**Hume’s Epistemology: The State of the Question**

1. **Introduction**

In the study of Hume’s epistemology, one issue dominates the literature. Known today as the ‘Kemp Smith problem’, it can be stated as follows.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hume has a positive naturalistic project of establishing a psychological account of the human mind, which he refers to as the ‘science of man’ in the *Treatise* (e.g. THN Intro 4).[[2]](#footnote-2) But if Hume’s scepticism is as caustic as he often seems to suggest, then how is there room for his positive project to have any hopes of flourishing? How can we reconcile his scepticism with his naturalism?

This issue is so central not only because of its intrinsic interest, but also because of its broader significance. If we cannot resolve this worry, it is unclear what sense we can make of Hume’s project itself. Given how much fruitful research has been done in this area, the body of scholarship on this issue has taken a number of innovative turns. I will first survey interpretations of the *Treatise* with respect to the Kemp Smith problem, pausing to briefly compare the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* with respect to their treatment of scepticism, before moving on to treatments of the *Enquiry* on the same.

1. **Hume’s Epistemology in the *Treatise***

Interpreting Hume’s treatment of scepticism in the *Treatise* is a notoriously difficult endeavour. THN 1.4.7, the locus of Hume’s battle against scepticism, can seem rather disjointed, taking numerous twists and turns. It is challenging enough to accommodate all the disparate threads in THN 1.4.7 alone, much less also taking into account what he says before in the rest of Part 4, and also in Part 3. No account is going to perfectly integrate all the texts and come out unscathed.[[3]](#footnote-3)

 The difficulty of providing an account of Hume’s solution to the sceptical problem is exacerbated by the fact that there is no widespread consensus on what exactly the sceptical problem amounts to. Does it include scepticism about induction, raised in THN 1.3.6?[[4]](#footnote-4) Scepticism about reason in THN 1.4.1? Scepticism about the external world in THN 1.4.2? Scepticism regarding vivacity’s lack of relation to truth in THN 1.4.7.3? Scepticism regarding the internal incoherence of our faculties in THN 1.4.7.4, or scepticism about objective necessary connection in THN 1.4.7.5? All of the above, or none of them?

In my view, Hume’s sceptical worry in the *Treatise* is primarily driven by the ‘dangerous dilemma’ (THN 1.4.7.6), which can be stated as follows: should we ‘assent to every trivial suggestion of the fancy’ (*ibid*.), or ‘reject all’ of them, ‘and adhere to the understanding’ (THN 1.4.7.7)? Allowing all the trivial propensities of the imagination leads to credulity. However, allowing none of them leads to the annihilation of our beliefs, given the result of THN 1.4.1, which argues that left to its own devices, reason iterates higher-order judgments which gradually diminish the vivacity of all our beliefs to nothingness, a process which is only prevented by the ‘forc’d and unnatural’ nature of such rarefied reasoning (THN 1.4.1.10). This latter sceptical horn of the dilemma obviously incorporates the worries of THN 1.4.1, but also those of THN 1.4.2—Hume states that only ‘[c]arelessness and inattention’ can save him from scepticism about the external world (THN 1.4.2.57), thus reinforcing his reliance on the trivial propensities in order to escape excessive scepticism. And the various sceptical worries adduced in THN 1.4.7.3–5 clearly give way to the dangerous dilemma in THN 1.4.7.6, particularly the worry regarding objective necessary connection in THN 1.4.7.5, which ‘proceeds merely from an illusion of the imagination’, directly leading Hume to ask ‘how far we ought to yield to these illusions’ (THN 1.4.7.6). I do not see scepticism regarding induction as being a particular point of worry in THN 1.4.7, given that it makes no appearance in this section: THN 1.4.7.3 makes reference to experience and habit, but the worry there is a more general one regarding vivacity, rather than regarding the lack of an argument for the Uniformity Principle; meanwhile, THN 1.4.7.5 concerns Hume’s results on causation, rather than induction. On the whole, it is the dangerous dilemma that appears to occupy Hume’s thoughts for the bulk of THN 1.4.7, dominating the dialectic from THN 1.4.7.6 onwards.[[5]](#footnote-5)

However, given that there is considerable disagreement regarding the nature of the sceptical problem that Hume faces in the *Treatise*, it would be somewhat unfair to view the interpretive options specifically through the lenses of the dangerous dilemma in particular, on pain of obscuring much of what is distinctive about these readings. In what follows, I will canvass the interpretive options for Hume’s treatment of scepticism in the *Treatise* in their own rights as best I can, subject to space constraints. Where appropriate, I will set out a few broad motivations for, and worries about, these accounts. This is not meant to provide decisive reasons for or against any given account, but merely to explain why certain interpretations might appeal to, or concern, a reader of Hume.

One of the most iconic sceptical reading of Hume is the ‘Pyrrhonian’ one that considers Hume to recommend our merely acting on appearances, without our pretending to go further.[[6]](#footnote-6),[[7]](#footnote-7) On this line, Hume is chastened by the sceptical arguments, and recognises the unattainability of any knowledge that lies beyond the realm of appearances. This reading certainly makes sense of Hume’s sceptical troughs, as well as his subsequent doxastic humility (THN 1.4.7.14–15). The primary challenge for sceptical readings is handling what (Cummins 1999) refers to as the ‘integration problem’; that is, adequately explaining Hume’s return to philosophy. The worry is that, without a genuinely epistemic reason for returning to philosophy, Hume’s endeavours in this respect are rendered pointless or futile. Thus, Collier points out that sceptical readings render Hume worse off than the ancient philosophers he condemns in THN 1.4.3.9: at least the ancient philosophers are blissfully unaware of the futility of their endeavours, whereas Hume must continue his projects with the weighty knowledge of the nugatory nature of his intellectual projects (Collier 2008, p. 311).[[8]](#footnote-8) The success of a given sceptical interpretation will largely be measured on the basis of how well it handles the integration problem, given that it cannot help itself to epistemic resources on Hume’s behalf.

One might instead attempt to quarantine the threat of scepticism while recognising its force by pursuing a ‘perspectivalist’ line.[[9]](#footnote-9) Such accounts see Hume as switching between different and mutually incompatible perspectives. At the lowest points of THN 1.4.7, he takes on a sceptic’s viewpoint. But this does not rule him later adopting a naturalist’s viewpoint and returning to his philosophy. He does not have an epistemic response to scepticism, but he does not need one: once he removes his sceptical hat, he no longer feels the force of the sceptical arguments. Such an account has in its favour its ability to make sense of the famously disjointed presentation of THN 1.4.7, in which Hume takes radically different viewpoints (for instance, ‘melancholy and delirium’, ‘spleen and indolence’, and ‘curiosity and ambition’ in the space of THN 1.4.7.8–12).[[10]](#footnote-10) And integration is no longer a problem if one simply denies that Hume takes up a unified perspective. However, there is a worry that reading Hume as committed to irreconcilable viewpoints that are nevertheless equally valid seems significantly to compromise the overall coherence and systematicity of Hume’s project.

One might preserve the perspectivalist intuition that Hume takes different viewpoints throughout THN 1.4.7 while nevertheless maintaining that Hume adopts a singular considered epistemological stance by arguing that the sceptical proclamations are not made *in propria persona.* Such readings, which Ainslie refers to as ‘dialectical’ (Ainslie 2015, p. 234), argue that Hume is not speaking from his own voice in his moments of sceptical despair: he does not genuinely endorse the sceptical arguments or conclusions, but utilises them to highlight the absurdity of a number of competing philosophical systems.[[11]](#footnote-11) Like perspectivalist readings, such accounts make sense of the disparate nature of Hume’s sceptical ruminations. If Hume seems happy to nonchalantly proceed from sceptical despair to a return to philosophy, this is because he did not genuinely enter into such despair in the first place. Such readings will typically exploit Hume’s explicitly drawn distinction between the vulgar viewpoint, false philosophy, and true philosophy (e.g. THN 1.4.3.9). False philosophy, which can fall prey to excessive scepticism, as Hume demonstrates, is to be rejected; meanwhile, Hume’s own true philosophy is untroubled by the sceptical concerns. However, as Ainslie points out, it is unclear on such a view in what sense Hume describes himself as a ‘true sceptic’, if he at no point considers the sceptical considerations to trouble his own beliefs.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Ainslie himself defends a related reading that addresses this concern.[[13]](#footnote-13) According to this interpretation, Hume comes to the realisation that sceptical arguments cannot, and should not, be answered. Like dialectical readings, Ainslie’s interpretation also turns on the distinction between false and true philosophy, seeing Hume reject the former and embrace the latter. According to this reading, for Hume, philosophy involves a close investigation of the mind itself, leading to a reflective interference, that is, a temporary disruption of one’s mental faculties that arises from using these faculties to investigate their own operations. False philosophy, including scepticism, is engendered by this reflective interference: reflective interference leaves us unable to answer certain core philosophical questions, an inability which leads to scepticism and despair (p.219). Hume’s solution is ‘true scepticism’, which recognises this reflective interference, and thus understands both that philosophy is optional insofar as its pursuit is not mandated, and that it must abstain from certain areas of inquiry even when pursued; in this way, philosophy is ‘domesticated’ (p.2). In particular, philosophy is unable to either repudiate or justify our basic cognitive capacities. Ainslie distinguishes between his view and the dialectical one on the basis that, on his view, Hume’s struggle with scepticism is genuine: it is not a mere dialectical device, but rather something that afflicts his own philosophy, perhaps even more so than it does other systems. Hume’s critique of false philosophy is a self-critique, and his escape from scepticism turns on his understanding the path of true philosophy. In this way, Hume remains a ‘true sceptic’ come the end of his struggle in THN 1.4.7 and beyond.

I am inclined to think that there is undoubtedly something to the domestication of philosophy, which has parallels to the limitation of our enquiries exhorted by mitigated scepticism of the *Enquiry* (EHU 12.25). As with all interpretations, objections might be raised over various aspects of Ainslie’s interpretation,[[14]](#footnote-14) but it seems a promising development of the dialectical line in virtue of its taking seriously Hume’s sceptical turn.

While perspectivalist and dialectical readings looked to partition Hume’s naturalistic psychology from his sceptical epistemology as far as possible, one might instead look to the psychology in order to find succour from the spectre of scepticism. A classic reading takes Hume’s return to philosophy to be justified on the basis that excessive scepticism is psychologically impossible to maintain, in contrast to the irresistibility of the beliefs of common life.[[15]](#footnote-15) Indeed, Hume does frequently emphasise the psychological untenability of excessive scepticism, for instance in THN 1.4.7.10. Such accounts often (although not always) turn, either explicitly or implicitly, on the assumption that ‘Ought implies Can’ with respect to our beliefs.[[16]](#footnote-16) Elsewhere, I make the case that Hume rejects this assumption (Qu 2017), and has also argued against Hume’s acceptance of the more general principle that ‘Ought implies Can’ *simpliciter* (Qu Forthcoming).

Externalist interpretations of Hume likewise emphasise the psychological portions of his work.[[17]](#footnote-17) While most interpretations of Hume’s anti-sceptical response focus their attention on Book 1 Part 4, externalist interpretations tend to focus on Hume’s approving descriptions of the psychological mechanisms underlying belief in Book 1 Part 3. Crucially, external justification is justification that need not be available to the agent. For instance, one might be justified in using a belief-forming mechanism that is *in fact* reliable, whether or not this reliability is known or even believed. This provides a response to even the most severe forms of scepticism that Hume considers. It does not matter that Hume cannot find a justification of his faculties against the sceptical arguments, so long as such a justification in fact obtains.

This is a sophisticated and elegant treatment of Hume’s epistemology that offers him a resounding response to scepticism. However, such readings can often be suspected of an undue anachronism. Of course, Hume might have simply been ahead of his time on this issue, as he was on many others. The extent to which such an accusation can be made to stick goes beyond the scope of this paper.

 A line of interpretation that sees Hume as turning to his naturalistic psychology in responding to the threat scepticism hinges on what (Garrett 1997) has termed the ‘Title Principle’:

Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us. (THN 1.4.7.11)

On this account, Hume’s escape from scepticism turns on the psychological elements of liveliness and our propensities. This interpretation has proven particularly influential over the last two decades,[[18]](#footnote-18) to the extent that many treatments of THN 1.4.7 feel it necessary to at least engage with the account, whether to register agreement or disagreement.

One key advantage of interpretations of Hume’s epistemology that appeal to the Title Principle is that it stands on dialectically strong footing with respect to the exegesis of THN 1.4.7.[[19]](#footnote-19) It offers a clear and systematic narrative for Hume’s struggle with scepticism. Hume draws a normative distinction between the permanent, irresistible, and universal principles of the imagination, which are justified, and those that are changeable, weak, and irregular, which are unjustified (THN 1.4.4.1). However, in THN 1.4.7, he realises that this epistemological standard will not do, because his solution to scepticism with regard to reason (THN 1.4.1) turns on changeable, weak, and irregular principles. He then raises the dangerous dilemma: which trivial suggestions of the fancy should we admit (THN 1.4.7.6)? Letting them all in leads to credulity, but letting none in leads to scepticism. He attempts an initial strategy for straddling these two horns, which is to admit those that preclude all abstruse reasoning (THN 1.4.7.7), but this is a failure for a number of reasons: (1) the principle cuts off science and philosophy; (2) it seems *ad hoc*; and (3) its justification itself depends on refined reasoning.

He then succumbs to melancholy and delirium (THN 1.4.7.8), moving on to spleen and indolence (THN 1.4.7.9–11). In this mood, he stumbles upon the Title Principle (THN 1.4.7.11), and finds that it works well enough for overcoming the dangerous dilemma. In conjunction with the stirring of his curiosity and ambition (THN 1.4.7.12), he is thus justified in returning to his naturalistic project.

Thus, viewing THN 1.4.7 through the lenses of the Title Principle offers a cohesive narrative for contextualising Hume’s descent into, and ascent out of, excessive scepticism. However, the horizon is not entirely sunny for interpretations that lean on the Title Principle. The main worry regarding such interpretations is that while they may be on reasonably solid dialectical ground (relatively speaking at least, in the context of THN 1.4.7), they are on much shakier philosophical foundations.[[20]](#footnote-20) For one, the Title Principle seems unable to deal with superstition, which can involve reason mixing with our propensities;[[21]](#footnote-21) thus, Hume is forced to appeal to considerations of safety in order to rule it out (THN 1.4.7.13), which is a strategy he explicitly decries elsewhere (THN 2.3.2.3). For another, it is unclear that Hume has sufficient reason for accepting the Title Principle, other than the fact that it roughly delivers the right results.[[22]](#footnote-22) And the Title Principle seems to point to an epistemology largely divorced from considerations of truth: we have no reason to think that our propensities will be truth-conducive, after all.[[23]](#footnote-23) The challenge for such interpretations is to handle, or explain away, these philosophical weaknesses.

 Garrett has recently developed this account in (Garrett 2015).[[24]](#footnote-24) In line with Hume’s references to the moral sense (THN 3.1.2; THN 3.3.6.3), Garrett reads Hume as a moral sense theorist, in the same vein as Hutcheson. In particular Garrett sees the concepts of ‘virtue’ and vice’ as sense-based concepts from Hume, arising from a faculty of moral sense that is responsive to pleasure and pain. Correspondingly, Garrett sees Hume’s epistemology as similarly sense-based, but responsive to truth and probable truth, rather than to pleasure and pain. This response takes the form of the vivacity of our beliefs.[[25]](#footnote-25),[[26]](#footnote-26) This overarching framework is one that the Title Principle naturally coheres with. Beliefs that are lively should be endorsed in virtue of this liveliness signifying probable truth, thus providing an underlying rationale for the Title Principle’s recommendations.[[27]](#footnote-27) This is a powerful and sophisticated framework that I foresee being particularly significant going forward.

 Garrett’s development of his view is part of a wider trend which sees Hume’s epistemological framework as paralleling his moral (and indeed aesthetic) frameworks in some respects. In my view, this interpretive movement is a highly promising one. Hume is a deeply systematic thinker, and it would not be surprising for his accounts of normativity to share in this systematicity.

 Perhaps the reading that most straightforwardly parallels Hume’s moral philosophy is the ‘usefulness and agreeableness’ reading, which has proven to be one of the more popular options available.[[28]](#footnote-28) Just as Hume holds that virtues are morally praiseworthy because of their usefulness and agreeableness to the self and to others, this reading sees Hume as justifying science and philosophy, as well as the beliefs of common life, on the basis of their usefulness and agreeableness. By contrast, excessive scepticism, superstition, and credulity are often dangerous and disagreeable. Such a view has the advantage of capturing and expressing the undeniable fact that in returning to philosophy, Hume does often refer to the pernicious effects of scepticism (e.g. THN 1.4.7.8) and superstition (THN 1.4.7.13), while emphasising the pleasure that philosophy brings (e.g. THN 1.4.7.12). Such an account might be taken to constitute a merely pragmatic or ethical response to scepticism on Hume’s behalf,[[29]](#footnote-29) or it might be taken to constitute an epistemic one.[[30]](#footnote-30)

 Another view that similarly looks to parallel Hume’s account of moral normativity reads Hume as appealing to a virtue epistemology in order to stave off scepticism. This is a relatively new, and I think quite promising, approach to reading THN 1.4.7. Virtue epistemological readings of Hume that draw parallels from his virtue ethics have been defended in (Vitz 2009) and (Schafer 2014), while (Baceski 2013) has argued for a version of this position that parallels Hume’s theory of aesthetic normativity.[[31]](#footnote-31) The idea is that doxastic virtues, that is, belief-forming dispositions that have some particular praiseworthy features, are such that they lead their possessors to shun scepticism, superstition, and credulity, while embracing science and philosophy. Thus, we are justified in following such a path. Virtue epistemological readings offer a sophisticated and flexible framework for handling the issue of scepticism. They are generally resilient against straightforward counterexamples, depending on how exactly the details are fleshed out, and nicely mirror the structure of Hume’s account of moral normativity, besides having a good deal of contemporary relevance.[[32]](#footnote-32) That said, the explicit textual evidence for Hume appealing to doxastic virtues in THN 1.4.7 is not as forthcoming when compared with the corresponding textual evidence for some other readings (such as usefulness and agreeableness accounts, for example). Schafer makes a case for the reading by pointing to Hume’s reliance on curiosity and ambition to facilitate his exit from the sceptical hole (THN 1.4.7.12), and postulates that epistemic virtues are those that satisfy these passions, but this is at best implicit in the texts. Consequently, virtue epistemological interpretations will typically have to lean on the cohesiveness and unity of the normative framework which they attribute to Hume, relying on parallels with Hume’s moral framework to motivate their accounts of his epistemology.[[33]](#footnote-33)

One worry with some readings that look to interpret Hume’s epistemology by parallel with his moral account is that they might take a good thing too far. To explain, it is a concern whether or not they are able to support the distinction between epistemic and moral normativity that Hume maintains:

Actions may be laudable or blameable; but they cannot be reasonable or unreasonable: Laudable or blameable, therefore, are not the same with reasonable or unreasonable. (THN 3.1.1.10)

In my (Qu 2014), I develop this worry for usefulness and agreeableness readings, as well as virtue epistemological accounts that lean on usefulness and agreeableness (such as Schafer’s), but for our purposes here it suffices to say that this presents a potential pitfall that such accounts must be wary of.[[34]](#footnote-34)

 One might see usefulness and agreeableness accounts, as well as truth-based frameworks like Garrett’s above, as roughly corresponding to consequentialist epistemologies. We have also seen that virtue epistemological readings of Hume have recently come to the fore. As of yet, however, there has not been a distinctly deontological reading of Hume’s treatment of scepticism that has been defended in print. I think that there is room for such a view.[[35]](#footnote-35) The problem presented by Hume’s scepticism with regard to reason (THN 1.4.1), which is so crucial to the dangerous dilemma, springs from a requirement to reflect on the fallibility of the understanding:

We must, therefore, in every reasoning form a new judgment, as a check or controul on our first judgment or belief…. (THN 1.4.1.1)[[36]](#footnote-36)

Correspondingly, Hume’s response to scepticism might consist in his abandoning, or modifying, this putative duty in some way. Notably, he considers such a failed attempt along these lines when contemplating the adoption of the maxim to reject all abstruse reasoning (THN 1.4.7.7), and it might be argued that a more successful attempt occurs later in THN 1.4.7.

I wish to conclude this section by returning to the Title Principle. Perhaps one reason for its prevalence is that it primarily concerns the *structure* of Hume’s response to scepticism, insofar as it lays down the doxastic rule that one should follow in order to circumvent both credulity and scepticism. But this largely leaves open the underlying *normative justification* for adopting this principle. Reading the Title Principle as forming the basis of Hume’s response to scepticism in THN 1.4.7 is perfectly consistent with a variety of interpretations regarding the fundamental normative basis of this framework.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Recall that, one significant strength of interpretations that lean on the Title Principle is its dialectical force, given how well it coheres with the narrative of THN 1.4.7. In the light of this, some accounts which may find themselves relatively short of explicit textual substantiation in THN 1.4.7 might find hybridisation with the Title Principle to be useful in shoring up their weaknesses: while the Title Principle accounts for the explicit structure of THN 1.4.7, the deeper framework that undergirds this principle is perhaps somewhat more implicit.[[38]](#footnote-38) Meanwhile, such hybrid accounts might themselves prove useful in potentially ameliorating some of the philosophical weaknesses of the Title Principle.[[39]](#footnote-39)

## Hume’s Epistemology in the *Enquiry*

There is more consensus with regard to the sceptical problem of the *Enquiry* than with the *Treatise*. Hume sets out and rejects antecedent scepticism—that is, scepticism regarding our faculties and beliefs prior to enquiry—on the basis that such scepticism precludes the success of any intellectual project whatsoever (EHU 12.3). Hume then turns to consequent scepticism, which questions our faculties after having found them to be deceitful (EHU 12.5). The primary sceptical antagonist in this section is Pyrrhonian scepticism, which is an extreme version of consequent scepticism, recommending a wholesale doubt of our faculties on the basis of various worries regarding the senses, abstract reasoning, and inductive reasoning. Hume eventually endorses a mitigated scepticism recommending a doxastic diffidence (EHU 12.24), and the limitation of the scope of our enquiries (EHU 12.25). Characterising Hume’s response to scepticism in the *Enquiry* amounts to discerning Hume’s rationale (if any) for dismissing Pyrrhonian scepticism—and, to a lesser extent, antecedent scepticism—in favour of mitigated scepticism.

Most of the scholarly attention in Hume’s epistemology has been focused on the *Treatise* rather than the *Enquiry*.[[40]](#footnote-40) This seems somewhat counterintuitive, if we take his infamous Advertisement to the volume of *Essays and Treatises* that contains his two *Enquiries*, the *Dissertation on the Passions*, and *The Natural History of Religion* seriously, which renounces the *Treatise* and expresses Hume’s desire ‘that the following Pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles’. Should we not focus on the version that he takes to be authoritative? Regardless of one’s views on the relationship between the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, it seems difficult to deny that the epistemological framework of the later work deserves more attention than it has hitherto received.

 Generally, commentators have assumed that, contrary to my suggestion above, Hume’s treatments of scepticism do not meaningfully differ between the two works.[[41]](#footnote-41) The prevalence of this view explains the relative lack of attention paid to the *Enquiry*, at least to some extent: if the two contain the same philosophical views, then why not frequent the more interesting mine? This similarity assumption means that where the *Enquiry* has been discussed, it is typically interpreted in similar fashion to the given commentator’s reading of the *Treatise*.

 With this in mind, it is worth noting a few key differences between the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* in respect of their anti-sceptical epistemologies (which should not be taken as exhaustive by any means). Even if one reads Hume broadly as having the same response to scepticism in both works, one’s interpretation ought to respect these differences.

1. Most significantly, the *Enquiry* omits scepticism with regard to reason (THN 1.4.1), and the corresponding dangerous dilemma (THN 1.4.7.6), which are crucial to the sceptical worries that Hume endeavours to resist in the *Treatise*. The absence of scepticism with regard to reason is particularly striking given that Hume’s criticism of abstract reasoning (EHU 12.18) would have seemed a natural home for such a discussion.[[42]](#footnote-42)
2. The Title Principle (THN 1.4.7.11) is very notably absent in EHU 12.[[43]](#footnote-43) Indeed, Hume arguably disavows it in endorsing the Academic philosophy which ‘strikes in with no disorderly passion of the human mind, nor can mingle itself with any natural affection or propensity’ (EHU 5.1).[[44]](#footnote-44)
3. Hume’s sceptical argument on induction in EHU 4 can seem more sceptical than its counterpart in THN 1.3.6. It is worth noting that, as mentioned earlier in the paper, the argument of THN 1.3.6 does not make an appearance in THN 1.4.7, while the arguments involved in EHU 4 and 5 appear in EHU 12.22. Correspondingly, his positive argument establishing custom as the foundation for our inductive inferences correspondingly seems more normative in the *Enquiry*. The conclusion of EHU 5 is particularly salient in this respect, ending with a quite explicit discussion of the truth-conduciveness of custom (EHU 5.21–22).[[45]](#footnote-45)
4. While THN 1.4.7 is frenetic and fitful in its presentation, EHU 12 takes a calm and measured tone.

In the light of the above, we can consider interpretations of the *Enquiry*’s response to scepticism.[[46]](#footnote-46) It is unsurprising that perspectivalist readings have proven less popular with respect to the *Enquiry* than with regard to the *Treatise*, given (4).[[47]](#footnote-47) Externalist interpretations, such as those defended by (Loeb 2008, p. 117) and (Kail 2016, p. 152), seem plausible with regard to the *Enquiry*, given the concluding passages of EHU 5, as noted in (3); this seems particularly true of reliabilist variants, given the theme of truth-conduciveness that runs through these passages.[[48]](#footnote-48) Interpretations that lean on the Title Principle might seem unpromising in light of (2). (Garrett 2015) broadly extends his reading of the *Treatise*’s epistemology to the *Enquiry*, although he draws a distinction between the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* in this regard: precisely because the later work omits the argument of THN 1.4.1, as noted in (1), Hume is now entitled to endorse the simpler principle of assenting to reason, rather than assenting to reason when it is lively and mixes with some propensity (p. 233).

On the other hand, some commonalities between the two works can support unified interpretations of the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* in respect of their epistemology. For instance, it has been argued that Hume justifies his mitigated scepticism on the basis of pragmatic or practical considerations.[[49]](#footnote-49) We have seen that there is certainly textual evidence for this reading in the *Treatise*. In the *Enquiry*, such themes are also prominent, particularly in EHU 5.21–22 and EHU 12.23. The theme of the psychological irresistibility of everyday beliefs also persists in the *Enquiry*, particularly in EHU 12.23, which lends support to readings of Hume as appealing to such considerations in order to escape or overcome scepticism.[[50]](#footnote-50) (Baceski 2013) also defends a virtue epistemological account of the *Enquiry*, pointing to the character of the ‘wise man’ described in EHU 10 in particular.[[51]](#footnote-51)

 Although most interpretations of the *Enquiry*’s epistemology see it as fundamentally equivalent to that of the *Treatise*, not all of them do. Take for example ‘consistency’ interpretations, which are offered with respect to the *Enquiry* but not the *Treatise*. These see Hume as able to offer normative standards of reasoning according to which justification consists in being consistent with our fundamental doxastic commitments. Such accounts typically appeal to the irresistibility of our base level commitments, and take higher-level commitments to be justified in virtue of their coherence with these base level commitments.[[52]](#footnote-52) Another interpretation of Hume’s epistemology that is peculiar to the *Enquiry* is to put weight on his rejection of antecedent scepticism (EHU 12.3), which is scepticism regarding our beliefs and faculties prior to any enquiry. This suggests that Hume accords our faculties with default authority, which might serve to defuse excessive scepticism.[[53]](#footnote-53) However, this seems like it could not constitute the entirety of Hume’s response to scepticism, because the bulk of Hume’s concern in EHU 12 lies with *consequent* scepticism, that is, scepticism regarding our faculties and beliefs *after* we have investigated them and found them wanting. Elsewhere, I defend a view that develops such a line in (Qu 2018) and (Qu Forthcoming); I argue that, having accorded our faculties with default authority,[[54]](#footnote-54) Hume then makes use of them in reflexively examining their own reliability. Those faculties that prove reliable will be endorsed, while those that prove fallacious will be rejected.[[55]](#footnote-55) Thus, he submits that Hume endorses a kind of internalist reliabilism in the *Enquiry*: we are justified in relying on those faculties that we have found to be reliable.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Overall, there has been a general movement towards attributing to Hume increasingly sophisticated anti-sceptical responses that have considerable contemporary significance in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*. Hume has been read as a virtue epistemologist, an externalist, an internalist reliabilist, a Pryor-type dogmatist, and a Wright-style internalist, just to name a few; all these epistemological frameworks have proven influential and important in contemporary epistemology.[[57]](#footnote-57) This development is not surprising, and it is part of a broader trend that sees the history of philosophy as increasingly continuous with its more modern counterpart. Just as the history of philosophy should inform our contemporary philosophising, new frameworks from contemporary philosophy can serve to sharpen and highlight non-obvious, but already present, lines in historical works.[[58]](#footnote-58)

(Hume 1739–1740/2007, Hume 1748/2007, Hume 1779/2008, Hume 1932, Hume 1987)

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1. (Kemp Smith 1941). See the recently reissued (Kemp Smith 2005), with an introduction by Don Garrett that emphasises the significance of this issue (p. xxxiv). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the references to Hume’s texts throughout, ‘THN’ refers to the *Treatise of Human Nature*, and ‘EHU’ to the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Arabic numerals refer to section and paragraph numbers (EHU); or book, part, section, and paragraph numbers (THN). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A particularly pessimistic take on the available options is expressed in (Durland 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Of course, there is significant controversy regarding the degree and kind of scepticism expressed in that section, or even whether it is sceptical at all, or merely psychological. For instance, ‘descriptivist’ accounts of THN 1.3.6 that see it as merely making a psychological point can be found in (Broughton 1983), (Garrett 1997, pp. 91–95), (Garrett 1998), (Owen 1999), (Noonan 1999), and (Allison 2008, Chapter 5). Deeply sceptical interpretations of THN 1.3.6 include (Millican 2002) and (Dimech Forthcoming). There is also a great deal of interpretative real estate in between these two extremes, much of it occupied. Unfortunately, a fuller discussion of this vast literature would take me beyond the scope of this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. I elaborate more on this later in the paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This reading dates all the way back to Hume’s contemporaries; (Fieser 2005) includes several texts from Hume’s early critics which accuse him of ‘dogmatic Pyrrhonism’. This reading has some pedigree: in the last century, it was prominently defended in (Popkin 1951) and (Fogelin 1983); more recently, it has been endorsed by (Baxter 2008, Chapter 1) and (Baxter 2018), (Fogelin 2006) and (Fogelin 2009), and (Garfield Forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Yet another prominent sceptical reading is defended by Broughton, who reads Hume as adopting an ironic or detached attitude in continuing his project; he recognises the epistemic deficiencies of his project, but persists nonetheless. See (Broughton 2008) and (Broughton 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. (Ainslie 2015, p.229) also argues that if the sceptical reading were correct, we would expect Hume to avoid the conclusions of Book 1 going forward, but he repeatedly makes references to these conclusions in Books 2 and 3 (for instance in THN 2.2.6.2). Similarly, (Boehm 2013, pp.73–74) argues that Hume’s scepticism cannot be excessively severe, because he takes what she calls his ‘foundational project’ to persist in Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise*, and he takes explicit pride in its success in the *Abstract*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Perhaps the iconic statement of this view is (Fogelin 1998), although it is also present earlier in (Popkin 1980, p. 132), (Penelhum 1983, p. 125), (Strawson 1985, pp. 12–13), (Michaud 1985), (Jacobson 1992, p. 61), and (Norton 1994, p. 121). More recent defences of this view can be found in (de Pierris 2001) and (de Pierris 2015), (Russell 2008, p. 209–210), (Ribeiro 2009, pp. 217–218), (Hakkarainen 2012, p. 303), and (Parusniková 2014, p. 596). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. By contrast, (Campbell 2009) objects to perspectivalist readings that there seems to be a ‘single, narrating voice’ (p. 113) chronicling Hume’s descent into, and release from, scepticism. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For instance, Baier takes Hume to be utilising scepticism in order to dismiss a rationalistic, intellectualist conception of the human mind (Baier 1991, Chapter 1). Morris takes Hume to be using the sceptical turn to express the forlorn state of the traditional metaphysician (Morris 2000, p. 107). (Collier 2008) argues that Hume’s own project, insofar as it gives a ‘different turn to the speculations of philosophers’ (THN 1.4.7.14), is immune from the sceptical arguments, because unlike the philosophical projects before him, it does not ‘attempt to penetrate into the ultimate nature of minds and bodies, but merely searches for the general principles of human nature’ (p. 310). A different but related view to these is defended in (Annas 2000), which reads Hume as a dogmatist, and takes him to never fully endorse the sceptical viewpoint. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. (Ainslie 2015, p. 237). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. (Ainslie 2015). An early version of this view is defended in (Ainslie 2003). For some critical discussion on Ainslie’s manuscript, see a forthcoming book symposium in *Hume Studies* featuring Jonathan Cottrell and Annemarie Butler. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In particular, I have concerns with Ainslie’s reading of THN 1.4.1, which sees Hume as taking scepticism with regard to reason to be self-undermining (Chapter 1); for Ainslie, this is part of Hume’s realisation that reflective interference is something to be circumvented rather than resolved.

However, I see Hume as explicitly ruling out this ‘self-undermining’ response in THN 1.4.1.12 (although Ainslie reads this passage differently (Ainslie 2015, pp. 38–39)). And indeed, if Hume does think scepticism with regard to reason to be resolved at this point, then it is difficult to explain why it rears its head in the sceptical horn of the ‘dangerous dilemma’ (THN 1.4.7.6); this objection is also expressed in (Durland 2011, p. 81).

These considerations give me general reason to doubt readings that seek to rescue Hume from scepticism on the basis of the fact that scepticism is self-undermining, for instance (Russell 2008, p. 221) and (Ainslie 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This interpretation goes back to (Kemp Smith 1941, p. 455), and is also defended in (Passmore 1980, Chapter 7) and (Wilson 1997). It is in my view most promisingly defended in (Avnur 2016). A similar view is endorsed in (Campbell 2009), which maintains that Hume endorses submission to one’s psychological inclinations. Likewise, Fogelin has argued that Hume ultimately abandons excessive scepticism and returns to philosophy purely on the basis of various psychological forces (Fogelin 2009, p. 137). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Indeed, (Wilson 1997) appeals to the stronger principle that ‘Must implies Ought’. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Reliabilist interpretations that read Hume as taking beliefs to be justified if they result from truth-conducive doxastic mechanisms go back to (Dauer 1980) and (Costa 1981), and have more recently been defended in (Schmitt 1992) and (Schmitt 2014). Proper functioning interpretations that take beliefs to be justified in virtue of issuing from the proper functioning of our faculties include (Craig 1987), (Wolterstorff 1996), and (Spector 2003). ‘Stability’ accounts take Hume to see as justified those beliefs that issue from belief-forming processes that produce steady and stable beliefs; this interpretation can be traced back to (MacNabb 1951), but is most prominently defended by Loeb in (Loeb 2001), (Loeb 2002), (Loeb 2006), (Loeb 2008), and (Loeb 2009). For some critical discussion of Loeb’s 2002 book, see (Williams 2004), (Schmitt 2004), and (Kelly 2004), and see (Loeb 2004) for a response. (Williams 2004) emphasises stability of consensus, rather than individual stability of belief. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Many commentators have accorded the Title Principle pride of place in THN 1.4.7. For some examples, see Garrett in (Garrett 1997, p. 233–237), (Garrett 2006), (Garrett 2015, pp. 227-237), and (Garrett 2016); (Mounce 1999, p. 60); (Kail 2007, p. 70); (Allison 2008, pp. 323–330); (Meeker 2013, pp. 73–81); (Qu 2014) and (Qu Forthcoming); (Schafer 2014); (Schmitt 2014, pp. 368–375); (Baxter 2018, pp. 388–389), and (Sasser Forthcoming). Schafer eventually downplays the role of the Title Principle in the course of the paper (p. 15, ft. 65). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For disagreement on this front, see (Ainslie 2015, p. 243). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The following three objections are developed in (Qu Forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See (Winkler 1999, p. 199–200) and (Ainslie 2015, p. 233). This is contested by (Qu 2014, pp. 506–507), (Schafer 2014, p. 9) and (Garrett 2016, p. 42). I no longer think that the defence I set out in my (Qu 2014) works, as I explain in my (Qu Forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See (Durland 2011, pp. 83–4). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Garrett’s recent development of his account would deny, or at least mitigate, this charge (Garrett 2015). More on this interpretation shortly. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. For some critical discussion on Garrett’s book, see (Millican 2014) and (Loeb 2014), and see (Garrett 2014) and (Garrett 2014) for replies. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Thus, Garrett sees Hume as being an early kind of Pryor-type dogmatist (Pryor 2000), (Pryor 2004), (Pryor 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Another broadly similar account is defended in (Boehm 2013), which argues that the beliefs of the senses, the memory, and custom are justified in virtue of their force and vivacity. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In the *Treatise*, the criterion of mixing with propensities is required to avoid the sceptical conclusions of THN 1.4.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. A sustained and influential defense is (Ridge 2003). The view goes all the way back to (Ardal 1976), and is also defended in (Owen 1999, Chapter 9), (Kail 2005), (McCormick 2005), and (Sasser Forthcoming), among others. Schafer expresses sympathies for such a view, although he offers a virtue epistemological version of it that puts curiosity and ambition at the fore (Schafer 2014), as we will shortly see. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. (Sasser Forthcoming) takes usefulness and agreeableness to offer the basis of a purely ethical response to scepticism. Meeker has suggested that Hume ultimately rejects scepticism on pragmatic grounds (Meeker 2013, Chapter 4), although he also draws on considerations of irresistibility. A similar reading inspired by ancient philosophy is offered by Stroud, who suggests that Hume exhorts us to be sceptical philosophers insofar as such a way of life the means of attaining the ‘good life’—indeed, the *best* life (Stroud 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. For instance, Ridge describes the account as a ‘pragmatic epistemology’ (Ridge 2003, p. 180). Kail maintains that ‘epistemic and ethical concerns are continuous for Hume’ (Kail 2005, p. 129). McCormick states that for Hume, beliefs that are useful and agreeable have ‘warrant’, and those who believe them (for the right reasons) are ‘epistemically responsible’ (McCormick 2005, p. 9). Owen is less explicit on this matter, but uses the language of ‘wise’ and ‘reasonable’ in characterising the view (Owen 1999, Chapter 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Schafer explicitly considers this to constitute Hume’s response to scepticism, whereas Vitz and Baceski do not substantively address the topic of scepticism. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Some influential discussions that are (relatively) contemporary include (Montmarquet 1987), (Sosa 1993), and (Zagzebski 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Another school of interpretation that has parallels to Hume’s moral theory focuses on self-endorsement: Hume, our doxastic (and other) faculties are justified insofar as they reflectively approve of themselves. Proponents of this view include (Baier 1991, pp.88–100) and (Korsgaard 1996, pp. 61–66). Such a reading particularly resonates with Hume’s claim that the moral sense acquires new force when reflecting on itself (THN 3.3.6.3). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. (Vitz 2009, pp. 213–215) maintains that doxastic virtues are neither moral nor epistemic, essentially undermining the distinction between moral and epistemic normativity and biting the bullet on this score. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. (Qu Forthcoming), presented at the 2016 Hume Society Conference in Sydney. Perhaps the closest we get in print is (Schmitt 2014, pp. 320–330), which takes the sceptical worry of THN 1.4.1 to stem from what Schmitt calls the ‘Norm of Reduction’, which is broadly deontic in nature, although as we see later, he sees Hume’s response to scepticism to proceed from an externalist epistemology, rather than from distinctly deontological considerations. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See also THN 1.4.1.5 and THN 1.4.1.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. For instance, interpretations that take the Title Principle to be justified in virtue of its relative usefulness and agreeableness are explored in (Qu 2014) and (Schafer 2014), and Schafer goes on to defend a virtue epistemological reading that also places significant weight on the Title Principle. Non-epistemic versions of this combination can be found in (Sasser Forthcoming). Meeker founds the Title Principle largely on considerations of irresistibility (Meeker 2013, p. 75). Combining an externalist account with the Title Principle is also possible: Schmitt, for instance, defends a reliabilist account and also reads the Title Principle as playing an important role in the dialectic of THN 1.4.7 (Schmitt 2014, Section 12.10); Kail similarly explores an account that takes the Title Principle as central within a broadly reliabilist framework (Kail 2016). (Baxter 2018) grounds the Title Principle in broadly Pyrrhonian considerations. Garrett’s initial defence of the Title Principle as crucial to Hume’s epistemology suggested that it did not turn on a deeper epistemic framework, for instance in his (Garrett 1997), but his recent work founds the Title Principle on truth and probable truth (Garrett 2015, pp.227–237). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For instance, externalist accounts such as (Schmitt 2014) which, while on textually firm grounds with regards to Book 1 Part 3, can be found somewhat wanting when it comes to THN 1.4.7, and the Title Principle can prove useful here. Virtue epistemological accounts such as (Schafer 2014), and probable truth accounts such as (Garrett 2015), might also appreciate the additional textual support provided by such hybridization. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Such accounts would offer a reason for accepting the Title Principle, for instance. The account set out in (Garrett 2015), as well as reliabilist accounts such as (Schmitt 2014), might also allow for the Title Principle to have a closer connection to truth than initially apparent. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Unlike with the *Treatise*, books focusing on the *Enquiry* are comparatively few in number: (Flew 1961) and (Buckle 2001) are two monographs that do so, and (Millican 2002) is a collection of papers on the first *Enquiry*, but neither of these books focus exclusively on the topic of Hume’s scepticism. (Qu Forthcoming) examines Hume’s epistemology in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*. Most of the papers written on the topic have similarly centred on the *Treatise*; when the *Enquiry* is addressed, it is typically presented as continuous with the discussion of the *Treatise*. A few papers to handle Hume’s scepticism with a focus on the *Enquiry* are (Winkler 1999), (Millican 2002), (Norton 2002), and (Qu 2018), with the former two focusing on Hume’s argument on induction in particular; (Ryan 2017) focuses on the *Dialogues*, and in doing so makes use of the *Enquiry*’s treatment of scepticism. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. This viewpoint has a storied tradition, including (Popkin 1951, p. 406), (Wilbanks 1968, p. 89), (Fogelin 1983, p. 399), (Livingston 1998, p. 160), (Stroud 1999, p. 230), and (Williams 2004, p. 290). It is usually expressed in passing, but the most explicit and sustained argument for this position is (McCormick 1999, p. 446). Some commentators do differentiate between the two works, but the general gist of Hume’s epistemic framework is generally held to be the same, broadly construed: for instance, see (Penelhum 1983), (Broughton 2008), (Fogelin 2009), (Ribeiro 2009), and(Garrett 2015).

By contrast, my (Qu Forthcoming) starkly differentiates Hume’s two works from an epistemological standpoint, arguing that the *Treatise* offers a deeply flawed treatment of scepticism that hinges on the Title Principle, which is ultimately superseded by a more sophisticated epistemological framework in the *Enquiry*. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. (Millican 2016) argues that Hume’s scepticism is moderated in the *Enquiry* precisely by dropping the more problematic sceptical arguments of the *Treatise*, including scepticism with regard to reason. Similarly, (Passmore 1980, p. 136) emphasises the absence of the argument of THN 1.4.1 from the *Enquiry*, taking this to stem fromHume’s rejection of antecedent scepticism. I am inclined to disagree with Passmore: the argument seems to fall under the scope of consequent rather than antecedent scepticism, insofar as it arises from having found our faculties of reasoning to be less than perfectly reliable (THN 1.4.1.1–6). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. As noted in (Millican 2016, p. 105 fn. 42). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See (Qu 2016) and (Qu Forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. This difference between Hume’s treatments of the induction in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* is suggested in my (Qu 2014, pp. 21–23), and defended more thoroughly in my (Qu Forthcoming, Ch. 3 and 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Alternatively, it has been suggested that Hume in the *Enquiry* simply fails to give any satisfactory reason for our holding on to our beliefs in the face of scepticism. See (Broughton 2008, p. 438). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. An exception is (Ribeiro 2009, p. 223), which argues that Hume is a perspectivalist in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, although he does concede that the perspectivalism of the *Enquiry* is less extreme. (Fogelin 2006, p. 235) is somewhat non-commital on this issue, but leans towards a perspectivalist reading of the *Enquiry*. But there is not much support for this reading in the *Enquiry*, and it seems to be a hangover from his reading of the *Treatise*. Thus, (Penelhum 1983) and (Norton 1994, p. 121) attribute perspectivalism to the *Treatise*, but not the *Enquiry*. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. While Loeb is somewhat non-committal here about the form of externalism supported in the *Enquiry*, Kail takes it to be reliabilist in nature. (Schmitt 2014) does not address the *Enquiry*, although his reliabilist interpretation of the *Treatise* seems naturally extended to it in light of this. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For instance, in (Buckle 2001, pp. 321–322). It is also suggested in (Winkler 1999, pp. 324–325). A practical reading of EHU 12 is briefly offered in (Sasser Forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See (Penelhum 1983), (Winkler 1999), (Norton 2002), and (Avnur 2016); such a view is also suggested in (Dimech Forthcoming). Winkler also sees Hume as adducing some pragmatic considerations in favour of rejecting scepticism. As with his reading of the *Treatise*, (Fogelin 2009, pp. 157–158) takes the Hume of the *Enquiry* to abandon excessive scepticism purely on the basis of psychological forces: in this case, mitigated scepticism is the result of Pyrrhonism clashing with common life and reflection. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. For whatever reason, Pyrrhonian readings of the *Enquiry*, defended in (Popkin 1951) and (Fogelin 1983), have not proven as recently popular as they are with the *Treatise,* although there does not appear to be an obvious systematic reason why this should be the case. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Such a line can be traced back to (Noxon 1973, pp. 180–187), and is more recently defended in (Millican 2002, pp. 164–166) and (Ryan 2017, pp. 324–326). The nature of the base level commitments are typically taken to concern the type of reasoning we accept in everyday reasoning; Millican takes them to be fundamental inductive principles (p.165), while Ryan takes them to consist of the reasoning method of ordinary life (p.326). Correspondingly, the higher-level principles would concern more rarified principles of reasoning utilised in science, philosophy, and theology. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See (Garrett 2007, p. 6) and (Millican 2012, p. 59). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. I see this default authority as stemming from the fact that doubting our faculties prior to all enquiry would undermine any intellectual project whatsoever. This is in line with Wright’s epistemological framework (Wright 2002); (Wright 2004); (Wright 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. More specifically, I argue that Pyrrhonian scepticism is rejected on the basis that it tends to overgeneralise the degree of appropriate doubt upon discovering the flaws of our faculties, or by pursuing enquiries that our faculties are not equipped to handle in the first place. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. (Beebee 2006, p. 73) suggests a sort of internalist reliabilism in the *Treatise*, although she does not take this to constitute a response to scepticism on Hume’s behalf, describing it as ‘hopeless’ as a solution. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. References to contemporary virtue epistemological accounts, Pryor, and Wright were given previously (footnotes 32, 25, and 54 respectively). Externalist epistemologies are numerous, and include (Van Cleve 2003) and (Graham 2012). Internalist reliabilism has been defended in (Steup 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. A debt of gratitude is owed to a number of anonymous referees for the *Southern Journal of Philosophy* for very helpful and detailed comments on earlier drafts. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)