Hume’s Scepticism and Realism

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1. Introduction

As Don Garrett has observed, relation between scepticism and naturalism in Hume’s thought has been the central question of Hume scholarship since Norman Kemp Smith’s ground-breaking *The Philosophy of David Hume* (1941/2005) (2005, xxxiv). One of the essential aspects of this problem is Hume’s attitude to what is nowadays called Metaphysical Realism.¹ The Humean definition of it is that there are Real, that is, (human) perception-independent, absolutely external, and continuous entities (EHU 12.7-8 and T 1.4.2.2).² In other terms, Hume's attitude to Metaphysical Realism is his view of the problem of the external world.

The question of Realism is significant for interpreting Hume’s philosophy in general - theory of the understanding and metaphysics, in particular. For instance, if Hume is a Realist, there is the possibility that Real entities are the standard of truth for him. In that case, truth of beliefs would be judged in terms of their correspondence to how things really are. Another related specific question is whether Hume is a materialist, mind-body dualist, or not. Corporeal substance and individual bodies are paradigm cases of Real entities.³ Thus, if Hume is a materialist or dualist, he must be a Realist and if he is not a Realist, he cannot be a materialist or dualist. The discussion over Hume's theory of causation is also connected to his view of the existence of Real entities. In the case that Hume is not a Realist, he cannot believe in the existence of Real causes and powers. Hume's attitude to Realism is therefore relevant for the New Hume debate (Richman and Read 2007).

¹ Following Loux (2002, 250), in order to distinguish Metaphysical Realism and Metaphysically Real entities from other uses of ‘realism’ and ‘real’ (and its cognates), I write the former with the capital ‘r’.
² Externality in absolute as opposite to perception-dependent space is suggested by Hume categorising it under “existence Distinct from the mind and perception” in the *Treatise* and the following formulation in the *first Enquiry*: “an external universe, which depends not on out perception” (T 1.4.2.2 and EHU 12.7).
³ So I will speak not only about Real entities but sometimes also of “Real matter and bodies” meaning material substance and individual bodies composed of it.
In this paper, my aim is to argue for a novel interpretation of Hume’s view of Realism, and accordingly of this part of his metaphysics, theory of the understanding, and of the relation between scepticism and naturalism. My main thesis is that Hume should be seen as both a sceptic and a Realist. His philosophical position is to suspend his judgement on the existence of Real entities, whereas his everyday view is to believe firmly in their being. My reading falls thus to the category of what I call below “no one Hume interpretations”, according to which more than one position ought to be attributed to him in the topic under discussion. The key point in my reading is that there is a subject distinction between Hume’s philosophical and everyday views. Suspension of judgement and belief in Realism are predicated of logically different subjects (a is P, b is Q): Hume’s considered philosophical position and his more natural everyday view. This distinction has significant consequences - as will be seen below – mainly because it avoids attributing a contradiction to Hume.

The main thesis and argument for it elaborate on my published doctoral dissertation (Hakkarainen 2007). In the first part of the paper, I present the different interpretations of Hume's view of Metaphysical Realism defended so far in the literature. As the subject is so much studied in Hume scholarship, I have to restrict myself to the main contributors. The exposition of the argument forms the second part of the paper that is comparing my interpretation with other readings and showing that it is the most satisfactory of them. The second part involves a short summary of the sceptical argument against the senses in EHU 12.15-16 (Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy) that begins with the distinction between primary and secondary qualities and its earlier version at T 1.4.4 (Of modern philosophy). Following Hume’s description closely, I call it the second profound argument against the senses, which has not received so much attention in the literature as the first in EHU 12.7-14 and T 1.4.2 (Of scepticism with regard to the senses).5

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4My claim is restricted to Hume's view of Realism. I am not stating that the relation is same in the other parts of Hume’s philosophy as his attitude to induction.

5The summary elaborates upon the reconstruction of the second profound argument against the senses defended in my doctoral dissertation. I analysed it in meticulous detail resulting in a structural diagram of it. (Hakkarainen 2007, chap. 3.4)
2. Different Interpretations

Formally, there are four possibilities of what Hume's attitude to Realism can be. In the first place, he may believe (suppose, assume, or take for granted) that there are no perception-independent, absolutely external and continuous entities. Let this be the negatively dogmatic attitude because in it, Hume holds a belief, \textit{dogma}, that not-\textit{p}. In other words, he rejects Realism or denies the existence of Real entities. The second possibility is that Hume believes in their existence (that \textit{p}). He then affirms Realism and is a positive dogmatic on the issue. Thirdly, Hume may be a genuine sceptic concerning Realism: his attitude is to suspend his belief or judgement on the existence of Real entities. The last principal option is some combination of these three. Hume is, say, both a sceptic and positive dogmatic on Realism. As these combinative accounts attribute more than one position to Hume, I will call them no \textit{one} Hume interpretations, readings, or accounts - metaphorically speaking, there is not just one Hume.

It was once the prevalent view that Hume denies the existence of Real entities – that he is a negative dogmatic. This is a part of the Reid-Green line of interpretation, which sees Hume as a destructive thinker and negative dogmatic across the board.\textsuperscript{6} It was also endorsed by H.H. Price in his otherwise more positive phenomenalist reading of Hume (1940, 227). In the last half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, it went out of fashion amongst Hume scholars, for good reason. Nevertheless, Louis Loeb has defended it as a side topic in his book (2002, viii and 215-6).

At the moment, the positively dogmatic reading is by far the most popular among Hume scholars. It is a part of both naturalist, New Humean, and what can be called dialectic interpretations. Most commentators on Hume's theory of perception seem to endorse it, too.

According to the father of the naturalist Hume interpretation, Kemp Smith, the belief in the existence of Rea entities is one of the “natural” fundamental human beliefs. It is involuntary, an inevitable fact of the human condition. As a result, no sceptical argument can undermine it. (Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 124 and 6) Later, Barry Stroud has famously defended this interpretation in his book (1977, 115-7) and especially his recent article (2006, 340-5). The involuntariness thesis and thus Realist interpretation is also endorsed by Garrett, most clearly in his 2004 article (83 and 90).

\textsuperscript{6} A fine summary of this interpretation can be found in Reid (2002, 162). For other references, see Kemp Smith 2005/1941, 3-8, and chap. IV; Norton 1982, 3-5, 192, and 196-204.
The New Humean John P. Wright’s strategy for attributing the belief in Real entities to Hume is what Wright calls “inconceivable suppositions”. Even after the sceptical arguments that Hume presents, it is possible to believe in the existence of Real matter and bodies as having only primary qualities by virtue of supposing their existence as such despite the fact that strictly taken that kind of entities are inconceivable. (Wright 1995, 226-7, 231-4; and 1983, 107-112) Strawson’s move is to attribute “relative ideas” to Hume’s theory of ideas. Although it is not possible to conceive of Real entities in terms of descriptively contentful perceptions, we can suppose their existence as distinguished from other entities in virtue of relative ideas. The relative idea of Real entities is of imperceptible beings causing our sense-impressions (X–causation–sense-impression). It is this relative idea that provides content for the belief in the existence of Real entities, despite the fact that it does not give any contentful insight into their properties and nature. (Strawson 2002, 239-42; Strawson 1989, 49-53)

The readings of Hume by Donald Livingston, Annette Baier, and William Edward Morris state that the sceptical arguments that he presents are not really his own. Therefore, the fact that Hume presents sceptical arguments against the belief in Real entities does not show that he rejects it or suspends judgment on it. (Livingston 1984, 2-4, and 9ff.; Baier 1991, 21, and 107; Morris 2000, 96-102, and 106) 

Vice versa, all these commentators believe that Hume is a Realist. According to Livingston, Hume takes the everyday belief in Real entities as a transcendental presupposition of our experience and reasoning (Livingston 1984, 3, and 15). For Baier, Hume’s true philosophy is critical application and self-reflection of common life beliefs and reasonings including the belief in Real entities (Baier 1991, 20-7). Morris claims that Hume advocates going back to common life from the philosophical “problem space” of “modern philosophy”, which produces the hardest sceptical argument against the belief in Real entities, the second profound argument. (Morris 2000, 108-9)

A camp of the Realist Hume reading is formed by those commentators who maintain that Hume holds a Realist theory of perception. John Bricke and John Yolton are among those scholars who take Hume to be some kind of Representative Realist (Bricke 1980, 21, and 23-4; Yolton 1984, 162-3; and 2000, 109-13). Recently, not only Morris but also Cass Weller has defended the interpretation that Hume is a Direct Realist (Morris 2000, 108-9; and Weller 2001).

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7 To be precise, Morris does this only in relation to the second profound argument against the senses.
As far as I can tell, no one has so far defended the mere sceptical interpretation of Hume's view of Realism. However, it is one element in the no one Hume interpretations of three distinguished Hume scholars: Richard H. Popkin, Robert J. Fogelin, and Donald L.M. Baxter.

In his classic article *David Hume: His Pyrrhonism and His Critique of Pyrrhonism*, Popkin maintains that Hume is “the only “consistent” Pyrrhonian” sceptic (Popkin 1980/1951, 103). In the case of our question, this means that at one time he suspends his judgement on the existence of Real entities; at another, he firmly believes in it. According to Popkin, Hume is both a sceptic and a positive dogmatic on the issue. When he is in his rational “mood”, by means of irrefutable sceptical arguments he comes to the conclusion that we ought to suspend our belief in Real entities (ibid. 132, 112, 114-5, 119-20, 126, and 130). That belief cannot have any rational basis and it involves insolvable paradoxes (ibid. 112, 119-20).

Despite the fact that the rational mood is natural for certain people, philosophers (ibid. 123, 131), it is in the strong natural mood that Hume is a Realist. With this respect, Popkin repeats the basic naturalistic claim that natural instincts force us to believe in it notwithstanding the irrefutable sceptical arguments. (ibid. 116, 119-20, 123-6) Hume is the only consistent Pyrrhonist because he does only what nature compels him to do. In their lives, the ancient Pyrrhonists followed nature in the form of appearances, what seemed to them to be the case, but suspended judgement on the question of how things really were. Hume follows nature more consistently as he believes firmly when nature necessitates him to do so. Actually, Popkin goes so far as to claim that Hume believes only what nature makes him to believe. (ibid. 126-30 and 132)

Another circumstance with respect to which Hume is also a consistent Pyrrhonist is that since he suspends and believes in different periods of time, he is not subject to any contradiction. Popkin does not make this explicit but it turns out to be so in the more recent no one Hume interpretations by Fogelin and Baxter, to which I next briefly turn.

In his latest Hume article, which is a comment on Garrett’s book, Fogelin defends a form of no one Hume interpretation. Actually, in his book, he already acknowledges his debt to Popkin and there are also hints at this kind of reading in it and the 1993 article (Fogelin 1985, xii, and 149-50; 1993, 113). However, it is only in the latest paper that he explicitly maintains a no one Hume reading. Fogelin’s mature view is that Hume is a radical perspectivist: his writings exhibit inconsistent positions depending on the perspective from which things are considered. Hume does not have any final
philosophical position on any issue; he has merely judgments depending on perspective. From one point of view, Hume is a Realist; from another, he is not.

I shall not go into the details of Fogelin’s new interpretation. Suffice it to note two things. First, Fogelin does not attribute any contradiction to Hume’s philosophical positions. The inconsistent views are held from distinct perspectives. As such, they are not contradictory with each other. (Fogelin 1998, 164-8) Second, Fogelin also reads Hume as the first philosopher doing the “natural history of philosophy” (Fogelin 1998, 168). This means that especially with regard to Real entities and perceiving them with our senses, Hume’s account should be taken as “a sequence of philosophical perspectives”, which unfold naturally when one is doing philosophy in “an unrestricted manner.” (ibid.; for a detailed account, see Fogelin 1985, 80ff.)

Recently, Baxter has deliberately followed Popkin’s footsteps and defended the view that Hume is a Pyrrhonist regarding the existence of Real entities. Baxter’s interesting claim is that Hume’s various remarks on the issue are best accounted for by making a subtle distinction between two kinds of assents. Baxter thinks that in this regard, Hume models himself on Sextus Empiricus who, according to Popkin and Michael Frede (1997), distinguished between active endorsement and passive assent.

Applied to the case of Real entities, this means the following. On the one hand, Hume suspends his active assent to their existence since it is epistemically unjustified - there are no reasons to support its truth. Actually, Baxter takes Hume to be a complete Pyrrhonist in the sense of suspending active endorsement of every belief due to the absence of reasons. However, on the other hand, Hume assents passively to the existence of Real entities because it is instinctive and almost irresistible. The passive endorsement is for Baxter then what the naturalistic interpretation takes as Humean, natural belief. His contribution, which is close to Popkin, is to distinguish this following of natural impulses from the upper case, philosophical endorsement. The relevant point here, as in Popkin and Fogelin’s latest interpretation, is that this is a way to avoid attributing any inconsistency to Hume. (Baxter 2006, 114-7) As Baxter concisely puts it, “[i]n this sceptical way Hume takes for granted the existence of body.” (ibid. 116)

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8 In his most recent work, Baxter develops his position into a somewhat surprising direction, which comes close to the naturalistic interpretation. Now he includes the conclusions of “good” inductive inferences into passive assent together with the belief in Realism. (Baxter 2007, 9-14)
3. **Comparison of Interpretations**

3.1 **Negatively Dogmatic and Sceptical**

On the one hand, it is not surprising that the negatively dogmatic interpretation was the standard view in light of superficial reading of the first and second profound arguments against the senses and *Of scepticism with regard to the senses* (1.4.2), *Of the modern philosophy* (1.4.4), and *Conclusion of this book* (1.4.7) in the *Treatise*. On the other, this state of affairs is almost astonishing because of the fact that there just is no passage where Hume explicitly denies the existence of entities the ontological status of which is Real. The closest he comes to this is in the last sentence of T 1.4.4: “When we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such [Real] an existence.” Nonetheless, putting this passage into its context - the conclusion of the argument in 1.4.4.6-14 - challenges whether Hume is really signalling rejection of Real existence in it. As it will be seen below, the argument does not sanction the denying conclusion.

Negatively dogmatic reading of Hume in this question is thus textually unjustified. If there is textually justified interpretation, that ought to be then preferred to it. In this respect, the mere sceptical interpretation has a slight advantage over it as I will show below. However, it suffers from another problem, which it shares with the negatively dogmatic reading: they have difficulties to explain the indisputable naturalist element in Hume's thought. In the case of Real entities, this element is manifest in what I call the involuntariness passages.

3.2 **Involuntariness Passages**

Most of these passages are so well known that it suffices to consider them briefly. In EHU 12.23, Hume states that the only tendency that the Pyrrhonian arguments can have is to show “the whimsical condition of mankind”. We must act, reason, and believe although we cannot found these operations on certain basis (or refute the arguments against them). The natural reading of this passage is that it also alludes to the belief in the existence of Real entities. It is thus an involuntary, uncertain belief against which there are irrefutable arguments.

In a familiar place in the *Abstract*, Hume concludes that nature always overcomes Pyrrhonism and compels us to assent to the external existence (*Abs.27*). Equally famously, he begins his explanation of the belief in Direct Realism in the *Treatise* by
asserting that “‘tis in vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.” The sceptic

“must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, tho’ he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless, esteem’d it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations.” (T 1.4.2.1)

Despite the fact that Hume expresses doubts about this statement in the penultimate paragraph of the section, he finishes it with the following affirmation:

“For this reason I rely entirely upon them [senses]; and take it for granted, whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world; and going upon that supposition, I intend to examine some general systems both ancient and modern, which have been propos’d of both, before I proceed to a more particular enquiry concerning our impressions.” (T 1.4.2.57)

Between these, Hume also writes that even philosophers have “so great propensity to believe” in Realism that faced with the non-Reality of perceptions, they invent Representative Realism (T 1.4.2.56; see also 50).

Finally, just before proclaiming the whimsical condition of mankind, Hume writes that “[n]ature is always too strong for principle.” (EHU 12.23) This formulation is reminiscent of the well-known passage in the *Abstract*. The same point is also made when Hume discusses the second “species” of Academical philosophy in EHU 12.25:

“To bring us to so salutary a determination [Academical philosophy], nothing can be more serviceable, than to be once thoroughly convinced of […] the impossibility, that any thing, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it [Pyrrhonism].”

All these passages suggest that the natural causes of the belief in Real entities are psychologically so strong that the belief cannot be continuously suspended or rejected. In some of them, Hume also appears to claim that he takes it as an unfounded, fundamental belief. Its logical and epistemological status seems to be then that of an axiom, which we take for granted.

Considering all these passages at the same time, is it possible not to conclude that Hume believes firmly in the existence of perception-independent, absolutely external and continuous entities? Even a detailed analysis of these passages revealing subtle differences between them would not suffice to eliminate these passages completely. As a minimum, Hume believes that the natural instinct behind the belief in Realism is psychologically powerful, rendering perpetual resistance to it psychologically impossible. Hume's philosophy is naturalist in this respect at least.
3.3 Realist

The strong point of the Realist interpretations is that Hume’s avowals of Realism as the involuntariness passages support them. The grave problem that they face is what to do with the sceptical arguments that appear in Hume's works.

The naturalist strategy to avoid this problem is that the point of Hume's scepticism is rather to support or bring about naturalism than to argue for a negatively dogmatic or sceptical position. Kemp Smith thinks that the sceptical arguments are ground-clearing for naturalism, showing a “mistaken endeavour of reason” (2005/1941, 116-21, 124-7, and 129-32). Garrett thinks that they are results of Hume's initial naturalism, his cognitive psychology. In the end, however, Hume reaches a stable naturalist position and the sceptical challenge is overcome when reason mixes suitably with sentiment. (1997, 89-90)

The New Humeans' solution is to claim that even after the strongest sceptical arguments there is room for Hume to be a Realist. This happens in virtue of inconceivable suppositions (Wright) or relative ideas (Strawson). According the dialectic readings, the sceptical arguments that Hume presents form a dialectic which ends up with the belief in Real entities.

My decisive objection to these Realist interpretations is that in the end they cannot evade the sceptical element in Hume's thought but render him an incoherent philosopher. Usually the discussion of the scepticism against the senses is restricted to the first profound argument. This argument concluding with the belief in Real entities being epistemically unjustified is still quite compatible with the naturalist and New Humean interpretations. The real problem, however, lies in the second profound argument and T 1.4.4. They represent scepticism concerning comprehensibility instead of justification. What is more, they conclude with a contradiction. That contradiction is between believing in the existence of Real entities, material substance for instance, and not holding that belief at the same time. The point to which I would like to draw attention is that withdrawing from believing in Realism is a rational attitude in Hume's view. The second profound argument consists mainly of the requirement of consistency, an inductive-causally well-grounded principle, and analysis of the perception of extension (and other primary qualities). So one ought to endorse the argument if one uses systematically what Hume takes to be the faculty of reason: consistency, inductive inference or causal reasoning, and perception analysis. The problem that the Realist interpretations face is that they want to attribute both to Hume: the belief in Real entities and consistent use of
Humean reason. He however thinks that they are inconsistent. These readings thus attribute a self-conscious contradiction to Hume.

### 3.4 The Second Profound Argument

That this is the correct description of the second profound argument and that it is really Hume's own argument call for a justification. Within the limits of this paper, it is not possible to go into the extensive discussion that the justification requires. I have done the full case for that in another place (Hakkarainen 2007, ch. 4.2.2). Still the argument and reasons for Hume endorsing it can be outlined briefly.

1. All other primary qualities than extension are necessarily connected to extension [because extensional properties].
2. The perceptions of extension are necessarily connected to the perceptions of proper sensibles [Hume's theory of perceiving extension in T 1.2].
3. If A is necessarily connected to B, A cannot be conceived without B (def.).
4. Every perception of primary qualities is a perception of proper sensibles (from 1-3).
5. The perceptions of primary qualities are the only candidates for perceptions resembling the Real properties of Real entities/matter and bodies.
6. The Proper Sensibles Principle (PSP): perceptions of proper sensibles do not resemble the Real properties of Real entities/matter and bodies.
7. None of the perceptions resembles any Real property of Real entities/matter and bodies (from 4-6).
8. Humans comprehend by perceptions.
9. Entities without properties (bare entities) are incomprehensible.
10. Real entities/matter and bodies are incomprehensible (from 7-9).
11. The PSP is an inductive-causally rational tenet.
12. Argument (1-10) is perception analysis.
13. Humean reason is the faculty of induction and perception analysis.
14. The incomprehensibility of Real entities/matter and bodies is a rational stance (from 10-13).
15. Rational beliefs have comprehensible content.
16. Rational persons ought not to believe in incomprehensible Real entities/matter and bodies (from 14-15).
17. Rational persons are consistent: they follow rational requirements.
(18) Rational persons do not believe in the existence of Real entities/matter and bodies (from 16-17).

(19) It is contradictory to believe and not to believe at the same time.

(20) It is contradictory to be rational and believe in the existence of Real entities/matter and bodies at the same time (from 18-19).

The controversial points of Hume’s endorsement of the argument are premises (8), (11)/(6), (15), and the step from (16) and (17) to (18). For instance, Strawson thinks that in Hume’s view, comprehensions are not exhausted by perceptions and he does not subscribe to premise (8). There are also “relative ideas” in virtue of which it is possible to grasp imperceptible entities (2002, 239-40). Garrett’s main objection to Hume’s endorsement of the Proper Sensibles Principle (6) is that he does not ever speak about it as his own principle (1997, 220). Wright claims that not all Humean rational beliefs have comprehensible content (15) because sometimes there are good reasons to believe in inconceivable suppositions. The supposition of bodies with only primary qualities is of this kind: it is incomprehensible but still grounded on “a systematic application of the principle of cause and effect.” (Wright 1995/1986, 232) Finally, the standard naturalist point is that from the requirements for rational persons to be consistent and not to believe in the existence of Real entities, it does not follow that rational persons do not in fact hold this belief. In Hume’s view, this inference is blocked by the proposition that it is psychologically impossible not to believe in the existence of Real entities continuously.

To make a long story very short, my replies to these objections are the following. The putative relative idea of Real matter and bodies is of that imperceptible $X$ which causes sense-impressions about them. The problem with this relative idea is that it is incompatible with Hume’s view of the ideas of relations. Hume requires that both relata of a relation are perceptible in order to understand the relation because the ideas of relations are complex (T 1.1.4.7). However, in the case of the putative relative idea of Real matter and bodies, the other relatum in the supposed causal relation is not perceptible. There cannot be any idea of the relation and therefore it is not possible to distinguish this alleged relative idea from its positive idea component. To Garrett, it may be replied that the textual evidence supports more Hume’s assent to the inductive rationality of the PSP than his rejection of it⁹ – and his endorsement of its rationality (11) is sufficient for his subscription to the argument. My answer to Wright is that Hume does

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⁹ E, ST, 234, 229-30; E, S, 166, n.3; Hume 1986, 416; T 3.1.1.26; EHU 1.14.n.1, in 1748-50 editions; T 1.4.4.3-4; T 1.4.4.15; and T 1.4.7.4

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not explicitly employ inconceivable supposition to avoid the conclusion of the second profound argument. So there is no specific textual evidence for his interpretation here. In the end, the basic naturalist objection may be replied by the point that the second profound argument does not require continuous refraining from the belief in Real entities. Momentary not believing is sufficient and that Hume allows (EHU 12.15.n.32, 12.21, 22, and 23).

Otherwise I think that Hume assent to the premises of the argument is rather uncontroversial. It starts with analysing the perceptions of putative primary qualities following Hume's doctrine of perceiving extension in T 1.2. This perception analysis is thus also a product of consistent use of Humean reason. It is also a reasonable assumption that Hume thinks that bare entities are incomprehensible and simultaneous believing and not believing are contradictory. Thus, if my account of the second profound argument is correct and replies to the objections are successful, it is indeed the case that this argument is Hume's own reasoning. For the Realist interpretations of Hume, this causes serious problems. If they simultaneously attribute both the consistent use of inductive, perception-analytical reason and Realism to him, they saddle him with “a manifest contradiction”, of which he is aware (T 1.4.7.4).

### 3.5 No One Hume Interpretations

Attributing a self-conscious inconsistency to Hume would not be a problem if he took this contradiction with carelessness. However, there are two reasons not to think so. First, there is much textual evidence that in general he does not accept contradictions in philosophy."¹⁰ Second, textual evidence points at the opposite direction in the case of this particular contradiction. In the first Enquiry, Hume states that the second profound argument is “derived from the most profound philosophy” and “goes farther” than the first (EHU 12.15 and 16). Moreover, he thinks that it is irrefutable: “admit[s] of no answer” (ibid. n.32). Hume's attitude is therefore rather seriousness than carelessness. The strongest evidence for this can be nevertheless found from the Conclusion of Treatise 1:

> “Or in case we prefer neither of them [belief in Realism and consistent reasoning], but successively assent to both, as is usual among philosophers, with what confidence can we afterwards usurp that glorious title, when we thus knowingly embrace a manifest contradiction?
> This contradiction wou'd be more excusable, were it compensated by any degree of solidity and satisfaction in the other parts of our reasoning. But the case is quite contrary.” (T 1.4.7.4-5)

¹⁰ EHU 2.4, 3.16.n.6, 4.2.21, 5.2.10, 8.1.8, 8.2.36, 12.2.20, 12.n.34, T 1.1.5.8, 1.4.4.1, 1.4.5.1-2, 14, 1.4.6.2, 1.4.7.4-8, T App.10, and 21
There is also the possibility that Hume thinks that this is how things just are. Philosophers cannot help but being inconsistent even if they should not be; they must both believe in the existence of Real entities and reason consistently. The former is psychologically necessary and the latter what they ought to do as philosophers. The moral of the second profound argument would be that this is the human and philosophical condition.

Yet I think we should look for the better. With this respect, the no *one* Hume interpretations seem most promising. Without the threat of the inconsistency, they can claim that Hume endorses both the existence of Real entities and systematic reasoning because of the temporal, perspective/perspectival, attitude/attitudinal or subject differences these accounts attribute to them. Accordingly, let me consider the merits and downsides of Popkin’s, Fogelin’s and Baxter’s interpretations.

Popkin’s claim is that Hume the only consistent Pyrrhonist believes only what nature compels him to believe. The problem with this reading is that it makes Hume a believing machine completely at the mercy of the impulses of nature. This picture just is not plausible in light of Hume’s Academical philosophy. Academical philosophy is self-reflective reasoning for the most part – including not only destructive but also constructive use of reason (EHU 12.24-32).

Among the three, Fogelin’s latest position is the most radical. According to him, there is not one Hume in any question; Hume only endorses what it seems to him in one perspective. Fogelin can be criticised from the point of view of what Hume does in the first *Enquiry*. He does not merely proceed from one standpoint to another. With regard to induction, causality, miracles and scepticism at least, he has a clear intention to establish a position. Amid the various sceptical positions that he discusses, it is Academical philosophy. Fogelin’s later reading is not therefore convincing in light of Hume’s mature work on the understanding.

Baxter’s philosophically interesting interpretation suffers the same fate. In order to reconcile Hume’s avowal of Realism in the beginning of T 1.4.2 and his rejection of it at the end of the section, he attributes the distinction between active endorsement (on rational basis) and passive (natural) assent to Hume. As the belief in Real entities belongs to the sphere of passive assent and the consistent use of reason to that of active endorsement, the inconsistency between them does not arise. Although we may find this distinction in Sextus Empiricus – if Popkin and Frede are right -, Hume does not employ
it anywhere. Baxter’s general direction is therefore correct but there is no positive textual support for the specific distinction on which it is based; in this respect it is non-Humean.\textsuperscript{11}

3.6 Sceptical and Realist Interpretation

Instead, it is typical for Hume to make the distinction between everyday life and philosophy in its various forms.\textsuperscript{12} His point is not, however, to build a wall between philosophers and common people but that even the philosopher who engages in the most abstract thinking is a plain man in some moments of his life (EHU 1.6; T 1.4.2.36; and DNR 1, 35-6). Philosophy is also in an intimate constructive relation with everyday life as Hume's famous slogan about philosophical decisions being corrected and methodized common life reflections says (EHU 12.25). The crucial point in these tenets for the purposes of this paper is that Hume puts forward them in connection with the belief in Real entities and inductive inference (EHU 12.1.5, T 1.4.2.36, EHU 12.3.25, and DNR 1, 36). By contrast to Baxter’s distinction of assents, thus, it is well grounded to use this distinction in the resolution of the present problem. Interpretation is then based on a genuine Humean distinction, which he applies in this context.

Upon distinguishing Hume’s philosophical position from his opinions as a common man, we are able to construct a satisfactory no one Hume interpretation, for which the irrationality of the belief in Real entities is not a problem. The basic idea in this interpretation is that his philosophical position involves suspension of judgement on the existence of Real entities, whereas his everyday view is to believe firmly in it.\textsuperscript{13}

The distinction involved in my no one Hume interpretation differs subtly from that used in the three other combined readings. Popkin's distinction is temporal, Baxter attributes a distinction between assents to Hume, but I employ a subject distinction

\textsuperscript{11} In his book, Baxter develops his position into a somewhat surprising direction, which comes close to naturalist interpretations. Now he includes the conclusions of “good” inductive inference in passive assent together with the belief in Realism. (Baxter 2007, 9-14) As Baxter claims that Hume endorses what he is forced to assent passively by nature, his interpretation attributes to Hume the inconsistency between the belief in Realism and induction. Baxter’s most recent account is thus subject to the same problem as the naturalist readings. The only rescue for him seems to be claiming that this inconsistency is not a problem for Hume. However, I have shown above that that is not plausible.

\textsuperscript{12} EHU 4.2.21, 5.1.2, 12.1.5, 12.2.21 and 23, 12.3.24 and 25; T 1.4.2 and intro.3; DNR 1, 35-6; and E, EW, 533-4

\textsuperscript{13} I would like to emphasise that Realism is the philosophical analysis of everyday position. I am not ascribing to Hume the claim that everyday people are aware that they are Realists. This is completely coherent with how Hume himself discusses the issue (EHU 12.7-9, 14, and 16).
between logical subjects: Hume's philosophical position and his everyday view. Fogelin's perspective/perspectival distinction comes quite close to mine. Formally, Fogelin thinks that Hume makes claims only from perspectives. The difference between his and my view is that according to Fogelin it is always the same Hume that makes the statement – though from different perspectives. By contrast, I think that it is not the same logical subject to which a belief and suspending that belief are attributed. Realism is a part of Hume's everyday standpoint and suspension informs his philosophy.

This account of Hume as a philosophical sceptic and an everyday positive dogmatic is the most satisfactory of those proposed so far when we take all the discussed circumstances into consideration. Among the four principal interpretations, it avoids the problem of the negative dogmatic reading having no textual support. It has the same advantage as the mere sceptical interpretation having textual justification. The first point to be noted is that Hume says explicitly that his Academical philosophy involves suspension of judgement:

“The academics always talk of doubt and suspense of judgment” (EHU 5.1.1).

In this light, it is reasonable to read Hume’s use of “doubt” referring to suspension in the corresponding passage in Section 12:

“In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner.” (EHU 12.3.24)

Of course, these passages speak about suspension of judgement in general instead of the specific suspension of belief in the existence of Real entities. However, for the very reason that the point of the passages is general, the reading that Hume’s Academical philosophy, his philosophical position, involves suspension of judgement on the existence of Real entities is coherent with them.

Besides, one of Hume's few comments on the second profound argument is that it “produce[s] no conviction.” (EHU n.32) Although there might be other reasonable readings of this passage, it fits nicely with both the second profound argument concluding by not believing in Real entities and Hume's philosophical position being suspension of belief: non-conviction.

To this interpretation, it might be objected that why Hume does not bring his solution of the second profound argument forward if he has one. Hume is almost completely silent of his attitude to the two profound arguments in EHU 12. He presents them, refutes Pyrrhonism, and proceeds to Academical philosophy, which can be, in part, the result of Pyrrhonism. Nevertheless, here I would like to ask the reader to reflect on the
very fact that Hume is silent. Which one of the interpretations of his philosophical position does it support more, suspension, affirming, or denying? If Hume the philosopher believes in the existence of Real entities, why does not he say it? Why does not he do so either if he denies their existence? But is not it the case that his silence fits quite nicely with suspension? If one suspends his judgement on a problem, he may say it aloud. However, it is equally reasonable to express his attitude, or more precisely, his omission by keeping silent. Hume’s silence supports therefore rather the sceptical than dogmatic readings of his philosophical position. It should also be paid attention to the circumstance that Hume’s Academical philosophy does not involve expressed belief in the existence of Real entities.14

In addition, my no one Hume interpretation does not suffer from the difficulty of the mere sceptical and negatively dogmatic interpretations to explain the involuntariness passages; on the contrary, they can be incorporated into it. As the involuntary belief in Real entities is attributed to Hume's common life standing, it can include the strong point of the Realist readings. It also fits well with what Hume’s point in the involuntariness passages is: when we do not reflect on the issue, the belief in the existence of Real entities returns. This no one Hume interpretation does not, however, assign a self-conscious inconsistency to him like the Realist readings.

Finally, it steers away from the problems involved in Popkin’s and Fogelin’s no one Hume accounts. It does not make Hume a natural believing machine, on the one hand, and makes it possible that Hume has the final philosophical position, on the other. Concerning Baxter’s account, it is preferable because of being founded upon a Humean distinction.

This no one Hume interpretation is also capable of assimilating Hume’s endorsement of the two profound arguments into it. Hume's philosophical attitude is to suspend his judgement on the existence of Real entities because believing in it is unjustified (first argument), inconsistent with the systematic use of Humean reason in philosophy, and Real entities are beyond the reach of our understanding (second argument). Yet it does not commit Hume to Pyrrhonism as universal suspension of belief because according to it, suspension concerns only one belief and is momentary. Hume the philosopher can easily deny then that universal suspension of belief as the mental effect of the arguments is lasting as he does in EHU 12.2, n.32, 21, 23, and 25.15

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14 If anybody suspects this, I would like to see where Hume explicitly announces Realism in EHU 12.24-34.
15 Hume finishes his first Enquiry with “Academical philosophy”, which consists of two attitudes. The first of them is suspension, caution and modesty. The second attitude is “confining to very narrow bounds the
4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have defended the interpretation that Hume is both a sceptic and a positive dogmatic on the existence of Real entities. To put it in contemporary terms, he is both an anti-Realist in the sense of being neutral on the issue and a Realist. Scepticism or neutral anti-Realism is his philosophical position, whereas his everyday position is philosophically speaking positive dogmatism: a firm belief that there are Real entities.

The philosophical component of this no one Hume interpretation is coherent with Hume's silence concerning his attitude to the second profound argument and his only comment on it: “admit[s] of no answer and produce[s] no conviction.” It is also able to deal with Hume's scepticism and naturalism. The second profound argument is not a problem for it. Because of the subject distinction between Hume's philosophical and everyday position, it can avoid attributing to him the self-conscious inconsistency between assenting to the existence of Real entities and the rational attitude of not holding that belief. One of the virtues of this no one Hume interpretation is also that Hume's avowals of Realism, the involuntariness passages, support its everyday element: in common life, we cannot but help believing in the philosophical analysis of which is Realism. In addition, it allows Hume to have serious theoretical ambitions – which he has – because suspension of judgement concerns only one philosophical topic. Finally, my no one Hume interpretation is compatible with Hume's academical philosophy ending his mature work on the understanding: the first Enquiry.

Corporeal substance and individual bodies belong to the category of Real entities. From this no one Hume interpretation, it follows that Hume's philosophical position does not involve any standpoint concerning their existence. Hume’s philosophy of body, if he has any, is therefore anti-Realist: in his notions, matter and bodies are not perception-

enquiries of the understanding” or “the limitation of our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding.” (ibid. and 12.25) These limits are set by a kind of empiricist epistemological realism. According to Hume, experience is the standard of truth and justified belief: “experience [...] is the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge” (EHU 12.29; see also 5.1 and DNR 1, 36).

That the sceptical and Realist reading of Hume is compatible with the second element of Hume's Academical philosophy would call for an extended argument. Here it is not possible to go into that complicated discussion. Yet it may be remarked that some type of phenomenalist epistemological realism, for instance, seems to be coherent with suspension of judgement on the existence of Real entities. Besides, this suspension does not rule out that there can be agreement on what we experience and perhaps that agreement can work as the empirical basis for judging beliefs.
independent. Hume's philosophical position can therefore be neither materialism nor body-mind dualism.\textsuperscript{16} Besides, if my interpretation is correct, it is not possible that Hume's philosophy involves Causal Realism. This casts a shadow on at least some New Humean readings. Instead, the interpretation advanced here leaves it completely possible for Hume the common man to believe in the existence of what is in philosophy called Real matter, bodies, and causes.

\textsuperscript{16} It should be pointed out, however, that this does not concern two other traditional substances, God and the soul because they does not seem to be capable of spatial location and as such of externality to the (finite) mind.
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