i.e., I am investigating what he means to be referring to when he uses the term "inference," and not the arguments that make use of that term.

II. Two examples of inexactitude

In discussing human reason, Hume's usage of terms is inexact in multifarious ways. I show two of the ways Hume's usage is inexact in subsections (A) and (B) below. I address these two ways because each makes a particular point: Hume does not define the key term "argument," as discussed in (A), and this leaves open to interpretation (and re-interpretation) one of his most critical arguments. That Hume fails to be explicit about how he means for certain pairs of terms to be related in "or"-constructions, as discussed in subsection (B), means that interpreters can be misled about how those terms are related if they do not carefully focus on the meanings of the terms themselves.

A. Crucial terms undefined

The first kind of inexactitude results from the fact that Hume leaves crucial terms undefined. Take Hume's famous "negative argument" from *Treatise* 1.3.6 and *Enquiry* 4 to the conclusion that our beliefs about unobserved matters of fact are not "determin'd by reason" (T 1.3.6.12). In order to establish this conclusion, Hume relies on results he proves along the way, e.g., that "there are no *demonstrative* arguments to prove, *that those instances, of which we have had no experience, resemble those, of which we have had experience*" (T 1.3.6.4, italics in the original).[7]

[7] Or, as it appears in the first *Enquiry*, "that there are no demonstrative arguments in this case." (EHU 4.18)

Hume is denying that there can be a particular sort of argument for a certain kind of conclusion. But there is dispute about what Hume means to be showing by claiming that humans are not "determin'd by reason" in the negative argument's final conclusion. To determine this, we are called on to interpret the term "argument" in these intermediate conclusions.

But Hume does not tell us precisely what class of things "argument" is supposed to refer to. The broad contours are easy enough to see: arguments are supposed to play some role in our mental lives, some other items in our mental economy are supposed to be "founded" on them, *&c*. But there is no account of just what an argument *is*.

This might seem like a technicality: we might think that Hume's usage should make it apparent what he means by "argument," and/or that it probably does not matter much just what Hume's precise conception of argument is. These are *prima facie* reasonable suppositions but in reality there has been significant scholarly disagreement about just what the word "argument" is supposed to mean in these passages, and how one interprets "argument" can drastically alter one's reading of the conclusion.

For instance, the commentator D.C. Stove (1973) claims that when Hume uses the term he means something like our contemporary conception of a deductively valid argument, i.e., a set of (logically) linked claims that establish some conclusion, and, in order to save some of Hume's claims from triviality, Stove extends this conception to include the codicil that they must also have necessarily true premises. Stove interprets Hume as claiming that this criterion cannot be met by certain sorts of arguments and resultantly casts Hume as inductive skeptic. Beauchamp & Rosenberg (1981) adopt the same definition of argument, and this leads them to deny that Hume is an inductive skeptic, because, given this interpretation of "argument," the conclusion is a

narrow rejoinder to the rationalist not a broad deliverance on reasoning, generally. Thus, Stove and Beauchamp & Rosenberg come to opposite but related conclusions.

Owen (1999), by contrast, claims that Hume's conception of argument is nothing like the contemporary conception. As a result, Owen claims that the "negative argument" *is not even about the same thing* that Stove and Beauchamp & Rosenberg thought.[8] By shifting what one of the crucial terms means, we are able to shift the entire focus of the argument and redefine the place it holds in the progression of ideas in *Treatise* Bk. I and *EHU*.

Owen presents much evidence against the Stove and Beauchamp & Rosenberg readings, and the final reading that Owen presents is open to much criticism.[9] This illustrates that each view I have presented here is open to some counter-evidence.[10] The availability of counter-evidence for every existent view in turn suggests that none of them are the final, correct interpretation.[11]

The currently available interpretations are unstable due to this countervailing evidence to each. The state of affairs in interpreting the negative argument approximates a gestalt swap: depending on how one thinks about certain terms, one interpretation or another will make itself evident in the text. This is unstable, though, because by reading other interpreters who make other terms or definitions salient, that interpretation will become the evidently correct one. By

[8] Owen claims that it is about the causal etiology of our beliefs about matters of fact (i.e., the psychological processes that result in humans having certain sorts of beliefs) and not at all about their justification or warrant.

[9] See, for instance, the exchanges found in Garrett (2000, 2001) and Owen (2000, 2001).

[10] These are just three examples that show starkly how the understanding of the word "argument" bears on our understanding of Hume. Other examples can be found in Millican (2002) and Garrett (1997).

[11] While it might not be the case for every historical figure, everyone involved in the debate seems to believe that there is or should be a coherent, consistent version of Hume available: he appears to be careful, he defends substantially the same views over the course of his career, and his starting points are easily explicable and well-known. In light of this commitment of the interpretive community, it would seem that the extent to which the current views are plagued by counter-evidence is problematic.

examining the terms themselves, I mean to surmount this difficulty (and these interpretations). By determining the meaning of the word "argument" and other, related terms, I will develop a stable framework that can be used, in turn, to determine the correct interpretation of the text itself.

Hume does not define argument (and other crucial terms), and the lack of specification leads to interpretive difficulties. Only by finding Hume's implicit meanings can we delineate the correct interpretation.

B. Unclear relationships of terms in "or" constructions

A second form of terminological inexactitude stems from Hume's habit of deploying constructions that claim that a phenomenon does (or does not) result from *something or something else*. This can make his writing easier to get an initial grip on. With these constructions, though, it is not always clear if the two items wedded together by "or" are being treated as *closely related*, *contrasting*, or *synonymous*.[12] When an "or" is used to highlight closely related items, we see two items that are similar. "Or," when used to show contrast, gives us a range that emphasizes the breadth of the conclusion. Finally, "or" can be used to aid comprehension by giving us items that are equivalent, but might be known by a different name.[13]

[12] I want to treat these uses of "or" as distinct from the disjunctive arguments that Hume gives, e.g., when he deploys *neither…nor…* or *either…or…* constructions. What I am concerned with are not disjunctive conclusions that Hume is giving, but rather what appear to be Hume's way of making the text easier to understand. As such, I have selected a very narrow range of uses of "or," but these uses form a distinct class. These three sentences should serve as a guide to the three types:

(1) Similar terms: "I could go for some *apples* or *pears*."

(2) Contrasting terms: "I wouldn't say no to some *cereal* or a *steak*."

(3) Synonymous terms: "I love eating *pancakes* or *flapjacks*."

[13] Synonymous uses of "or" are usually written in contemporary English with parentheses around the second item, e.g., "I love eating pancakes (or flapjacks)." but there is no indication that Hume employs this convention in these works.

Hume uses a lot of or-clauses, and–in part because he has not defined any of the terms–it is not always clear how Hume intends the "or" to be taken. Consider the list below from *EHU* 4 and 5:

(A) "Our conclusions from that experience are *not* founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding." (EHU 4.15, italics original)

(B) "Now this is a process of the mind or thought, of which…" (EHU 4.16)

(C) "…without some new argument or inference" (EHU 4.21)

(D) "…by any process of argument or ratiocination." (EHU 4.23)

(E) "… which is not supported by any argument or process of the understanding." (EHU 5.2)

(F) "… without being impelled by any reasoning or process of the understanding." (EHU 5.5)

(G) "This principle is CUSTOM or HABIT." (EHU 5.5)

(H) "…which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able, either to produce, or to prevent." (EHU 5.8)

(I) "This process of the thought or reasoning…" (EHU 6.2)

And just a few from a small stretch of the Treatise, including one that uses "and" instead:

(J) "we shall now examine the nature of that inference, and of the transition from the impression to the idea." (T 1.3.6.3)

(K) "A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION." (T 1.3.7.5)

(L) "… without any new operation of the reason or imagination." (T 1.3.8.10)

(M) "… that the understanding or imagination can draw inferences from past experience, without reflecting on it." (T 1.3.8.13)

Sometimes the relationship seems fairly straightforward, as in (B), (G) and (J), which seem to provide synonyms. Sometimes, as in (D) and (K), we have a contrastive "or" where one

term is supposed to be a narrower specification of the other. Hume sometimes just seems to want to expand the scope of the conclusion with a contrastive "or," as in (C) and (M).[14]

These different usages of the same construction make it hard to see the relationship the construction is trying to express in many cases. Take quotation (E), which relates "argument" to "process of the understanding" and quotation (F), which relates "reasoning" to "process of the understanding" (as does quotation (A)). If, in each case, the terms on either side of the "or" are synonymous, then "argument" and "reasoning" will be interchangeable for Hume. This would be a significant result, but one we would be entitled to only if every "or" construction in Hume rested on synonymy. But they do not, so we need to provide an argument for this interpretation, because it faces the following *prima facie* problem: it results in a contradiction (or, at the very least, a deeply infelicitous use of terms): in quotation (E), Hume says that in some reasonings there is a "step taken by the mind" that is not supported by "any argument or process of the understanding."[15] If we treat the instances of "or" in (E) and (F) as synonymy-conveying, we get the result that some reasonings are not instances of reasoning: this result follows because there would be a step in an instance of reasoning that is not itself reasoning. This would seem to mean that what Hume explicitly calls reasoning there is not reasoning.[16]

This may well be Hume's view, but to arrive at it on the supposition that "or" always relates synonymy is too quick. Given that "or" is a natural language conjunction, this should not be surprising: there is a depth and variety of use to natural language conjunctions that cannot

[14] Some of these claims about how the "or" is to be read are substantial interpretational claims on my part. But the point—that Hume uses "or" in at least these three senses—should still be clear.

[15] "Though we should conclude, for instance, as in the foregoing section, that, in all reasonings from experience, there is a step taken by the mind, which is not supported by any argument or process of the understanding…" (EHU 5.2)

[16] To drastically oversimplify to make the point clear: if argument = process of the understanding = reasoning, but reasonings (from experience) ≠ argument, then, by substitution, reasonings (from experience) ≠ reasoning.

always be captured by one strict interpretive rule. Interpreting "or"-constructions like these as always conveying synonymy, then, is a substantive conclusion, one that requires an interpretation of the relevant terms that makes their usage here consistent. In addition, the interpretation should explain the appearance of other usages elsewhere. It must also account for the different uses of "or" constructions.[17] Blindly treating the "or" as univocally substitutional results in a contradiction (or an infelicity) that requires explaining. Alternatively, treating both the instances of "or" as being contrastive uses, particularly the *widening* usage of, e.g., quotation (C), makes quotations (E) and (F) consistent but uninformative.[18]

Either way we do it, treating the instances of "or" in these seemingly nearly identical constructions with the same interpretation precipitates interpretational difficulties. But treating these instances of "or" differently requires an explanation and defense. It should be clear that there is no way to interpret "or" as having just one meaning, even if we confine our efforts to one bit of text and/or one set of terms.

There are two, interrelated conclusions to be drawn from this example: first, we must be sensitive to the interpretational issues that the different uses of "or" can produce and be careful that our interpretations of the other (defined or undefined) content terms do not hinge on treating these instances of "or" in one particular way or another (without some good, independent

[17] Additionally, quotation (I) further complicates matters, by introducing "process of thought," which does not seem straightforwardly like a substitution for "process of the understanding," especially given the way those two are related by quotation (H).

[18] Instances of reasoning from experience, on this interpretation, are not arguments, and, insofar as they are not arguments, they are not–*qua* argument–in the containing set, the set of processes of the understanding. All (F) then claims is that instances of "reasoning" are also members of the containing set of processes of the understanding; this allows that "reasonings" and "reasonings from experience" are included *qua* reasonings in the set of processes of the understanding, but are not arguments (and so are not included *qua* argument). This makes the quotations consistent with each other. The problem with this reading is that the two phrases, taken as wholes in their respective arguments, are supposed to be equivalent. If we treat these instances of "or" as cases of contrastive widening, then we make the internal relations consistent at the price of making the complete phrases inconsistent.