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Abstract: With his theory of sympathy in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume has been interpreted as anticipating later hermeneutic theories of understanding. It is argued in the present article that Hume has good reasons to consider a hermeneutic theory of empathetic understanding, that such a theory avoids a serious difficulty in Hume's "official," positivist theory of sympathy, that it is compatible with the complex and subtle form of positivism, or naturalism, developed in Book 1 of the *Treatise*, and that his analysis of sympathy provides valuable methodological rules for empathetic interpreters. Against the interpretation of James Farr in "Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," it is maintained that Hume's theory does not support a hermeneutics of non-empathetic Verstehen.

David Hume has been called the father of positivism,[1] and there is support for this interpretation already in the subtitle of his first published work, the *Treatise of Human Nature, Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method into Moral Subjects*. From the context it is clear that Hume identifies the "experimental" method with the empirical-inductive nomothetic (law-seeking) method traditionally ascribed to Newton and his followers.

It comes as something of a paradox, therefore, that Hume's theory of sympathy in Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise* has been interpreted as an early hermeneutic, non-positivist theory of understanding, or a precursor of such theories. This reading

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has been most clearly developed by James Farr, who claims that the "underlying methodological implications" of Hume's theory "are decidedly hermeneutical," and that "Hume must be counted among the modern theorists of *Verstehen*."[2]

Do we have reason to say, then, that Hume is the father not only of positivism, but also of anti-positivism, or hermeneutics? I believe there are four main issues to be addressed here.

(1) It seems clear that Hume's theory of sympathy in the *Treatise* forms part of his moral psychology and moral philosophy. To what degree, if any, is it also a theory of *interpretation*?

(2) If Hume has a theory of interpretation, then to what degree is it a *hermeneutic* theory?

(3) Does Hume by "sympathy" mean something similar to that which Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and other hermeneutic thinkers called *empathy* (*Hineinversetzen*, *Nacherleben*, *Einfühlen*)?

(4) If Hume's theory is hermeneutic, then to what degree is it philosophically *interesting today*? Is it as outdated as, for instance, some of Hume's problems and arguments about the ideas of time and space in part 2 of Book 1 of the *Treatise*, or does it still have something important to contribute to the philosophy of understanding and interpretation?

Farr maintains that (1) Hume *has* a theory of interpretation and understanding by means of sympathy which (2) *is* "decidedly hermeneutic," but (3) *not* a theory of empathy, and that (4) the last-mentioned point makes Hume's theory interesting from a contemporary point of view because it avoids certain objections against empathy theories and puts it in essential agreement with theories of non-empathetic *Verstehen*, among them those of Apel and Gadamer.

I will question this reading of Hume and advocate an alternative hermeneutic interpretation. Hume, I believe, *does* have a theory of interpretation by means of empathy, or at least the fundamentals of one, according to which one understands others by "putting oneself in their shoes," without depending (as positivists would argue) on law-assumptions about their thought and behaviour. I will argue that, so interpreted, Hume's theory in certain ways has a greater interest from a contemporary point of view than the position ascribed to him by Farr. Among other things, Hume has an answer to the crucial question of how an interpreter can determine whether he and the other are sufficiently and relevantly similar for the interpreter to function as a reliable model of the other. My position thus differs from Farr's concerning (3) and by implication (4), but agrees with it concerning (1) and (2).

My general plan is to first give an overview of Hume's theory of sympathy in the *Treatise* and then discuss (1)–(4), opposing the three interpretations just mentioned. In the first section, I outline Hume's account of how we acquire knowledge

of other people's passions and opinions, how that knowledge leads to sharing of those passions and opinions, how sympathy is affected by similarity between the sympathising observer and the agent, and how it is affected by differences in points of view. With Farr's reading of Hume serving as the point of departure, the idea of a hermeneutic reading of Hume's theory is introduced and defended in the second section. The third section deals with the question whether sympathy can be considered a form of empathy. It is argued that an interpretation of sympathy as empathy agrees well with Hume's uses of the concept of sympathy, whereas the non-empathetic reading suggested by Farr does not. The fourth section therefore explores the possibility of an empathetic reading of Hume's theory, and suggests an analysis of sympathy as based on a direct, non-inferential form of understanding in which the interpreter serves as a model of the other by reacting directly to the same stimuli, without needing a theoretical understanding of the other's mental processes. It is then argued in the fifth section that a theory of non-inferential empathetic understanding is in fact compatible with positivism, not perhaps in *our* modern sense of the term, but in the more complex—and to my mind more interesting—sense in which *Hume* is a positivist. In the sixth section, it is maintained that Hume's theory explains how interpreters can identify and compensate for differences in points of view between themselves and others, and thus can ensure their own reliability as empathetic models of the others. The seventh and final section identifies a problem with a positivist account of sympathy, having to do with the relation between "ideas" and "impressions" in the cognitive process of sympathy, and shows how a theory of empathetic understanding avoids that difficulty.

I limit myself to the theory of sympathy in the *Treatise*, and thus do not address the question how Hume's thought on this issue evolved in later works. This is an interesting question, but one which would require a thorough discussion of its own.[3]

1. The Theory of Sympathy: An Overview

The concept of sympathy is first employed in Book 2 of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, in the analysis of the passions which Hume calls *pride* and *humility*.

> No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own. This is not only conspicuous in children, who implicitly embrace every opinion proposed to them; but also in men of the greatest judgment and understanding, who find it very difficult to follow their own reason or inclination, in opposition to that of their friends and daily companions. . . . A good-natured man

finds himself in an instant of the same humour with his company; and even the proudest and most surly take a tincture from their countrymen and acquaintance. A cheerful countenance infuses a sensible complacency and serenity into my mind; as an angry or sorrowful one throws a sudden damp upon me. (T 2.1.11.2; SBN 317)[4]

Although Hume is not always consistent in his usage,[5] his definition here catches one important sense in which he uses the term sympathy, namely, for the propensity "to receive by communication" the "inclinations and sentiments" of others. It is easy to see why he chooses the word sympathy for this mental disposition to fellow-feeling, considering the etymological roots of the word in the Greek *syn* (with, same, or alike) and *pathos* (feeling or passion). Note how Hume's definition differs from contemporary everyday usage, where "sympathy" mostly denotes an attitude of affection or high regard for another person. (Hume would call this *love*.)

According to Hume, sympathy plays a decisive role in moral thought.

Sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions. . . . The happiness of strangers affects us by sympathy alone. To that principle, therefore, we are to ascribe the sentiment of approbation, which arises from the survey of all those virtues, that are useful to society, or to the person possessed of them. These form the most considerable part of morality. (T 3.3.6.1–2; SBN 618–19)

Hume argues in the *Treatise* that morality is based on passion rather than reason, and that moral thinking is incompatible with egoism.[6] If so, then only non-egoistic passions can overcome self-interested passion and make moral thinking possible. Sympathy, Hume seems to think, is the source of all non-egoistic passions, and thereby the source of a crucially important class of moral judgements. When they do not affect us either directly or indirectly, the happiness and suffering of others would be emotionally indifferent to us unless we had the propensity to fellow-feeling, to feel pleasure and pain as the result of perceiving the pleasure and pain of others.[7] Moreover, the virtue of justice and thereby the possibility of society depend on sympathy. Short-term and long-term self-interest can motivate a certain degree of loyalty to government, the laws, and to justice, but in cases where these go against the individual's self-interest, or are indifferent to it, only sympathy can cause us to have feelings of moral approval towards them (T 3.2.2.24; SBN 499).

Hume discerns two main parts in the process by which sympathy arises; first, the sympathetic observer *knows* by inference that another person has a certain belief or feeling, and second, he comes to *share* that belief or feeling. The analysis of the first, epistemic part of the process is in agreement with Hume's analysis of indirect factual knowledge in the *Treatise*, Book 1, part 3. When I know the

mental states of another person, I do so in essentially the same way as I know any other fact that goes beyond what I have observed, namely, by inferring it from an observed fact and an assumed causal relation between the observed and the non-observed fact.

> When I see the *effects* of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the *causes* of any emotion, my mind is conveyed to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion. Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, it is certain that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and assistants, would have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of the causes and effects. From *these* we infer the passion: And consequently *these* give rise to our sympathy. (T 3.3.1.7; SBN 576)

Seeing the scalpels and bandages, I thus infer the anxiety of the patient as their effect, and observing his facial expression, I infer it as the cause. But as a sympathetic observer, I do not merely *know* that the other has a certain feeling; I *experience* the feeling, although perhaps not with the same strength as the other. The process of sympathy is not complete until the resulting idea of anxiety has become "converted into the passion itself."

Hume observes that not all ideas of the feelings and beliefs of others produce their corresponding impressions to the same extent, and suggests that *similarity* between people is a determining factor in this regard; we are much more disposed to sympathise with people who resemble us in their emotional and cognitive dispositions. Similarities are particularly strong among people with the same customs, character, nationality, or language. However, human nature ensures sufficient likeness for the capability of mutual sympathy to be present even in the absence of those common denominators (T 2.1.11.5; SBN 318).[8]

The factors which unite people also separate them. If friends and countrymen sympathise more easily than others, the opposite is true of strangers and enemies. Hume enumerates a variety of factors which cause the degree of sympathy between people to vary even when the moral qualities of the actions or personalities do not. In addition to custom, character, nationality, and language, he mentions "the present disposition of our mind" (T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582) and distance in time and space (T 3.3.1.14–15; SBN 581–82). Perhaps most importantly, the disposition to sympathy is affected by self-interest (T 3.3.1.18; SBN 583).

Hume draws an analogy to the extra-moral phenomenon that external objects sometimes appear differently to different observers, and to the same observer at different times (T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603). If each observer spoke only from his peculiar point of view and described external objects as they appeared to him at each occasion, without being aware of the ways in which his perspective influences appearances, then each observer would fall into constant contradiction with others, and with himself at different points of time. What holds for judgements on external objects holds also for moral judgements. In both cases, Hume contends, we need to compensate for differences in points of view, so that each observer strives to express, not so much how things appear to him at any particular occasion, but rather how they appear independently of the peculiarities in his point of view which separate him from other observers, and from himself when observing the same thing at other occasions. (How things are "in themselves" is a different matter.)

> Our situation, with regard to both persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance, Besides, every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and it is impossible we could ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent those continual *contradictions* and arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things, we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation. (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581–82)

Steadiness or stability of points of view here seems to mean independence of *intra*-individual variations in perspective—that is, variations in the ways a single individual perceives things on different occasions, depending on changes in self-interest, distance, connections of friendship, and so on—and generality independence of *inter*-individual variations in perspective, or differences between people.[9]

The factors which cause points of view to vary require compensation of different types. To counteract the effects of self-interest, the moral observer considers the ways in which the action or personality under consideration affects, not himself, but those who are most directly affected by it (T 3.3.1.17; SBN 582). To neutralise the influence of differences in distance, the moral observer imagines what it would be like *if* he were to perceive the action or person at a closer or otherwise more appropriate distance. Thus, Hume explains that he naturally has much stronger feelings of love and benevolence for his skilful and loyal servant than for Marcus Brutus, but considering the latter's deeds as they are described by historians, he knows that *if* he were to meet the latter and come as close to him as to the former,

then Marcus Brutus *would* induce in him a much stronger affection and admiration than the servant. It is on these imagined feelings, or actual feelings towards an imagined situation, that he builds his considered moral judgement (T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582). Hume goes so far as to say that it belongs to the very *meaning* of moral judgements that they are to be understood as being made from stable and general points of view (T 3.3.1.18; SBN 584; see also T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582, and T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603).

Being aware of the influence of points of view on our feelings and judgements, we thus distinguish our actual feelings from those of an ideal observer. Although we retain our partial, idiosyncratic and unstable emotions, the moral judgements we express and defend in intercourse and discussion with others are based on the supposed emotions of the ideal observer, or of ourselves in a supposed ideal situation, rather than the emotions we actually entertain.[10] If moral judgements were based on our actual, uncorrected feelings, then moral reasoning would require our emotional dispositions to be refined, ideally to a point where they would generate only steady and general feelings, or feelings generated from steady and general points of view. But since our moral judgements are to some degree independent of our actual feelings, we can reason morally without such emotional refinement (see also T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603). Hume can readily admit, therefore, that even the most conscientious moral reasoner cannot be completely impartial and unaffected by friendship, nationality, and so on.[11]

2. Sympathy, Understanding, and Positivism

Let us turn to our main problem, whether Hume's theory of sympathy constitutes a hermeneutic theory of interpretation, or an early precursor of such theories.

By positivism, I here mean the view that human action and speech should be studied by methods similar to ones applied in natural science, where—at least according to a common, Hume-inspired philosophical understanding—one typically searches for general laws, or law-like regularities, and explains and predicts natural phenomena by applying assumptions about such laws to particular objects and events. In other words, a positivist is someone who defends a "deductive-nomological" model of the role of general laws in the humanities and social sciences, or something much like it.[12] I here deliberately use the term "positivism" for a position on a single philosophical issue, concerning the nature of understanding, or explanation and prediction of others.[13] This is just one among the multitude of senses in which the word "positivism" can be and has been used, but it is one that seems particularly useful for understanding Hume's theory of sympathy, as I hope will be clear from what follows.

By hermeneutics—a perhaps equally ambiguous term—I here mean a view that includes two closely related but logically distinct elements: first, anti-positivism, or the view that at least some parts of the *Geisteswissenschaften* require interpretive

methods which *do* not involve searching for general laws, and second, a theory of such interpretive methods. By a hermeneutic thinker, I thus refer to someone who embraces anti-positivism *and* a theory concerning the nature of the interpretative, non-positivist methods allegedly employed in the humanities and social sciences. Schleiermacher and Dilthey are paradigmatic examples of hermeneutic philosophers in this sense. Note that hermeneutics, thus understood, is compatible with the view that positivist methods can *also* be usefully applied in these disciplines, which is to say that they combine nomothetic and interpretive methods. What the hermeneutic denies is that *all* methods in the "moral sciences" follow the deductive-nomological pattern, not that *some* of them do.

As I have mentioned, Hume's positivism is evident already in the idea of the "experimental method of reasoning" mentioned in the subtitle of the *Treatise*. But it is at least conceivable that Hume would consider sympathy an exception from his generally positivist methodology, or that he gradually changed his mind and gave up positivism when writing Books 2 and 3, or that he is simply ambiguous on this point.[14] So the question remains whether sympathy is a hermeneutic or a positivist method of understanding. According to a positivist interpretation of sympathy, it requires that one explicitly or implicitly applies general assumptions about their external behaviour and inner, mental processes. According to a hermeneutic interpretation, it does not.

There is evidence for a positivist interpretation of Hume's theory in the general analysis of inferential empirical knowledge in Book 1, part 3, which is unambiguously causal and nomothetic, and in a remark in Book 2, directly after an analysis of sympathy as based on the three laws of association stated in *Treatise* 1.1.4 (SBN 10–13) and a statement on the "nature and cause of sympathy."

> What is principally remarkable in this whole affair is the strong confirmation these phenomena give to the foregoing system concerning the understanding, and consequently to the present one concerning the passions; since these are analogous to each other. (T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319. See also T 3.3.1.7; SBN 576, quoted above, T 2.1.11.3; SBN 317, and T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319)

According to Hume's analysis of causation in Book 1 of the Treatise, causal relations can only be known on the basis of observed constant conjunctions. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, this strongly indicates that the passages just quoted should be read as stating that sympathy is based on a sort of inference by analogy, in which the interpreter observes the other's behaviour and from that evidence in combination with observed law-like connections between similar behaviour and corresponding mental states in his own case draws the conclusion that the other has mental states of the same types.

Admitting all this, Farr contends that nevertheless the "underlying methodological implications" of Hume's analysis of sympathy "are decidedly hermeneutical" ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 296). As I have mentioned, one issue to be addressed here is whether Hume in his remarks on sympathy puts forward a theory of interpretation and understanding, or of morals and moral psychology. Another issue is whether Hume's theory of understanding, if he has one, is hermeneutic.

Addressing the first-mentioned issue, Farr provides three arguments ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History"). First, he argues that the question of how we understand others and ourselves is integral to Hume's moral psychology, since it is by understanding the pain or pleasure of people affected by an action, and consequently coming to share them, that we judge the action's moral rightness or wrongness ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 292, 298–99). Just as we must feel before we can judge, according to Hume's moral theory, we must understand before we can feel, or feel in the appropriate ways; to the degree in which moral thought involves sympathy, it is a process of understanding, feeling and judging, not just of feeling and judging. Thus, although Hume's primary concern in the theory of sympathy is undeniably with moral thought and emotions, the understanding of others is an important part of his topic.

Second, and despite the etymological roots of the word "sympathy" in the Greek *pathos* (here denoting feeling or passion), what is communicated by sympathy according to Hume are not only emotions, but also "opinions," "principles," "reasons," and other non-emotive states or contents of mind ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 291).[15] Thus, sympathy is not exclusively a principle of moral thinking. It has a wider range of application, including, in principle, mental states of all kinds.

Third, although the main tendency or focus of Hume's entire analysis of human nature in the *Treatise* is undeniably naturalistic and descriptive-psychological, his remarks on the importance of adjusting in sympathy for differences in points of view shows that his theory of sympathy has a normative-methodological aspect. It not only *describes* the psychological mechanisms of sympathy, but also states *rules* for how to control and regulate these mechanisms, to compensate for the sources of bias identified in the descriptive analysis ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 295–98).

Disregarding minor points, it seems to me that Farr's argument here is sound. However, his interpretation becomes more problematic when he addresses the issue whether Hume's theory of understanding is positivist or hermeneutic.

Again, Farr has three main arguments. First, he interprets a passage in the first *Enquiry* as expressing the idea of a hermeneutic circle in the interpretation of others ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 293):

Hence likewise the benefit of that experience, acquired by a long life and a variety of business and company, in order to instruct us in the principles of human nature, and regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation. By means of this guide, we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again, descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. (EHU 8.9; SBN 84–85)[16]

Second, he points out that Hume in the second *Enquiry* apparently gives up the associationist and causal analysis of sympathy ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 295).

It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes; and there are, in every science, some general principles beyond which we cannot hope to find any principle more general. (EPM 5.17n19; SBN 219–20)[17]

Thus, Hume here no longer holds that sympathy can be explained as a simple instantiation of the laws of association, and so at least to some extent opens up for an alternative, non-causal account of understanding by means of sympathy.

As a third and final argument for the hermeneutic nature of Hume's theory, Farr emphasises that Hume in his *History of England* and other works points to socio-historical contexts, including language, customs, and forms of governments, as the interpretative background for explanations in history and the moral sciences. Assuming the interpretation of the theory of sympathy as a methodology of understanding, Farr draws the conclusion that,

[S]ympathy is a paradigmatic form of *contextual understanding*. The contexts which are relevant for the explanation and understanding of action are social, cultural, historical; they function much like the linguistic or symbolic systems in which signs operate. ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 303)

I am here concerned only with Hume's standpoint in the *Treatise*, and the arguments just mentioned concern other works. Allowing myself to disregard this restriction for the moment, I want to argue that they are less than convincing. The first passage from the *Enquiries* seems entirely compatible with a (not strictly behaviourist) positivist reading of action explanation as proceeding from evidence in the other's external behaviour to assumptions about his beliefs and desires,

and from these assumptions to explanations and predictions of his actions. The second passage indicates that Hume has given up his analysis of sympathy in the *Treatise*, but not that he has adopted an alternative, hermeneutic analysis. What Hume seems to be doing here is to apply the Newtonian rule *hypotheses non fingo*, of not attempting to explain "the ultimate force and efficacy of nature" (T 1.3.14.8; SBN 159) or "the ultimate principles of the soul" (T Intro 9; SBN xvii), and this is a rule that Hume applies to natural laws and other phenomena for which he accounts in unambiguously positivist ways. As far as the third argument is concerned, finally, it is not clear that Hume's historical references to context commits him to anything more than the positivist view that historical, cultural, and social circumstances play the same role in historical explanation as, say, the particular circumstances preceding the eruption of a volcano does in an explanation of it. According to the positivist, the phenomenon at issue is in both cases explained by particular circumstances *and* general laws connecting those circumstances to the *explanandum*.[18]

I conclude, therefore, that Farr's interpretation of Hume as a fore-runner of hermeneutics fails on a crucial point. Although it seems clear that Hume does have a theory of *understanding*, or at least the fundamentals of one, it still needs to be established that the method of understanding which he describes is *hermeneutic*, rather than yet another application of the positivist "experimental method of reasoning." Part of the difficulty here concerns the third of our four main issues, whether sympathy as Hume conceives it is a form of empathy.

3. Sympathy as Empathy or Non-empathic *Verstehen*

According to Schleiermacher—whose right to be entitled the father of hermeneutics is obviously less disputable than Hume's—the interpreter must "put himself both objectively and subjectively in the position of the author," objectively by thoroughly understanding the author's language and historical circumstances, and subjectively by "knowing the inner and outer aspects of the author's life," or, understanding his individual *psyche*.[19] As Schleiermacher explains it, this empathetic method is inseparable from the hermeneutic circle; the author's work is part of the author's language, genre, and age, each text is part of the author's work as a whole, and "each part can be understood only out of the whole to which it belongs, and vice versa. . . . To put oneself in the position of an author means to follow through with this relationship between the whole and the parts."[20] Following a similar line of thought, Dilthey stresses the importance in interpretation of putting oneself in another's place (*Hineinversetzen*), and re-creating (*Nachbilden*) and re-living experiences (*Nacherleben*). If the interpreter simply stays within his own perspective, he will misunderstand the other, but if he acquires sufficient knowledge of the tradition to which the other belonged and the particular situation in which the other

wrote or spoke, he can learn to see things the way the other did, and thus bridge the gap between perspectives so that he attains understanding. For instance, the only way for me as a modern interpreter to understand the religious thought of Luther is to "transpose myself into the circumstances" in which Luther lived, and think through the situation as he would have done it.[21]

The question is what, if anything, Hume's concept of sympathy has in common with the notion of empathy as employed in such hermeneutic theories.

In an analysis of Hume's concept of sympathy, Rico Vitz differentiates three senses in which Hume uses the term: in what could be called a "procedural" sense for the cognitive mechanism by which a person "enters into" the sentiments of another (T 2.1.11.5; SBN 318), in a "substantial" sense for the sentiments thus communicated (in the *Treatise* sometimes referred to as "fellow-feeling"), and in a third sense for the process by which the "idea" of an other's sentiment is converted into an "impression" in the observer.[22] The interpretation of sympathy as empathy concerns the first of these three senses, or aspects.

We have seen that Hume defines sympathy as the "propensity . . . to receive by communication" the inclinations and sentiments of others (T 2.1.11.2; SBN 316), and he even talks of "the principle of sympathy or communication" (T 2.3.6.8; SBN 427), as if the two terms were synonymous. According to Farr ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 290, 306–308), this shows that Hume conceives sympathy as a principle of communication and *not* of empathy, which sets him off from philosophers like Adam Smith and Edmund Burke, who think of sympathy precisely as a process in which, in Burke's words, "we are put into the place of another man."[23]

> The notions of empathy, projection, and substitution are completely alien to his [Hume's] account. . . . His principle of sympathy is . . . about communication of signs (and/or effects), not empathetic projection. ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 306)

This point is of great importance to Farr because, he believes, it saves Hume's theory from the objections of Hempel and others against the idea of empathetic understanding ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 287, 305–306).

Farr sums up his interpretation as follows:

> Consequences strikingly similar to Apel's and Gadamer's follow from Hume's principle of sympathy. Not only does "the principle of sympathy or communication" have implications for *what* the moral sciences (must) study, and *how* they (must) proceed; without sympathy between moral scientist and moral agent these sciences would not even be possible; the foundation of the moral sciences rest upon the a priori of sympathy.

> Hume's problematic and conclusions have great affinities with those of the contemporary proponents of *Verstehen*. With his emphasis on sympathy *qua* communication, Hume must be counted among the modern theorists of *Verstehen*, and not among the theorists of empathy. ("Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 310)

It seems to me that this conclusion does not follow, however. First, Farr refers only to Hume's definition of sympathy and does not take into account his actual use of the term. Second and more importantly, nothing in the definition excludes the possibility that communication at least in some cases takes place precisely by means of empathy; and although there may also be *other* forms of sympathy, these seem much less relevant for understanding and interpretation.

One way in which an observer may empathise with a patient waiting to undergo surgery, is to imagine himself lying on the operating table, sharing the other's expectations about what is going to happen and his dispositions to physical pain and anxiety. Presumably, this will produce similar feelings of fear and distress in the mind of the observer as in that of the patient. But the same vicarious or resonant feelings may be produced in another, more direct way, which can also be sorted under the label of empathy; simply seeing the patient's facial expression of fear and distress may be enough to produce the same expression in the face of an observer, and even the feeling expressed by it. When I see another person smile, I myself smile, almost instinctively, when I see him put up a sad face, I experience a feeling of sadness, and so on. Such facial and emotional "contagion," "mimicry," or "imitation" has been observed in children from the age of one year,[24] which strongly suggests that it can take place without any fore-going process of perspective-taking, that is, of imagining oneself being in another's situation and sharing his initial desires, beliefs, or other mental states.

In a recent work on empathetic understanding, Karsten Stueber distinguishes *basic* from *re-enactive* empathy.[25] By the first-mentioned term, Stueber means a quasi-perceptual mechanism or process, closely connected to the phenomenon of mental mimicry, which enables us to directly recognise what another feels or intends.[26] Re-enactive empathy, by contrast, can replicate more complex mental states and is not limited to situations where the other is directly observed. This is the type of empathy of which it seems appropriate to say that the interpreter takes the perspective of the other, reconstructing the other's point of view and the other's situation from the available physical, historical or other evidence.[27] The question, then, is whether Hume by "sympathy" means basic or re-enactive empathy, or perhaps both.

As Goldman has observed, Hume's follower Adam Smith appears to use "sympathy" in the last-mentioned, wide sense, which includes both perspective-taking and simple motor mimicry.[28] There is evidence that Hume likewise uses the term

for types of "communication" which are not cases of taking the perspective of an other. For instance, he observes how "a cheerful countenance infuses a sensible complacency and serenity into my mind; as an angry or sorrowful one throws a sudden damp upon me" (T 2.1.11.2; SBN 317). Note the word "sudden" here, which suggests pre-reflective, immediate emotional resonance without any process of imagining oneself being in the other's place. It seems reasonable to assume, and consonant with Hume's definition of sympathy as "communication," that emotions and moods can be replicated in this particular way even by someone who knows virtually nothing about the circumstances which, in the other person, produced the original emotional state. Thus, mental mimicry seems to be *one* of the things for which Hume uses the term "sympathy."

However, Hume gives other examples which are clearly *not* cases of simple mimicry, especially in his account of what he calls extended or extensive sympathy, or sympathy that "is not . . . limited to the present moment," but in which we "feel by communication the pains and pleasures of others, which are not in being, and which we only anticipate by the force of imagination" (T 2.2.9.13; SBN 385; See also T 2.2.7.5–6; SBN 370–71, and T 2.2.9.14–17; SBN 386–88). "The view of a city in ashes conveys benevolent sentiments; because we there enter so deep into the interests of the miserable inhabitants, as to wish for their prosperity, as well as feel their adversity" (T 2.2.9.17; SBN 388). And if I see someone who is in danger of being run over by horses, I immediately run to his assistance, motivated by sympathy with the pain which he has not yet experienced, but which I anticipate (T 2.2.9.13; SBN 385–86). A further example is that of the outside observer who shares a patient's suffering when seeing him being prepared for surgery, not *only* because he sees the patient's facial expression—*that* may be a case of direct emotional contagion—but also because he observes the circumstances and imagines what it would feel like if he himself were in them (T 3.3.1.7; SBN 576).[29]

It seems to me, therefore, that mental mimicry cannot be the source of fellow-feeling in all types of cases for which Hume uses the term "sympathy." Moreover, it cannot be so in cases which are crucial for Hume's claim that sympathy is "the chief source of moral distinctions" (T 3.3.6.1; SBN 618). According to Hume, actions should be judged morally according to their consequences for those primarily affected by them (T 3.3.1.17; SBN 582). However, it seems to be a limitation of emotional and cognitive mimicry that it can take place only between people who come in contact with each other, directly or indirectly. I may resonate emotions and attitudes of people I meet, or see depicted in painting or sculpture, perhaps even of people I only read about, such as fictional characters described in a particularly lively manner. But according to Hume, sympathy is essential for moral judgement quite generally, that is, even of actions and character traits which affect, affected, or will affect people whom we know of only by inference, such as the man sleeping in the field, or people known to us only from written or oral sources in which we

are told nothing whatsoever about their facial expressions, gestures, or outward appearance in any other respect. In such cases, moral judgement requires extended sympathy. Mental mimicry is not enough.

Moreover, it appears necessary to correct emotional contagion by extended sympathy in order to arrive at a "steady and general" point of view. Emotional mimicry contributes to the fact that we feel stronger sympathy towards people whom we have met and people in situations we have observed, than towards strangers, or friends and acquaintances in circumstances of which we lack first-hand experience. But in considered moral judgements, or "calm" sympathetic feelings, such differences in spatial, temporal, and social distance are compensated for, so that "we blame equally a bad action, which we read of in history, with one performed in our neighbourhood the other day" (T 3.3.1.18; SBN 584). Psychologically interesting as it is, mental mimicry is *not* sufficient to achieve the impartiality in sympathy which is crucially important in Hume's moral theory.

Thus, we can discern three possible ways to understand the nature of sympathy: as (a) direct mental mimicry (contagion, imitation) without perspective-taking (basic empathy), (b) a process of imagining oneself being in the other's place and taking his perspective (re-enactive empathy), or (c) a process of applying general psychological or other law-type assumptions to infer the other's feelings or beliefs from his outer and inner behaviour, and then converting the ideas of these feelings and beliefs to their corresponding impressions in one's own mind. A positivist theory of sympathy excludes (b) but recognises (a) and (c) as possible forms of sympathy, the clearly most important being (c). A hermeneutic interpretation of sympathy as empathetic understanding emphasises (b) as the most important form of sympathy, although, as far as I can see, it excludes neither (a) nor even (c) as possible sources of fellow-feeling and understanding in *some* cases.[30]

An objection against Farr's reading of Hume, which to me seems decisive, is that the interpretation of sympathy as *Verstehen* without empathy fits *neither* of these three possible forms or conceptions of "sympathy." Farr's interpretation directly contradicts (b), and (c) is excluded for almost equally obvious reasons, the question under consideration being what it can possibly mean to interpret Hume's theory as hermeneutic and non-positivist. What remains, then, is (a). But a theory of interpretation in the humanities, including the historical sciences, can hardly be built upon the phenomenon of mental mimicry, the range of which is, essentially, limited to the present. As far as I can see, it is therefore *only* if we interpret Humean sympathy as re-enactive empathy, or empathetic understanding by means of perspective-taking, that we can make sense of the claim that sympathy is a specifically hermeneutic method or source of historical understanding. Contrary to what Farr maintains, it is then in the works of thinkers like Schleiermacher and Dilthey that we should look for more fully developed forms of the hermeneutic theory for which, presumably, Hume lays some of the foundations.

I conclude that Farr's interpretation fails, not only because it has little textual support as against a more conventional, positivist reading, but also because it cannot account for the ways in which Hume uses the notion of sympathy. In the subsequent sections, I will first try to elaborate the interpretational hypothesis that Hume has a hermeneutic theory of empathetic understanding (section 4), and then argue that a theory of empathy is compatible with Hume's nuanced version of positivism, despite first appearances to the contrary (section 5), that his analysis of points of view provides the fundamentals of a methodology for empathetic understanding (section 6), and that the interpretation of sympathy as empathy has the advantage from Hume's point of view that his theory avoids a serious problem affecting it as interpreted positivistically, and from our point of view that it is considerably more interesting as a contribution to the contemporary debate (section 7).

4. Sympathy as Engaged, Non-inferential Empathetic Understanding

Let us begin the search for a hermeneutic theory of empathy in Hume's *Treatise* by asking what characterises a theory of empathetic understanding, generally speaking, and then apply the answer to that question to Hume's theory of sympathy. In contemporary analytical philosophy of mind and theory of science, the two sides in the debate on empathetic understanding usually go under the labels *theory theory* and *empathy* or *simulation theory*.[31] According to theory theorists, all explanation and prediction of other people's behaviour depends, explicitly or implicitly, on theoretical assumptions. These in turn are usually understood as general law assumptions, especially of psychology, in which case theory theory becomes equivalent to positivism as defined above.[32] By contrast, empathetic understanding is mostly thought of as *not* depending on the application of general laws of psychology or any other form of theoretical knowledge. (Henceforth, I use "empathy" and "empathetic understanding" only for re-enactive empathy.)

The question whether it is possible to empathise with, or simulate, an other without explicitly or implicitly drawing on general law assumptions is at the heart of the empathy-theory theory debate. As the term "simulation" suggests, an analogy can be drawn to the use of models in natural science and engineering. Just as engineers and meteorologists use physical and computerised models to predict and explain the behaviour of airplanes and weather systems, the empathetic interpreter uses himself as a model for the other person. In naturalistic models, the observer manipulates the input variables, such as speed and distribution of weight, and observes what happens with the output variables, such as a plane's crashing or not crashing. Similarly, the empathetic interpreter feeds himself with the input of imagined counterfactual situations, and observes the output consisting in his own beliefs, desires, and decisions to act in those

imagined situations. In both cases, one assumes that the "target system"—the plane, the other person—behaved or will behave like the model in the relevant ways. A plane model can yield correct predictions of a real plane's reactions even if the relevant aerodynamic and physical laws are unknown; in fact, that seems to be the very point of using a model.[33] In a similar way, empathy theorists maintain, interpreters can correctly identify the beliefs and desires of others without knowing the relevant psychological or other general laws governing the others, or themselves.[34]

An influential objection to empathy theory comes from Daniel Dennett. Suppose that someone were to predict the reactions of a bridge to strong winds by imagining himself being in the situation of the bridge and considering how he would react to it. Since people and bridges are different, this would make sense only if he somehow compensated for the differences. The only possible way to validate the inference from the observer's own reactions to those of the bridge, Dennett maintains, would be to draw on whatever laws of physics and engineering are applicable to bridges under the conditions at issue. But this means that the supposed case of empathetic understanding can be validated only by being turned into something else, namely, a case of theory-based prediction or explanation. Similarly, if an observer imagines being in another person's situation and infers that the other would react in the same way as the observer himself does, then the inference is valid only if the observer has evidence of law-like connections to the effect that that is the way such people generally react to such situations.[35] But then *all* explanation and prediction is in fact nomothetic, which is precisely what theory theorists contend and empathy theorists deny.

In an attempt to answer such objections, Robert M. Gordon argues that the problem lies not so much in the idea of empathetic understanding as in a particular conception of it, namely, as a form of inference by analogy from the interpreter to the other ("Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," and "Simulation without introspection or inference from me to you"). More precisely, Gordon criticises a theoretical three-step model of empathy which he finds explicitly or implicitly assumed both in the works of contemporary simulation theorists such as Goldman, Jane Heal, and Robert Nozick, and in the criticisms of simulation theory by theory theorists.[36] The empathetic interpreter is assumed, first, to imagine, or "simulate," being himself in the other person's situation, having duly compensated for differences in evidence, background beliefs, and so on, between himself and the other; second, to introspectively observe his *own* beliefs and desires in the imagined situation; and third, to infer that the *other* had these beliefs and desires in the actual situation. Gordon rejects this "model model," as he calls it, on the grounds that it makes empathy theory vulnerable to objections like Dennett's. *If* there is an inference from self to other in empathetic understanding, then it can only be validated nomothetically.

However, Gordon maintains, empathy involves no such inferences ("Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," and "Simulation without introspection or inference from me to you").[37] Elaborating on this idea, he makes a distinction between "*cold*" and "*hot*" methods of empathy (simulation), or *detached* and *engaged* methods, as I will prefer to call them.[38] A detached method is one that "chiefly engages our intellect and makes no essential use of our own capacities for emotion, motivation, and practical reasoning." By contrast, someone who employs an engaged method for empathy "uses her own perceptual, cognitive, motivational, and emotive resources to mirror [the other's] mind . . . and then predicts what he [the other] will do by [himself] deciding what to do" ("Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," 732–33). Exploring and defending the idea of "hot" or engaged empathy, Gordon argues that an empathetic interpreter can "transform" himself into an other by "recentering his egocentric map"—by simulating himself *being* the other person in the situation at issue, as opposed to being *himself* in the other's situation; and that, having thus transformed himself, the interpreter can identify the other's beliefs and desires directly, without inferring them from either the other's external behaviour or his own introspective evidence ("Simulation without introspection," 53–54). Rather than concerning himself with the other's beliefs or desires, the interpreter thus concerns himself "with *the world*—O's [the other's] world, the world from O's perspective" ("Simulation without introspection," 60).[39] Thus, empathetic interpretation resembles the way in which some actors prepare a role: by imagining being the other, taking into consideration both the other's external situation and his personality traits, life story, background beliefs, and so on, to compensate for the differences between the actor's own and the other's perspectives ("Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," 733–35, 739).

Let us call this a *non-inferential model* of empathy, since empathy is claimed to require neither inference by analogy nor any other form of inference from external evidence to the other's beliefs and desires. (See section 6 below for an important qualification of this claim.) As we have seen, Gordon believes that the non-inferential nature of empathy saves it from Dennett's objection. Let us leave aside that issue for the moment (but see again section 6), and go on to explore the implications of a non-inferential analysis of empathy and sympathy for Hume's theory.

As we have already noted, Hume explicitly and repeatedly endorses an inferential model of sympathy in the *Treatise*, according to which the beliefs and feelings of the other are inferred from his externally observable behaviour (for instance, in T 3.3.1.7; SBN 576, quoted earlier). It seems to me, however, that Hume in fact has good reasons to prefer a non-inferential account of sympathy—first, that the sophisticated form of positivism which Hume embraces is in fact compatible with a non-inferential hermeneutic model, second, that Hume's theory of sympathy

provides an important building-block for a hermeneutic theory, namely, a set of methodological rules for assessing the reliability of interpreters as models of others, and third, that the non-inferential model avoids an internal problem in Hume's theory affecting the idea of sympathy as involving inference by analogy model.

5. Knowledge of Laws versus Habitual Law-following; The Compatibility of Hume's Positivism with Hermeneutics

Hume has obviously influenced paradigmatic positivists, such as Carl Hempel in "The Function of General Laws in History." However, Hume himself wrote long before positivism and the positivism-hermeneutics debate as we know them, and his position therefore does not necessarily coincide with any of those developed later in the tradition. In what sense and to what degree is Hume a positivist?

The term "positivism" is perhaps most commonly associated with a specific form of nomotheticist monism, the *methodological* and prescriptive doctrine that explanatory claims ought to be supported by statistical evidence of correlations (or something of that kind) between the types of events, actions, or states to be explained and the factors which supposedly explain them, such as the motives of agents in the case of actions.[40] Under the label theory theory, nomotheticist monism figures in philosophy of mind and epistemology as a primarily non-normative doctrine about the nature of causal and explanatory knowledge—an alternative label would be *ontological* positivism. Among other things, ontological positivists, or theory theorists, have argued that most people's relatively well-developed ability to predict and explain other people's actions in everyday life is evidence that they possess—partly or even entirely implicit—"folk psychological" knowledge of general laws of human behaviour.[41] This is a thesis on the interpretation of certain psychological data, not a methodological rule for how to go about in doing psychological explanation.

I believe that some such distinction is necessary to capture the complexity of Hume's position on the role of general laws in explanation and prediction. On the one hand, Hume is clearly a methodological positivist about his own project of describing and explaining human nature. For instance, he writes in the Introduction to the *Treatise* that the science of man must "leave the tedious lingring method" of previous philosophy and apply the "experimental" method of natural science, which requires careful and exact observations of the "particular effects, which result from its [the mind's] different circumstances and situations," so that we can "endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible" (T Intro 7–8; SBN xvii). In other words, the right method in the human sciences is to identify general laws of the human mind by means of observation and induction so that they can be applied in explanation and prediction of thought and action, in essentially the same way as laws of nature in explanation and prediction of natural events.

On the other hand, Hume *also* seems to say, in the more skeptical parts of the *Treatise*, that the search for general laws is *not* essential for explanation and prediction in any such way. This idea, which seems more ontological than methodological, is an aspect of his tendency to oppose reason, reflection, and knowledge of general principles to "custom" and "habit."

In the section "Of the reason of animals," Hume argues that humans and animals alike learn from experience "by means of custom alone" (T 1.3.16.8; SBN 178)—custom and habit being in turn prompted by observed conjunctions of objects, or law-like connections, in past instances—and that consequently "reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas" (T 1.3.16.9; SBN 179). Part of the difficulty here is to realise what might be called the unsophisticated or non-reflective nature of the human intellect.

> The common defect of those systems, which philosophers have employed to account for the actions of the mind, is, that they suppose such a subtility and refinement of thought, as not only exceeds the capacity of mere animals, but even of children and the common people in our own species. (T 1.3.16.3; SBN 177)

Hume sees this as an implication of his skeptical argument on induction, which demonstrated the impossibility of perceiving or inferring a "real connection" among objects. Earlier in Book 1, he explores the same topic further and directly addresses the issue whether causal knowledge, and thereby explanation, requires knowledge of general regularities. He reflects on the example of a man who interrupts his journey when arriving at the shore of a river, being motivated by past experience which informs him of the connection between being emerged in water and suffocating, but without consciously remembering that general regularity or the observed instances which are evidence of it.

> The custom operates before we have time for reflection. The objects seem so inseparable, that we interpose not a moment's delay in passing from the one to the other. But as this transition proceeds from experience, and not from any primary connection between the ideas, we must necessarily acknowledge, that experience may produce a belief and a judgement of causes and effects by a secret operation, and without being once thought of. . . . For we here find, that the understanding or imagination can draw inferences from past experience, without reflecting on it; much more without forming any principle concerning it, or reasoning upon that principle. (T 1.3.8.13; SBN 103–104. See also EHU 4.23; SBN 39. Note

that Hume here uses "imagination" as synonymous with, or inclusive of, understanding and reason; see T 1.3.9.19n22; SBN 117–18)

To say that it is possible to infer predictions from past experience "without forming any principle concerning it" is to say, or at least to strongly suggest, that explanation is possible without knowledge of the relevant general laws. Hume is even more explicit on this point in the subsequent paragraph.

> It is certain, that not only in philosophy, but even in common life, we may attain the knowledge of a particular cause merely by one experiment, provided it be made with judgement, and after a careful removal of all foreign and superfluous circumstances. . . . [T]hough we are here supposed to have had only one experiment of a particular effect, yet we have many millions to convince us of this principle; *that like objects, placed in like circumstances, will always produce like effects*. . . . The connection of the ideas is not habitual after one experiment; but this connection is comprehended under another principle, that is habitual; which brings us back to our hypothesis. In all cases we transfer our experiences to instances, of which we have no experience, either *expressly* or *tacitly*, either *directly* or *indirectly*. (T 1.3.8.14; SBN 104–105. See also T 1.3.15.6; SBN 173–74)

Hume does not deny that causal connections presuppose general regularities, but he does deny that *knowledge* of such connections presupposes explicit and "direct" knowledge of such regularities. Hence, if I know that C causes E, then there *exists* a general law-like connection between events of the type to which C belongs and events of the type to which E belongs (under some description or other of C and E, one might add). Moreover, *non-reflective knowledge* of causal connections—as I will call it—requires something which distinguishes it from mere true belief, namely, a mental "habit" corresponding to the objective connection, so that the impression or idea of a C-type event is regularly followed, in the mind of the knowing subject, by the idea of an E-type event. Thus, for instance, if there exists a law-like regularity such that a billiard ball is set in motion whenever it is hit by another billiard ball, then I know that the motion of a billiard ball was caused by the collision with another ball if I observe the latter event being followed by the former, and have a mental habit or disposition such that whenever I think of a billiard ball being hit by another, then I expect the ball hit by the other to move. That is to say, I know this causal fact if the further conditions indicated by Hume are fulfilled, one of which is the "careful removal of all foreign and superfluous circumstances." But knowledge of the general law connecting the events is *not* necessary for non-reflective knowledge. A habitual connection of the corresponding ideas is enough.

The crucial point here is thus the contrast between knowledge of general regularities and mere habits of mind. This is a subtle difference. Hume uses the word "tacitly," and a theory theorist could argue that his point in the passages quoted is just that nomothetic knowledge can be implicit, and that consequently it lends no support whatsoever to empathy theory as against theory theory. Indeed, the conditions for non-reflective causal knowledge as just described look much like the conditions under which theory theorists would talk of tacit or implicit knowledge.[42] But it might be objected here that what the theory theorist calls tacit knowledge is in reality nothing but learnable dispositions of non-propositional thought and behaviour—something similar to what Ryle calls *know-how*, rather than the implicit *know-that* postulated by theory theory.[43] To some degree, Hume is ambiguous between these two views, using not only the words "tacit," "principle," and "inferences," which suggest propositional knowledge, but also "custom," "habit," and "habitually," which suggest non-propositional knowledge. (Ryle makes a sharp distinction between know-how and mere habits. It might be an improvement of Hume's theory to replace the concept of habit and custom with Ryle's concept of multi-track dispositions.)[44]

I am not sure how to pursue the argument on propositional versus non-propositional knowledge further, and suspect that it would lead too far for the present purposes.[45] In the philosophy of mind, the problem does seem to have far-reaching implications for the issue of debate between empathy and theory theorists. From a methodological point of view, however, its importance is less obvious. In what follows, I will first explore Hume's argument as interpreted non-propositionally, and then briefly discuss the question to what extent the conclusions would be affected by an alternative, propositional interpretation.

Stated in non-propositional terms, the core of Hume's argument is that explanatory knowledge requires correspondence between the knowing subject's "train of ideas" and the real train of events explained, but does not require knowledge of the relevant laws. When I think of a billiard ball being hit by another, I regularly and unreflectively expect it to be set in motion. This habitual connection between the *ideas* of collision and motion corresponds to a real regular connection between the two types of *events*. I do not know a general law connecting events of the two types, but nevertheless I know that the collision caused the motion. Compare this to the following case. When I think of being prepared for surgery—I imagine seeing the doctors prepare their scalpels, and so on—I regularly experience fear. This habitual connection in *my* mind between the idea of being prepared for surgery and the experience of fear corresponds to a real connection in the mind of the *other*. However, I do not know anything like a general law connecting mental states of these types. If Hume is right, then it would appear that I nevertheless *know* that the other is experiencing fear when I see him in the situation at issue and imagine myself

being in it (again, provided that the further conditions for "tacit" and "indirect" knowledge are fulfilled).

Empathy theorists have argued something very similar. In response to the objections of Dennett and others, they have maintained that an interpreter can function as a model of an other if he *follows* the same relevant patterns or laws of thought and behaviour, even if he does not *know*, either implicitly or explicitly, what these patterns are, or knows the underlying psychological laws.[46] In other words, validity in empathetic understanding requires *ontic* nomothetic, or nomic, similarity—the interpreter must simply *be* sufficiently and relevantly similar to the other—but it does *not* require nomothetic *knowledge*. For instance, if two people have been brought up under similar circumstances and therefore have formed similar emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dispositions—habits and customs, in Hume's terms—then the one can validly simulate the other without needing to apply knowledge, either explicit or implicit, of relevant laws. This point is well stated by Arthur Ripstein.

> If I am to serve as a model of you, we must be sufficiently alike to be tempted by the same things, and to find the same things prima facie reasonable, even if we act very differently. The more we share by way of culture, background, and innate sensibilities, the more likely it is that I really am following your mind rather than seeing some irrelevant and accidental connection between your thoughts and your deeds.[47]

As in Hume's argument on non-reflective causal knowledge, the idea here is thus that explanatory knowledge depends, not on knowledge of laws, but on a correspondence between regularities in the object—here the mental dispositions of the other—and regularities in the mind of the knowing subject. In other words, we can understand others because "the minds of men are mirrors to one another" (T 2.2.5.21; SBN 365). Note how closely this idea fits in with a non-inferential analysis of empathetic understanding. If I do not know the law-like regularities in the other's mind, or my own, and hence cannot *infer* the other's beliefs and feelings from the observed evidence, then I may nevertheless understand those beliefs and feelings by simply *having* them (or something sufficiently like them) if I am sufficiently similar to the other to follow the same patterns of thought and emotion.

Thus, the correspondence between trains of ideas and trains of objective events explains how explanatory knowledge can be non-reflective, or "tacit," and this in turn supports the suggested reading of sympathy as non-inferential empathy. But this leads to a further problem which a theory of non-inferential empathy needs to address.

I mentioned earlier (in section 4) the question whether the analysis of empathy as non-inferential really saves it from Dennett's suspended bridge objection in

the way Gordon claims. I believe that it does not. Understanding seems to require, not only that the interpreter *is* sufficiently similar to the other and thus a reliable model of him, but also that he possesses some *evidence* of that similarity. Otherwise the interpreter seems to have no method for validating his own reliability as a model of the other, and hence no way to distinguish mere interpretational guesses from well-grounded hypotheses.[48]

The problem here is to explain by what type of evidence validity in empathetic understanding can be assessed, if not by knowledge of general laws. How can the interpreter determine whether he and the other are similar in the required ways, without referring—as Dennett claims that he must—to general psychological regularities connecting stimuli to responses in himself and the other?

6. Hume's Methodology for Points of View

A clue here may be taken from Hume's assertion that what I have called non-reflective causal knowledge is "indirect," which in the context seems to mean that it is built on the general principle of the uniformity of nature; "The connection of the ideas is not habitual after one experiment; but this connection is comprehended under another principle, that is habitual," namely, "that like objects, placed in like circumstances, will always produce like effects" (T 1.3.8.14; SBN 105; see also T 1.3.15.6; SBN 173–74).

Again, there is a possible analogy to this pattern of reasoning about natural events in the understanding of others. The principle of uniformity of nature is equally applicable to both the natural and the human sphere, but there is also a more specific principle of uniformity, or resemblance, in human affairs.

> Now it is obvious, that nature has preserved a great resemblance among all human creatures, and that we never remark any passion or principle in others, of which, in some degree or other, we may not find a parallel in ourselves. The case is the same with the fabric of the mind, as with that of the body. However the parts may differ in shape or size, their structure and composition are in general the same. There is a very remarkable resemblance, which preserves itself amidst all their variety; and this resemblance must very much contribute to make us enter into the sentiments of others; and embrace them with facility and pleasure. (T 2.1.11.5; SBN 318. See also T 3.3.1.7; SBN 575–76, and T 2.2.5.21; SBN 365. The same point is eloquently stated in EHU 8.7; SBN 83)

The *principle of similarity* between people, as we may call it, is stated by Hume as an empirical truth. One may wonder how it could possibly be tested empirically. If writing today, Hume might consider reformulating it as a methodological rule

of thumb, analogous to the version of the principle of charity which Dennett (in his less anti-empathetic mood) calls the *principle of humanity*: that an interpreter should attribute to speakers the propositional attitudes he supposes he would have himself in the same circumstances.[49]

However the principle is to be understood in this regard, it seems clear that it can play a role in explanation of human thought and action roughly analogous to that played by the principle of uniformity of nature in explanation of natural events. I see, for the first time, a billiard ball being hit by another and set in motion. I subsume this single case under the general principle that "like objects, placed in like circumstances, will always produce like effects" (T 1.3.8.14; SBN 105). Thus, I form a habitual connection between the ideas of collision and motion, corresponding to the real connection between these two types of events, so that the next time I see a collision—unless I have evidence to the contrary—I expect motion. Consider a parallel case in the understanding of others. I imagine myself being prepared for surgery, and experience fear. I first subsume this case under the general principle of uniformity of nature, thus forming a habitual connection between the idea of myself being prepared for surgery and the experience of fear. I then subsume this connection under the principle of similarity between humans, so that whenever I observe someone (myself or another) being prepared for surgery, I expect that person to experience fear—supposing again that I lack evidence to the contrary (for instance, that the patient has been given strong pain killers, or that he is a Japanese Zen Buddhist monk trained to be insensitive to pain).

This leads us to a further (and as far as I can see the last) condition for non-reflective causal knowledge mentioned by Hume, the "careful removal of all foreign and superfluous circumstances." Presumably, what is at issue here are factors which exclude *ceteris paribus*, thus making principles or habitual connections derived from previous experiences inapplicable to new instances—*disturbing factors*, for short. (See also T 1.3.15. 11; SBN 175, where Hume talks of separating circumstances that were "superfluous," or not "essential," to the first experiment.) The "removal" of disturbing factors can of course be concrete, so that they are not allowed to have any real effect, but it can also, I take it, be a matter of compensating purely theoretically for possible or actual disturbances. Considering what has just been said, disturbing factors in the case of empathy are best understood as factors which detract from the validity of the interpreter by diminishing the degree of similarity, in relevant respects, with the other.

How are interpreters to compensate for such factors? In effect, this is precisely the question with which Dennett's suspended bridge argument confronts the empathy theorist, Dennett's answer being, of course, that the degree of relevant similarity can only be determined on the basis of nomothetic knowledge. Does Hume have a different answer to this question?

It seems to me that he in fact has a quite excellent such answer, namely, what he has already said about the influence on sympathy of factors which add to, or detract from, the degree of relevant similarity between sympathetic observers and others: self-interest, distance in time and space, relations of friendship, nationality, and so on. (See section 1.) According to Hume's methodological rules for sympathy in moral judgement, one ought to compensate for such factors when sympathising with others. And it is now clear, I believe, that precisely the same methodological rules are applicable to empathetic understanding, if conceived as a non-inferential, engaged method, as I have suggested.

I believe that this indicates the prescriptive *methodological* implications of Hume's largely ontological remarks (in the sense explained above) on non-reflective causal knowledge. To repeat, it is a consequence of a non-inferential account of sympathy and empathetic understanding that they are to a large extent inseparable; I understand the other's beliefs and feelings by coming to share them. Consequently, Hume's analysis of the ontology of non-reflective causal knowledge implies methodological rules, not only for moral judgement based on sympathy, but also for empathetic understanding and interpretation—more precisely, rules for assessing the degree of similarity between interpreter and the other, and compensating for differences. (This, I believe, answers a possible objection, namely, that Hume's analysis of unreflective knowledge, like Goldman's and Gordon's theories of simulation, is subject to the objections against so-called externalist theories of knowledge.)[50]

To repeat, it is because of its non-inferentiality that engaged empathy does not require the interpreter to make general law assumptions, and so does not reduce to nomothetic explanation in the way implied by Dennett's suspended bridge argument. However, we now see that calling it non-inferential is in fact an oversimplification. Hume's methodological rules *are* based on assumptions of a certain form of general laws or regularities, connecting factors such as self-interest, distance, and relations of friendship to partiality and impartiality in points of view. From the general assumption that interpreters tend to sympathise more easily with people they have met, for instance, we can draw inferences on a certain interpreter's reliability as a model of a certain other. *This* form of inferentiality in empathy does *not* reduce it to nomothetic explanation, however. The empathetic interpreter can simply treat the other's mind, or the laws or principles governing his behaviour and mental processes, as a "black box." The interpreter does not need to know the inner workings of the other's black box, or his own. To ascertain the validity of interpretation, the interpreter needs only to know that the other's black box and that of the interpreter himself are sufficiently and relevantly similar to systematically produce the same outcome.[51] In other words, empathetic understanding does not require anything like a psychological *theory* of the other, only a set of methodological rules of thumb for assessing similarity in points of view

between the other and the interpreter himself. That is why the interpreter can follow the engaged method of simply relying on his own responses to external stimuli in order to understand the other's responses to the same stimuli.

Let us return to the issue of the propositional versus the non-propositional interpretations, or versions, of Hume's argument on non-reflective knowledge. It seems to me that although the *ontological* difficulty remains, a propositional reading of the argument would not change anything of fundamental importance in the *methodological* conclusions just drawn. If Hume's "tacit" and "indirect" causal knowledge is really implicit knowledge of propositions about general laws, not just habitual trains of thought, then *one* method in validation of empathy-based predictions and explanatory hypotheses would be to make the relevant implicit law assumptions explicit and test them. But if—as quite often seems to be the case—we have no idea whatsoever about how to state the relevant assumptions without making them either uninformative, implausible, or irrelevant,[52] then a more practicable alternative would be to follow the rules of method Hume suggests. Thus, even a positivist ontology of knowledge and a—partly impracticable—positivist methodology may allow and even to some degree require non-positivist methods, that is, methods which do not involve the search for or application of general law assumptions. More precisely, such methods will be required to the degree that the positivist methods are impracticable.[53]

7. A Problem with the Positivist Account of Sympathy

I have argued that a theory of sympathy as empathetic understanding is compatible with Hume's view on the role of general regularities in causal knowledge, and that his methodological rules for compensating differences in points of view provides an answer to objections such as Dennett's against that theory. A further reason, from Hume's point of view, for considering a non-inferential conception of sympathy has to do with a difficulty affecting the alternative, inferential and positivist conception which, as I mentioned above, is undeniably an important tendency in Hume's theory of sympathy. The difficulty affects his explanation of the second part of the cognitive process of sympathy, in which, he claims, the *ideas* of the other's feelings or beliefs are converted into their corresponding impressions.

Recall Hume's inferential analysis. First, there is an outward observable sign of a mental phenomenon in another person's behaviour—say, a bodily movement, an utterance, or a facial expression. Observing this gives rise, in the mind of the observer, to the *idea* of the mental state or process itself—the feeling, belief, or chain of reasoning which the other is assumed to have or go through. That idea causes the feeling or belief *itself* (or a similar one) to arise in the mind of the observer, thus completing the process of communicating the contents of one mind to another. Hume interprets the last step as a matter of ideas becoming stronger

and livelier, thereby being transformed into their corresponding impressions; the idea of the other's pleasure becomes pleasure itself, the idea of uneasiness becomes uneasiness in the mind of the observer. The "idea is presently converted into an impression, and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal motion, as any original affection" (T 2.1.11.3; SBN 317. See also T 1.3.10.2–4; SBN 118–20, T 2.1.11.3–8; SBN 317–20, and T 3.3.1.7; SBN 576). This, presumably, is what distinguishes fellow-feeling from mere knowledge of other people's feelings, and the same can be said about belief and other mental states or processes.

In the first sections of the *Treatise*, Hume makes much of the principle that "impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas" (T 1.1.1.8; SBN 5), the latter being mere "faint images" or "copies" of the former, distinguishable by their lesser degree of force and vivacity (T 1.1.1.1; SBN 1, T 1.1.2; SBN 8). Later in Book 1, he discusses a case where the order is reversed, that of the notorious liar who by constantly repeating his lies turns ideas of his imagination into impressions, and thus becomes unable to distinguish true from false (T 1.3.5.6–7; SBN 86, T 1.3.9.19; SBN 117). In sympathy, the exception becomes the rule, according to the inferential analysis; it is only by a cognitive process of converting ideas into their corresponding impressions that we are able to feel sympathy for others.

What is it, then, that turns the ideas of the other's emotions into those very emotions in the mind of the sympathetic observer? Hume's answer to this question is interesting but, as far as I can see, entirely unsatisfactory. He first claims that no explanation is needed; the transformation of ideas into passions in sympathy "is an object of the plainest experience, and depends not on any hypothesis of philosophy" (T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319–320). Despite this, he offers an explanation. In Book 1, Hume maintained that "when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity" (T 1.3.8.2; SBN 98). Applying this principle to the present case (T 2.1.11.7; SBN 319), Hume tries to explain the conversion of ideas into impressions by searching, first, for one or more *impressions* in the sympathetic observer from which force and liveliness are conveyed to the ideas of the other's passions, and, second, for the relations through which this conveyance takes place.

The most unsatisfactory part of the analysis concerns the first of these two problems. Hume claims that it is from the impression of the *self* that force and liveliness are transferred to the sympathetic observer's ideas of the other's passions.

> It is evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person, that it is not possible to imagine, that any

thing can in this particular go beyond it. Whatever object, therefore, is related to ourselves must be conceived with a like vivacity of conception, according to the foregoing principles. (T 2.1.11.4; SBN 317)

In the well-known skeptical argument on personal identity in Book 1 of the *Treatise*, Hume rejects the notion that "we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our *self*" (T 1.4.6.1; SBN 251). In the passage from Book 2 just quoted, however, he apparently makes exactly the claim that he refuted earlier. Moreover, he claims that the idea of the self surpasses all others in force and liveliness, and that it strengthens and enlivens the idea of any object related to the self by resemblance, contiguity, or causality, so that the latter will be conceived with the same force and liveliness as the former.

The relation which more than any other influences sympathy is resemblance. All humans resemble each other, but some more than others.

Where, beside the general resemblance of our natures, there is any peculiar similarity in our manners, or character, or country, or language, it facilitates the sympathy. The stronger the relation is between ourselves and any object, the more easily does the imagination make the transition, and convey to the related idea the vivacity of conception, with which we always form the idea of our own person. (T 2.1.11.5; SBN 318)

Apart from the apparent difficulty of reconciling this analysis with skepticism about personal identity, a problem here seems to be that *if* the vivacity of the idea of the self were conveyed in this way, then the idea of the self would communicate its force and liveliness to all ideas, and turn them into impressions. Hume's reply is that "opinions and affections" are converted into their corresponding impressions more easily than other ideas because they "depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind, than any other impressions." He even remarks that "this is the nature and cause of sympathy" (T 2.1.11.7; SBN 319).

In his attempt to explain the supposed transformation in sympathy of ideas into impressions, Hume thus invokes psychological premises which, at least from a contemporary perspective, seem highly dubious to say the least. Does his theory of sympathy essentially depend on these premises?

It seems to me that it does not, and that it is only because of Hume's tendency to think of sympathy as a detached, or "cold," inferential method that he is confronted in the first place with the problem of how ideas of passions can turn into the passions themselves. (See the criticism of Hume's inferential model of sympathy in Gordon, "Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," 728.) According to the inferential model, the *passion* in the mind of the other—the patient's fear, for instance—is connected to externally observable evidence—the scalpels, the

facial expression—which makes the interpreter infer the *idea* of the other's passion, and that idea is transformed into a *passion* in the mind of the interpreter. In other words, the cognitive process of sympathy goes from "hot" passion to "cold" idea and back to "hot" passion. But if sympathy is an engaged method, then the process is "hot" all the way through. The *passion* itself, not just the idea of it, arises *directly* in the mind of the interpreter when he observes the other's situation and imagines himself being in it. Consequently, the problem which Hume tries to solve by his dubitable psychological hypotheses simply does not arise; there *is* no transition from idea to passion in the mind of the interpreter, and consequently no need to explain it. This is not strictly speaking a disproof of the inferential model of sympathy. However, it provides good reasons, at least from Hume's point of view, for seriously considering a non-inferential model. And as we have seen, a non-inferential analysis fits in almost surprisingly well with the idea of non-reflective causal knowledge and his methodology for points of view.

Let me conclude by emphasising an implication of the non-inferential conception of sympathy, namely, that there can be no sharp distinction between interpretation and moral judgement. According to inferential models, sympathy and moral judgement require sharing of the other's feelings, beliefs, and so on, while understanding does not. If the method of understanding is engaged, however, then there is no fundamental difference between empathetic understanding and sympathy in this regard. It is by *feeling* fear in my own breast that I *understand* the patient's fear. It is by *myself* coming to expect that the surgery will be painful that I understand *his* expectation that it will be so. Drawing a perhaps unexpected parallel, we might say with Gadamer that understanding is, primarily, agreement ("*Verständnis ist zunächst Einverständnis*").[54] Understanding an other's belief or feeling is, to a considerable extent, to share it.

8. Conclusion

Is Hume's theory of sympathy in the *Treatise* a theory of *interpretation*, not just of moral thought? If so, is it a *hermeneutic* theory of interpretation? Is it a hermeneutic theory of *empathetic understanding*? And does it have something to contribute to the contemporary philosophical debate on the nature and methodology of understanding in the human sciences?

True to his own principles, Hume sets out to explain sympathy by applying the "experimental," positivist method sketched in the introductory sections of the *Treatise*. But positivism, I believe, leads him into a difficulty in the account of how the sympathetic observer comes to *share* the feelings and beliefs of the other, and, more or less inadvertently, Hume develops the materials for a hermeneutic theory of empathetic understanding. As an implication of his skeptical argument about induction, he argues in Book 1 of the *Treatise* that explanatory knowledge

does *not* require knowledge of general laws, and that habitual connections between ideas, directly and indirectly derived from experience, can fulfil the same epistemic function. In Books 2 and 3, he discusses the ways in which our ability to sympathise is determined by the degree of similarity to the other, or lack of it; to sympathise, I must share much of the other's point of view, including his cognitive, emotional, and motivational dispositions, his "habits" and "customs." Taken together, these two arguments fit in surprisingly well with an idea in contemporary empathy theory, namely, that validity in empathetic understanding depends, not on *knowledge* of general laws, but on the degree to which the interpreter and the other *follow* the same general laws. Moreover, Hume has an answer to the question of how the degree of relevant similarity is to be assessed, if not by the application of nomothetic knowledge—namely, his methodological rules for how to compensate in sympathy for differences in points of view, such as conflicting self-interest and differences in cultural background.

In sum, I believe that Hume has good *reasons* to consider a hermeneutic theory of empathetic understanding (as we would call it) as an alternative to his positivist theory of sympathy, that such a theory is *compatible* with the complex and subtle form of positivism which Hume develops in Book 1 of the *Treatise*, and that his analyses of sympathy and explanatory knowledge contain the *fundamentals* of a hermeneutic theory. It is in this sense, I suggest, that Hume is a fore-runner of hermeneutics, and a fore-runner with much to contribute to the tradition. I have argued, against Farr's interpretation, that Hume's theory does not support a hermeneutics of *non*-empathetic understanding. Hence, the hermeneutic tradition in which he should be placed is that of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and—if "hermeneutics" is used in the wide sense defined earlier—contemporary empathy or simulation theory.

It must be conceded, however, that Hume could hardly lay claims to being *more* than a fore-runner of that tradition (or those traditions), considering that the primary focus in the theory of sympathy is on morals rather than on understanding, that he gives few signs of being aware of the weaknesses in his positivist explanation of sympathy, and that the analysis of sympathy as non-nomothetic is more of a latent possibility than a fully developed theory. Thus, Hume has the building-blocks of a hermeneutic theory, but fails to put them explicitly and unambiguously together in the required way.

However, while Hume's so to speak official, positivist theory of sympathy contains little of apparent interest today—except of course from a historical point of view—his latent hermeneutic theory touches upon central topics in the contemporary debate on empathetic understanding, and makes interesting contributions to it. And it seems to me that, if not more, Hume's methodology of similarity is a good first attempt to formulate non-positivist methods for understanding and interpretation.

For the purpose of placing Hume in relation to the hermeneutic tradition, it is interesting to compare what I have called the principle of similarity with a remark by Dilthey on empathetic understanding.

> But we understand individuals by virtue of their kinship, by the features they have in common. This process presupposes the connection between what is common to man and the differentiation of these common features into a variety of individual mental existences; through it we constantly accomplish the practical task of mentally living through, as it were, the unfolding of individuality.[55]

Even if people are similar, generally speaking, we need criteria of some sort to determine whether and to what degree we are sufficiently and relevantly similar for understanding in specific cases, and perhaps more important, methods to bridge the gaps that inevitably separate ourselves as interpreters from those whom we try to understand. Hermeneutic thinkers have discussed at great length the problem of conflicting fore-conceptions and horizons of understanding, or in Humean terms points of view. Most important in this regard is perhaps the notion of the hermeneutical circle, which, understood as a methodological principle, directs interpreters to identify the over-all points of view of authors, speakers, and agents by placing them, or their texts, utterances, and so on, in the wider contexts of their culture, epoch, social group, lives, other works, and so on.[56] All this is of course a great improvement on the rules of method offered in the *Treatise* for identifying and compensating differences in points of view. But Hume already saw the fundamental problem and made contributions to its solution which, I believe, still deserve serious attention for more than historical reasons.

NOTES

1   Leszek Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & co., 1968), 30. For further references on Hume's relation to positivism, see James Farr, "Humean Explanations in the Moral Sciences," *Inquiry* 25 (1982): 57–80, 77n1.

2   James Farr, "Hume, Hermeneutics, and History: A 'Sympathetic' Account," *History and Theory* 17.3 (1978): 285–310, 296, 310. See also Joel C. Weinsheimer, *Eighteenth-Century Hermeneutics: Philosophy of Interpretation in England from Locke to Burke* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), chap. 4, 103–34; Farr, "Humean Explanations in the Moral Sciences"; and Donald Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), chaps. 7–8, 187–246.

3   For an interesting discussion, see Rico Vitz, "Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume's Moral Psychology," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42.3 (2004): 261–75.

4   David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed.David Fate Norton and Mary Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), abbreviated "T" in the text and cited by Book, part, section, and paragraph number, followed by the page number in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A.Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), abbreviated "SBN" in the text.

5   On Hume's different uses of "sympathy," see Vitz, "Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume's Moral Psychology."

6   David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), abbreviated "EPM" in the text and cited by section and paragraph, followed by the page number in *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A.Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), abbreviated "SBN." For Hume's view on egoism, see also EPM, Appendix 2.

7   See, for instance, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "On Why Hume's 'General Point Of View' Isn't Ideal—and Shouldn't Be," *Social Philosophy & Policy* 11.1 (1994): 202–28, 205–207.

8   On Hume's theory of moral points of view, see Sayre-McCord "On Why Hume's 'General Point Of View' Isn't Ideal"; Rachel Cohon, "The Common Point of View in Hume's Ethics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57.4 (1997): 827–50; and Christine M. Korsgaard, "The General Point of View: Love and Moral Approval in Hume's Ethics," *Hume Studies* 25.1–2 (1999): 3–42.

9   On Hume's notion of steady and general points of view, see especially Korsgaard, "The General Point of View."

10   See Korsgaard, "The General Point of View"; and Cohon "The Common Point of View in Hume's Ethics," 836–39.

11   See Sayre-McCord, "On Why Hume's 'General Point Of View' Isn't Ideal" on this problem in Hume's theory.

12   The classical statement of what has later been called the deductive-nomological model is Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History" (1942), in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts inc., 1949): 459–71.

13   For a richer sense of the term, see for instance Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason*, chap. 1, 1–10.

14   For an excellent discussion of Hume's ambiguous position on the positivism-hermeneutics issue, see Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life*, chap. 7, 187–209, especially 196–97.

15   See also Páll S. Árdal, *Passion and Value in Hume's* Treatise, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 46–48.

16   David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), abbreviated "EHU" in the text and cited by section and paragraph, followed by the page number in *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human*

Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), abbreviated "SBN" in the text.

17   David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), abbreviated "EPM" in the text and cited by section and paragraph, followed by the page number in *Enquiries Concerning the Principles of Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), abbreviated "SBN."

18   Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History."

19   Friedrich Schleiermacher, "General Theory and Art of Interpretation" (1828), in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1992), 73–97, 83–84.

20   Schleiermacher, "General Theory and Art of Interpretation," 84.

21   Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life-Expressions" (1907–10), in Vollmer, *Hermeneutics Reader*, 152–64, 159–60.

22   Vitz, "Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume's Moral Psychology."

23   Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of the Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756), in E. Burke, *Works*, vol. 1 (Boston 1881), 117, quoted in Farr, "Hume, Hermeneutics, and History," 306; Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (1759; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

24   Alvin I. Goldman, *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 193–95; Susan S. Jones, "Imitation in Infancy: The Development of Mimicry," *Psychological Science* 18.7 (2007): 593–99.

25   Karsten R. Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy: Agency, Folk Psychology, and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), 145–47, 151–52. Alvin Goldman makes the same distinction using the terms *low-level* and *high-level simulation*; Goldman, *Simulating Minds*, 113, 147.

26   Someone who replicates the feeling of another by mere emotional mimicry may have no interest in understanding the other. Thus, mimicry can occur without empathetic understanding. See Goldman, *Simulating Minds*, 133, on this point.

27   Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy*, 151, 158, 202

28   Alvin I. Goldman, "Empathy, Mind, and Morals," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 66.3 (1992): 17–41, 27; and Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

29   Like Farr, Árdal seems to neglect such examples, thus being led to conclude that Hume thinks of sympathy exclusively in "mechanical" terms and does not see perspective-taking as part of it; Árdal, *Passion and Value in Hume's* Treatise, 45, 134.

30   See Goldman, *Simulating Minds*, and Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy*, for "hybrid" theories of empathy, or simulation, according to which both empathy and the applying of general law assumptions are necessary for understanding others. See also Gordon, "Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," 236; and Henrik Bohlin,

"Intuitively Assessed Reasonableness as a Criterion of Validity in Empathetic Understanding," *SATS. Nordic Journal of Philosophy* 10.1 (2009): 107–31, 121–26.

31   See Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy*; Goldman, *Simulating Minds*; Jane Heal, *Mind, Reason, and Imagination: Selected Essays in Philosophy of Mind and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and the contributions to *Folk Psychology. The Theory of Mind Debate*, ed. Martin Davies and Tony Stone (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); *Mental Simulation: Evaluations and Applications*, ed. Martin Davies and Tony Stone (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); and *Empathy and Agency: The Problem of Understanding in the Human Sciences*, ed. Hans Herber Kögler and Karsten R. Stueber (Boulder, Colorado, & Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 2000).

32   It has also been argued that explanation depends on other theoretical assumptions or entities than laws; Paul M. Churchland, "Folk Psychology and the Explanation of Human Behavior," *Philosophical Perspectives* 3 (1989): 225–41.

33   Arthur Ripstein, "Explanation and Empathy," *Review of Metaphysics*, 40 (1987), 475–76.

34   Ripstein, "Explanation and Empathy"; Goldman, "Empathy, Mind, and Morals"; Gordon, "Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator"; and Gordon, "Simulation without Introspection or Inference from Me to You," in Davies and Stone, *Mental Simulation*, 53–67.

35   Daniel Dennett, *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 100–101. For a similar objection, see Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History."

36   For an example, see Goldman, "Empathy, Mind, and Morals," 21.

37   For a critical comment on Gordon's argument, see Goldman, *Simulating Minds*, 185–88.

38   The terms "engaged" and "detached" empathy are from Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy*, 34, 122.

39   A similar argument is developed in Jane Heal, "Co-Cognition and Off-Line Simulation," in her *Mind, Reason, and Imagination*, 91–114

40   Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History."

41   See, for instance, Churchland, "Folk Psychology and the Explanation of Human Behavior"; Stephen P. Stich and Shaun Nichols, "Folk Psychology: Simulation or Tacit Theory?" *Philosophical Issues* 3 (1993): 225–70; Jerry A. Fodor, "The Appeal to Tacit Knowledge in Psychological Explanation," *The Journal of Philosophy* 65.20 (1968): 627–40; and Daniel Dennett, "Styles of Mental Representation," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 83 (1982–1983): 213–26.

42   See Fodor, "The Appeal to Tacit Knowledge," 638.

43   Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Hutchinson, 1949), chap. 2, 25–61.

44   Ibid., 40–44.

45   But see Fodor, "The Appeal to Tacit Knowledge."

46   Ripstein, "Explanation and Empathy"; Goldman, "Empathy, Mind, and Morals"; Gordon, "Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator"; and Gordon, "Simulation without Introspection."

47   Ripstein, "Explanation and Empathy,"480.

48   See Bohlin, "Intuitively Assessed Reasonableness," 118–21.

49   Dennett, *The Intentional Stance*, 343. Dennett ascribes the principle to Richard Grandy.

50   See Bohlin, "Intuitively Assessed Reasonableness," 118–21.

51   Bohlin, "Intuitively assessed reasonableness," 121, 124–25; and Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy*, 120–22.

52   See William Dray's classical argument in W. Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), chap. 2, 22–57.

53   This argument for empathy theory comes close to Dennett's argument for the "intentional stance" in Daniel Dennett, *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1978), chap. 1, 3–22. See Bohlin, "Intuitively Assessed Reasonableness," 121ff, for elaborations. See also Farr, "Humean Explanations in the Moral Sciences," 64–69, for an interesting discussion of Hume's view on the limits of nomothetic explanation in the human sciences.

54   Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised ed., trans. Joel C. Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (1960, London: Sheed & Ward, 1989), 180. I have argued the same point in Bohlin, "Intuitively Assessed Reasonableness."

55   Dilthey, "The Understanding of Other Persons," 158.

56   See, for instance, Dilthey, "The Understanding of Other Persons." See also Gadamer's re-evaluation of the hermeneutic tradition in *Truth and Method*.