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A TAUT AND DELICATE BALANCE:

Reflections in the Eye of

Thomas Brown

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ABSTRACT

Common sense, affirmed Ferrier, can neither be set aside nor taken for granted by philosophy. Rather, it must be converted into philosophy, and this "by accepting completely and faithfully the facts and expressions of common sense as given in their primitive obscurity, and then by construing them without violence, without addition, and without diminution into clearer and more intelligible forms". In the period under discussion, the early nineteenth century, the attempt to elucidate the phenomena of mind and their linguistic moulds came under the title of 'mental science' or 'analysis'. More specifically, the process envisaged for this science was inductive, what Dugald Stewart would call a dual operation of analysis and synthesis or Cabanis the method of *decomposition* and *recomposition*. Agreement on the use of such a procedure for the philosophy of mind or on the details of the technique employed was never unanimous: in the case of the latter, it had first to be established whether the 'scientist' was dealing at the outset with 'simple' or 'compound' phenomena and whether he was to proceed from the known to the unknown or *vice versa*. Beneath this controversy lay the roots of an earlier separation between the 'analysis of nature' (wherein our representations

are viewed as scattered across the linear board of their presentation, and so distantly and only vaguely related) and the 'analytic of imagination' (which arranges and orders the disparate segments of temporal presentation into a simultaneous table of comparative representations). Michel Foucault, whose distinction this is, argues that these two directions of analysis begin to converge towards the end of the eighteenth century. But the moment of convergence, being fraught with difficulties for those at the intersection, is less than happy. This uneasiness of mind accounts, moreover, for the strain of conversion in 'Common Sense' philosophy.

Nevertheless, where the struggles at the juncture are most intense, there is a commensurate heightening of philosophical awareness. Faintly visible in the first inquiries of Thomas Brown (1778-1820) into causality and volition, it reaches a crescendo in his more mature reflections on memory and attention, the nature of consciousness and reflection itself. Emerging with this apprehension, and giving it depth, is Brown's sensitivity to the feelings of selfhood and his belief in the recovery, however imaginary, of the individual's past. That sense of an order to be captured and restored, combined with a recognition of the affections which, more often, reap the havoc of human nature, create in his writings the sort of excitement associated not with the resolution of

dilemmas, but with a prolonged, agonizing and continual tension. The subsequent discussion moves towards as it is moved by that realization.

PREFACE

In his historical appraisal of Modern Philosophy (1921), Guido de Ruggiero decried the "work of compilation" which, arresting the "speculative impulse of classical empiricism", originated in the "Scottish school at the beginning of the nineteenth century". He goes on to affirm that

"here the search for facts became an end in itself: in the psychological museums of Reid and Stewart every trace of mental life disappeared, and philosophy was reduced to a schedule of the senses and the faculties of the mind, drawn up by a process reminiscent of the doctors in Molière."

Presumably, one is to see these figures as the very opposite of the *honnête homme*, affected in their professionalism, extravagant in the claims of their speciality, *imposteurs* of true learning and education. Although his name does not appear on Ruggiero's list, Thomas Brown would seem to deserve a similar epithet, for Carlyle found that his otherwise "brilliant lectures" left him "irritated at having his mind subjected to systematic analysis". If one were to remain true to Molière, one would have to turn this irritation into satire.

My intention has been, rather, to examine the operating theatre of the actual Dr. Thomas Brown, M.D., with a view to converting that 'museum' into a re-

vitalized philosophic engagement. That it was once the scene of lively and many-sided debate is readily attested to by Brown's own relatively brief span of activities. Between classical empiricism and the 'radical empiricism' of William James there lies not an 'arrested' stream of Scottish inquiry, but in Brown and others the makings of some of the dominant (and more physiological) psychologies of the nineteenth century: those, for example, of J. S. Mill, Beneke, Ribot, Spencer and Alexander Bain. Mill, for one, is always eager to applaud the work of Hartley, Brown and James Mill in this connection. Admitting that, however, one has still played unfairly with the Scottish writers of that period, played moreover straight into the hands of Ruggiero. The thought which carries the label 'Common Sense Philosophy' does not rest on one foundation only but on many and descending levels of investigation. The pursuit of 'facts' was a singular and not wholly typical aspect of those inquiries into the human mind. I have sought at every stage to explore the contributions of Brown from that premise.

I had originally designed to give stress to those thinkers, both French (such as Condillac and Destutt de Tracy) and English (Locke and Hartley), to whom Brown was certainly indebted. Fruitful as this study was (and is), it proved to be no match for the richness and subtlety of his own, and quite original, analyses. These eventually

opened doors which have led me into the recesses of what I take to be the *sine qua non* of any serious philosophic enterprise, namely reflection. Appearing at the end of the dissertation, my examination of this concept will, I hope, enable one to dismiss the charges of Ruggiero and others on Brown's, or even Reid's, behalf. Molière's doctors are perhaps suitable companions for the diseased proponents of an idle speculation; they clearly have no place beside such honest and persevering advocates of truth.

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J. C. R.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

"I am more particularly puzzled with what you say about our late most excellent friend Dr. Brown; but, after revolving the subject long in my mind, I am nearly resolved (according to my *first* impressions) to pass over in silence any difference between our opinions concerning Dr. Reid, more especially as it is a subject on which I cannot help thinking that our friend has laid himself open to a most triumphant reply.

- D. STEWART to Mr. Napier,
14 November, 1820.

There are occasions when the rain of blows from a critic's pen falling mercilessly on the subject of one's inquiry causes a mixture of pain and delight. The latter response will depend, of course, on the incisiveness of the criticism, on the lure of its inherent brilliance. However unjust one might feel it to be, after the initial shock has worn away, there is still that treacherous moment of agreement, that first sense of the 'rightness' of the attack. Availing oneself of critical resources is not quite the same thing as stumbling, unwittingly, on such a passage, nor is that brief night of unfaithfulness comparable to the objective stance which one tries in general to take towards one's subject.

Brown was not without his detractors. It would be naïve to suppose that in a period of intense, often heated controversy, particularly over the claims and procedures of the philosophy of mind, any writer of note would come through it unscathed. No exception to this, the 'metaphysician' who early became known in Edinburgh as 'Darwinian Brown'¹ amassed his own legion of opponents. Best known perhaps was the apologist of

¹Alexander Bain adopts both labels from his researches into the youthful enterprises and associations of James Mill. See James Mill, A Biography (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882), p. 48.

Thomas Reid against the alleged 'misrepresentations' of Brown, Sir William Hamilton, whose determination it was in the still glowing aftermath of Brown's demise to place the latter "on his proper level".² Needless to say, that level was considerably lower than the one projected by Brown's enthusiastic students or by his friend Dr. Thomas Chalmers who occupied the chair in Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews from 1823 and who was "most desirous of a classical monument being raised to his memory behind the manse" at Kirkmabreck.³ Coming upon a typically virulent attack on Brown's 'misappropriations', one of Hamilton's readers has inserted in the margin the very fitting comment: "Don't you think you have given poor Brown enough?" If one may judge by what he himself affirms, Hamilton seems never to have tired of 'enumerating' or providing 'samples' of Brown's "inconsistencies", "mistakes", and "misrepresentation", let alone his "appropriations" (notably from "Destutt Tracy").⁴ But

²Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform (1st ed.; London, 1852), pp. 43 and 97.

³The Rev. Wm. Hanna, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers, D.D., LL.D. (Edinburgh, 1851), III, 131-2. The terms of a proposed subscription for a monument to Brown are outlined in Appendix C, 502-3; Hanna does not elaborate on the circumstances surrounding Chalmer's apparent failure to raise the necessary funds.

⁴Hamilton, op. cit., p. 97. In the 'supplementary dissertations' to his edition of Reid's Works (Edinburgh, 1846), Hamilton enlarged upon his complaint against Brown's

although Hamilton's sense of outrage and disapproval was peculiarly strong, that of other writers and philosophers during Brown's life-time was equally sharp and influential of opinion.

The spirit of independence which pervaded Brown's philosophical career led more than once to strained relations with his peers. When, for example, Francis Jeffrey attempted to interfere in his editorial capacity with Brown's submission of another article for the third number of the Edinburgh Review (the first was his review of Charles Villers's Philosophie de Kant), Brown lost no time in severing his connection with the Review; once gone, he never returned to Jeffrey's fold.⁵ More importantly, he could not long withhold an open breach with his teacher and predecessor, Dugald Stewart, in spite of an initial effort to camouflage the divergence of view-points. Recounting the "disagreeable circumstance" of his first full year as Professor of Moral Philosophy

borrowing "without acknowledgment" from Destutt de Tracy, notably in reference to "the sense of muscular feeling, as a special source of knowledge" and as the basis of "our notion of Space or Extension"; II, 868-9.

⁵In a letter to Francis Horner on 9 April, 1802, Jeffrey had lamented the "miserable state of backwardness" in the Edinburgh Review; after noting some progress among his reviewers he complained: "Brown has engaged for nothing but Miss Baillie's Plays." Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P., ed. L. Horner (London, 1853), I, 186.

at Edinburgh (1810-11), in a letter to his friend William Erskine, he observes:

"What would I not have given to have had *you* here to consult on all those subjects which I had to treat. I was very much *constrained*, as you may believe, by the unpleasantness of differing so essentially from Mr. Stewart, on many of the principal points. But I conceived that it would be more honourable to state at once my own opinions, than to seem to introduce them afterwards in other years; and *Dr. Reid's* name served every purpose, when I had opinions to oppose in which Mr. Stewart perhaps coincided. I got off, therefore, pretty well in that way; though I must confess that it was one of the most unpleasant circumstances attending my situation."

(Welsh, 195; for this and other abbreviations cited in the text see Appendix A)

I will have occasion shortly to remark again on this masking of voices. For the moment, however, we must pursue the question of 'honour'.

The cat was soon out of the bag. Brown's lectures were too public (not to say, publicly acclaimed) and too forceful to parade or conceal delicate and fine distinctions. Stewart eventually felt called upon to vindicate his own honour. In the third volume of his Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind (1827), Stewart took revenge in a badly tucked 'Note' at the end.

"Like most other men . . . of very quick parts, [Dr. Brown] was too confident in his rapid judgments; too ready to conclude that there were no difficulties in his way when he was unable to see them; and not sufficiently aware that in his science, much more than in any other, the success of our inquiries depends on that capacity of *patient thinking*, to which Newton had the modesty to ascribe all the merit of his greatest discoveries. In this capacity, I cannot help thinking that Dr. Brown was remarkably deficient; and to this cause, more than to any other, I am disposed to impute his very loose and

inaccurate use of language on various important occasions."

(Note C, 375)

In yet another version of the game of concealment, Stewart endeavours to attribute to Welsh's "not always well-judged solicitude" of Brown the imposition "on shallow understandings" of the latter's views:

"The most exceptionable passages in Mr. Welsh's book . . . are those in which he speaks of Dr. Brown's powers of *analysis*, when he ought rather to have warned novices (who are always most liable to be misled by an overweening vanity) of the danger of attempting to analyze things unsusceptible of analysis; or, in Mr. Locke's homely, but expressive language, to have exhorted them to '*stop when they are at the end of their tether*'.

(*ibid.*, 376-7)

It is a poor disguise, for a few lines later Stewart cannot resist the suggestion of a "delusion which so often misled Dr. Brown, of fancying, when he had got to the end of his own sounding-line, that he had reached the bottom of the ocean." (Compare Brown's own use of this Lockean metaphor in L.III, 38.) In his memoir of Stewart, prefixed to Stewart's own 'Biographical Memoirs', John Veitch carried the injured philosopher's banner further into the nineteenth century and more firmly into tradition. Brown was simply an aberration whose thinking, being "in direct antagonism to the results of Reid and Stewart", had "turned aside, in some degree, the course of speculation in Scotland, from the channel in which it had begun to flow." *But* adds Veitch, "he failed in permanently giving it an opposite direction;

and his writings are now more generally regarded as simply a brilliant episode in the course of the philosophical thinking of the century, which has followed an earlier and more powerful impulse."⁶

Some were critical of yet another of Brown's 'wanderings', this time into the field of poetry. Lord Cockburn explains, rather sympathetically, that

"his more judicious friends were disturbed by his verse; which might have passed if he had done nothing better, but which, though neither devoid of thought nor feeling, was unworthy of his superior powers. . . . His friend Dr. Gregory described his poetry as too philosophical, and his philosophy too poetical."⁷

The same Cockburn could see the injustice of Stewart's rebuke, attributing it not only to "a state of personal irritation" (quite out of keeping with his usual "dignified caution") but also to the "absurd" claims of the "learned and excellent biographer of Brown", Dr. Welsh. It was indeed a pity that Welsh chose to ally Brown's views with those of the Phrenologists, such as George Combe, who themselves openly disowned any allegiance to the 'metaphysics' of Reid, Stewart or Brown. Quite unintentionally, this 'friendly biographer' became one of Brown's worst enemies: the association of names, as Brown himself would have admitted, was to stick like glue in the minds of the unsuspecting. And so, while one

⁶Stewart, Collected Works, ed. Hamilton (Edinburgh, 1858), X, lxxxii-lxxxiii.

⁷Henry Cockburn, Memorials of His Time (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1872), pp. 317-8.

might wish to defend Brown against his own critical misrepresentation, it is virtually impossible to ignore the accumulated legends surrounding his 'affected' manner and 'insidious' doctrines. These will plague us, as they did him, throughout.

What was it then about that comment alluded to above, and made by yet another Scottish thinker in the nineteenth century, which could evoke such a reaction? Perhaps it was the fact that it was born not out of personal pique, but from a genuine concern for the philosophy of mind itself; perhaps also the fact that, characteristically, it struck at the very nerve-centre of another's philosophy. Probably no one has understood so keenly yet disagreed so cogently with Brown as this author, who described him as an "analytic poulterer", a "metaphysician" in executioner's garb. The caption is both telling and highly misleading. But rather than set a tenacious impression at the beginning, by reproducing the passage in its entirety, I will withhold its appearance until the so-called 'poulterer' is himself more fully described. In this way, I hope to be able to communicate something of the impact of that criticism on an interpreter of Brown's philosophy.

The scene I will endeavour to trace and define with the help of a Spaniard. Now any state of affairs which solicits our attention seems to involve at least

two factors (there is, for Brown, a third - called desire, - but we can hold this at bay for the moment): the first is the object immediately held in the focal centre of our perception; the second comprises those objects or events which although not spot-lighted are kept, as it were, in the offing, as background, support or conditions. In the case of a philosophical writer, we can label these factors, respectively, the text and the context. Of course, that which the author asserts at one point can be set over against his arguments on other occasions, and so within the scope of his writings there will be a continual shifting of ground and focus, a realignment of texts and contexts. At the same time (and this is crucial for our understanding of what he says), the body of his expressed opinions steps forward from the shadowy array of assumed but tacit thoughts. Failure to see this aspect of his philosophy is tantamount to a failure to understand what one is doing, and hence to be fully attentive.

Ortega y Gasset has described this back-ground - this ground *behind* one, - as a blending of *subsoil*, *soil*, and *adversary*. The details of his description are worth noticing. "The *subsoil*", he writes:

"composed of deep layers rooted in ancient collective thought from which a particular thinker derives his ideas, is generally something he is unconscious of. The *soil* is of recent creation - the fundamental, newly founded ideas accepted by the thinker. It is the soil

in which he is grounded, and from which his own unique thought and ideas stem. Hence he does not refer to it, just as one does not indicate to people the ground upon which one's feet tread at each moment. Finally, all thought represents *thought against*, whether so indicated verbally or not. Our creative thought is always shaped in opposition to some other thought, which we believe erroneous, fallacious, and needful of correction. I call this the *adversary*, a menacing bluff, which at a particular moment looms above our soil, and hence, *likewise emerges from that soil.*"⁸

Since our interest lies in what sort of things Brown attended to and under what stimulus or duress, I think it would be helpful to illuminate, by painting in, those compresent features of our emerging figure. Fortunately, Brown lends himself readily to this type of treatment. Even a cursory reading of Brown's work will reveal that the context is all too frequently missing: sources are left undisclosed, intentions hidden, and struggles suppressed (or nearly so). Yet paradoxically, in their very absence, the subsoil, the soil and the adversaries speak as with a clash of cymbals.

The "deep layers" and "recent creations" might be said to overlap in critical places, and therefore to be indistinguishable. There is a certain amount of truth in this - notably in the area of empirical methodology, - but if we confine the former to rumblings

⁸ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Origin of Philosophy*, tr. Toby Talbot (N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1967), pp. 73-4.

of a persistent kind, we can listen more closely to the rustlings nearby. Similarly, one can only separate the 'recent creations' from the 'thought against' by recognizing the existence of a kind of love-hate relationship which tends to arise between or among philosophers working on common problems. The youthful imagination which paid tribute to its mentor in a poem entitled 'To Professor Dugald Stewart, Esq.' belongs to the same critical consciousness which opposed the latter's atomistic presuppositions, his theory regarding the suspension of volition during sleep, and his reliance on inherent 'faculties' or 'powers' to account for the activities which are the mind's expression of itself.

Here is the adoring disciple in a poetic mood:

"Dear were the hours, when mid the listening train
My truth-warmed soul expanded with thy strain;
When first, on eyes in careless musings blind,
Burst all the glories of the World of Mind."

Yet adoration, so poignant in youth, cannot long endure the skeptical barbs of maturity and independent thought. From an almost random selection of passages, on memory or attention, sensation or consciousness, one could enlarge upon the bitter-sweet quality of Brown's relations with his teacher. In dramatic or operatic terms, the outcome could conceivably be a kind of philosophical disenchantment for two voices. And Reid might still be heard mumbling behind Stewart's words. Through the

juxtaposition of such passages, I would hope to convey an impression of tension, of grating nerves: between a philosopher for whom the mind was a veritable starry heaven, studded with functions which had become 'faculties'; and a philosopher for whom the mind was simply all that is felt by us at any one time and under any circumstance. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that it was Stewart who taught Brown that those very times and circumstances are both a burden and a challenge of complexity. And it was Reid who impressed upon Brown the essential simplicity and indivisibility of mind. In his capacity as an analyst, therefore, Brown never lost sight of the mystery of the whole, of all the glories, as he put it, of the World of Mind. That is the theme of this inquiry.

In filling out the details of Brown's tripartite background, I will be forced to introduce a rather large cast. This procedure might suggest that Brown was a mere collector of opinions, a philosophical vulture feeding off the bones of greater minds. Indeed, such was the verdict of J.S. Mill, and more recently of (the historian) Gladys Bryson. Brown is accused of drawing "unskilfully" (Mill) on two Scottish traditions: that of Humean analysis on the one hand and that of Common Sense intuition on the other. In short, he is an 'eclectic' of the same class as Victor Cousin (in my

opinion, rather good company). Sir William Hamilton's incessant and, one feels, obsessive 'thrashing' of Brown is too well known (and too ugly) to bear repeating. According to Hamilton, Brown not only borrowed, but filched with "silent appropriation", the psychological analyses of Condillac, Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis and Laromiguière, - the so-called 'sensationalists' and 'idéologues' of eighteenth-century France. The characterization has regrettably become crystallized: this fact alone, and not Hamilton's petulant attacks, should cause distress. In 1934, the author of The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism, Elie Halévy, wrote that "Brown had felt the influence of the French ideologists quite as much [as] if not more than that of Hume; he borrowed so much from Destutt de Tracy and Laromiguière, that he has been accused of plagiarism."⁹ It is time that someone gave a fair trial to, and perhaps acquitted, this 'poacher'.

The interweaving of subsoil, soil and adversaries will have the appearance of a labyrinth from which there is no escape. This should not deter our efforts. If I may draw one conclusion in advance, it is that for every point with which he agreed, Brown found cause for disagreement. His philosophical perspective was therefore

⁹The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism, tr. Mary Morris (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1934), p. 435.

slanted in neither direction: it was a genuine transcendence of - literally, a climbing above but standing on, - the intricate patterns and layers of past opinion.

Briefly stated, the subsoil was an empirical under-current stretching across a wide philosophical front, from Bacon and Hobbes to Hartley and Priestley, with Locke, Condillac, Berkeley and Hume mustered somewhere in between. Reversing the tide of rationalism, this steady wave of empiricists found in the return to sensory origins the kind of immediacy it desired. (Just what sort of 'immediacy' we find in our original experience was a question which hung in the balance until Reid exploded and redeveloped the concept of 'simple apprehension'.) The decomposition of experience into its elemental components was an analytic technique sustained by a metaphysical principle. That principle depicted a genetic development from lower to higher forms of experience, from the passivity of the senses to the activity of mind. In order to explain the more reflective functions, one had to descend the ideational ladder in search of the most primitive or rudimentary data. To verify was to look down and back. Brown accepted this model as unconsciously as we now turn to basic linguistic norms. But the line of demarcation between passivity and activity was never strictly adhered to: it was clouded by rationalistic prejudices as, for example, in Hobbes. Only with Condillac's statue was

there ever any real possibility of a purely haphazard or contingent accumulation and transformation of sensory moments. (Both his disciples and Brown himself, as it turned out, were unconvinced by this.) The lure of the necessary always wormed its way into the heart of the contingent. The outcome of analysis would be predetermined by the shape of the analyzing mind. It was to the investigation of that shape or 'form' that Brown devoted the bulk of his philosophical energies.

The contributions of mind to the impact (for Brown, the virtual bombardment) of sense - experience assumed various guises. Sometimes they were rooted in physiological structures and reactions of desire or aversion; sometimes in reflective 'powers' of abstraction, comparison and judgment; sometimes in habits of suggestion or association; and not least of all in dispositions or propensities to believe in certain basic features or qualities of experience. If there was an overriding question, it was this: how does the mind operate, both in and for itself and in terms of the sensory impingement of the external world? Again, Brown gave his consent to the mechanistic tone of that question. He opposed physiological reductions, but only on the grounds that they were, as yet, insufficient, misguided or incorrect. (Such was the blast against Hartley and, on the level of "recent creations", against Erasmus Darwin.) Similarly, he spoke out against

sensationalistic reductions, wherein the functions of memory, attention, comparison and judgment would be equated (through reverse transformation or *de-formation*) with the sensations of which they were the consequences. "[The sensations] do not involve or constitute," Brown wrote, "they merely give occasion to this third state [the comparison of two percepts], and give occasion to it, merely in consequence of the peculiar susceptibilities of the mind itself." (L. XXXIII, 511) But as I have intimated already, these "susceptibilities" were not to be confused with the alleged proliferation of "powers" in the hands of someone like Reid or Stewart: they were simply what the mind was inclined to do or feel with respect to other affections.

Brown's reluctance to give himself over to the theory of inherent faculties extended to his choice of the term "suggestion" to describe our habitual "association" of ideas. The latter he found to be too restrictive, for it excluded the vast range of emotional confluences which plague and enhance our lives (L. XXXIV, 524). Moreover, it implied something which, as far as he could see, could never be shown: namely, that impressions were immediately subjected to a special activity of classification and distribution. "Our consciousness, during perception," Brown asserts, "is far from indicating any process of association; and

all of which we are conscious, at the time of the suggestion itself, is the mere succession of one feeling to another, not certainly of any prior process on which this suggestion has depended."

(L. XL, 93)

Here as elsewhere, the intervention of 'higher' mental acts in the performance of 'lower' ones is ruled out, initially for want of proof and secondly in the interests of conceptual economy.

The emphasis which Brown gives to the natural movement of thought, to its spontaneous eruption into sequences of ideas or emotions, seems too deliberate to be unconscious. Yet Brown, like his poetic contemporaries and the aestheticians such as Alison (whom he greatly admired), were responding to Hobbes's analysis of what he called "Mentall Discourse",¹⁰ and in particular to the alarmingly simple insight that "Thought is quick". Reid pinched an ounce of this insight for his first Essay: "No succession can be more quick than that of thought"; so the idea was obviously growing. The concern of Stewart and many others for the maintenance of sound habits of attention was a reflection of their despair in the face of the peculiar 'raciness' of thought. What was food to the poetic imagination was poison to the philosophical analyst. Or at least so it seemed.

¹⁰ Leviathan, Everyman edition, I, iii, 9.

In fact, Brown drew heavily on this assumption, just as he readily accepted the explosive simultaneity of all perceptual experience. From his early Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin and his medical dissertation, De Somno, to his final Sketch of the Physiology of the Mind, he allowed his fascination for the *velocity of consciousness*, its successiveness, rapid retrospects and suggestibility, to run rampant. For that reason one can often read Brown with half an eye on contemporary writers such as William James, Marcel Proust and Paul Valéry. According to Brown, mind must be seen to be any state of consciousness (and nothing more) and yet no particular state of consciousness (and nothing less). It must refuse ultimately to be anything which it is: any "affection" internal or external; any conjunction of antecedence and consequence; any conception or feeling of relation; any act of recollection or desire to attend; any emotion of joy or sorrow. It must be immanent in each one, while at the same time transcending them all. In the words of Valéry:

"The character of man is consciousness; and the character of consciousness is a perpetual emptying, an unremitting unsparring detachment from everything that appears, no matter how it appears. An inexhaustible act independent of the quality or number of things that present themselves, and by which the man in the mind must knowingly restrict himself to being an indefinite refusal to be anything at all."

(Note et digression)

But if one refuses to be a single moment of the stream, one is still 'he who refuses', and it is on this felt yet logical 'identity' that Brown founds his belief in the simple and indivisible mind. "It is the same individual mind", he notes,

"which, in all these instances, is pleased and pained, is ignorant, doubts, reflects, knows. There is something 'changed in all, and yet in all the same', which at once constitutes the thoughts and emotions of the hour, and yet outlives them, - something which, from the temporary agitations of passion, rises unaltered and everlasting, like the pyramid, that lifts still the same point to heaven, amid the sands and whirlwinds of the desert."

(L. XI, 168)

That "something" was the elusive goal of Brown's mental analysis. The image of the pyramid suggested itself and was gone.

By now it should be apparent that deep layers have shifted ground and are beginning to step clearly into the light of more recent creations. This is inevitable. If I were to say that Brown had inherited from Hume the idea of the reducibility of human experience into its felt qualities, into that mode of existence which is impression or affection, I would be halfway towards announcing Destutt de Tracy as a major influence on Brown. For I would be on the verge of pronouncing, through the media of Destutt de Tracy and Brown, that feeling is "everything for us; that it is the same thing as ourselves"¹¹ (p. 42);

¹¹Destutt de Tracy, A Treatise on Political Economy; to which is prefixed "A Supplement to a Preceding Work on the Understanding, or Elements of Ideology", tr. Th.

Vivre, c'est sentir. I would have to add that man is "a being willing in consequence of his impressions and knowledge, and acting in consequence of his will" (Éléments, 34). This would call to mind Brown's reiteration of the Hobbesian thesis that voluntary action depends only on "the last Inclination, or Appetite" (Leviathan, 29). And still the windings and unwindings would not cease. The *effort of will* which now describes man as a creature going out of himself, attaining self-consciousness in the very act (Maine de Biran), throws us back to Berkeley's rediscovery of touch for the purpose of apprehending extension; then forward again to Brown and Destutt de Tracy who hit upon the realization that in extending my arm, I discover not only the 'resistance' at the far end of my movement but also the 'muscular sensation' through which I reach it. I am, of course, giving expression to that realignment of eighteenth-century perspectives which begins to loosen the empirical supposition of pure receptivity. That very operation of "loosening", of

Jefferson (Georgetown, D.C., 1817), p. 42; Jefferson refers in the title to Éléments d'Idéologie, sec. II, 'Application de nos moyens de connaître à l'étude de notre volonté et de ses effets'.

¹²Destutt de Tracy, 'Table analytique', to P.J.G. Cabanis, Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme (Paris, 1815), I, XLI.

shaking loose those ties which bind ideas (whether through accident or of necessity), Brown regarded as the "first meaning" of analysis (L. X, 152). And so we are well within sight of our quarry. A simple comparison (yet one with enormous implications) will suffice to illustrate the alteration of view-points.

In the second of the Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, Berkeley describes the sort of antics which an object in the world must perform in order to 'catch the eye' of the perceiver: "the attention must be awakened and detained by a frequent repetition of the same thing placed oft in the same, oft in different lights." Brown does not deny this feature of our paying heed to something: there is a real sense in which we must be drawn out of the Cartesian "prison" of reflective consciousness towards the periphery of our being.¹³ But the motivation behind attention cannot be ignored: paying heed is part of a more general externalizing thrust on the part of man in his capacity for curiosity and concern. "To attend", observes Brown, "is to have a desire of knowing that to which we attend, and attention without desire is a verbal contradiction an inconsistency, at least, as great as if we were said

¹³ José Ortega y Gasset, What is Philosophy?, tr. Mildred Adams (N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 154-65.

to desire to know without any desire of knowing, or to be attentive without attention."

(L. XXXI, 486)

An object or idea before us is therefore infused with the emotional temper or climate of the experiencing subject.

"The eye has . . . a double quickness, to perceive what we love or hate, what we hope or fear" (L. XXXI, 487).

Like Ortega y Gasset and the poet Wallace Stevens after him, Brown focuses on the condition of lovers to evoke the peculiar complementary structure of attention, its response to the beckoning 'fact' of presence or absence as well as its eagerness to engage 'this' object and no other. Thus absence is depicted as "nothing more than the greater vividness of some mere conception, or other internal feeling, than of any, or all of the external objects present at the time, which have no peculiar relation to the prevailing emotion." (L. XXXI, 487)

As I suggested earlier, any examination of mind or consciousness must begin within the context of a particular time and circumstance. For Brown is, among other things, a master contextualist. Attention, therefore, must undergo a type of phenomenological 'loosening', a *separation* for the purpose of *discovering* the actual experience of consciousness in such a state.

"It is to our consciousness, of course, that we must refer for the truth of any such analysis; and the process which it reveals to us, in attention, seems, I think, to justify the analysis which I made, indicating a combination of

simpler feelings, but not any new and distinct species of feeling, to be referred to a peculiar faculty."

(L. XXXII, 491)

So much, then, for the soil of Reid and Stewart whose myriad host of 'powers' must be opposed by a stringent analysis; so much also for the subsoil of an antiquated 'science of mind and human nature', as Brown heralds in the new science of 'affection-cum-motive', be it external or internal; good-bye, as it were, to the statues of 'sensationalism' and welcome the 'susceptibilities' of the human agent; farewell, that is, to subsoil, soil and adversaries, for the analysis of mind will begin where the 'physics' of matter left off.

Mental analysis is or now ought to be, proclaims Brown, a process of "intellectual physics" (the notion of a dual enterprise, combining the 'Physics of Matter' and the 'Physics of Mind' was undoubtedly a legacy from the Academy of Physics, - see Welsh, Note E, 506) according to which "we reduce to simpler elements, some complex feeling that seems to us virtually to involve them" (L. X, 151). This is how, in Reid's terms, we arrive at "simple apprehensions". Traditional empiricism failed to subsume mental phenomena fully under the joint aspects of space and time: on the one hand, to attend to the 'constitution' (L. VI, 95) of a simultaneous complex of phenomena and thereby to regard carefully the interstices, the

"separating spaces" (Sketch, 14), - an idea which Bergson ridiculed as "tending toward Zero the further one pushes analysis";¹⁴ and on the other hand, to remember the changes as they grow (L. VI, 95), the successions as they multiply, dissolve or alter the configurations into which consciousness at any moment is apt to glide. The shape of the analyzing mind is therefore both structured and structuring, figured and figuring. One has to catch it on the run. "It is unquestionably the same individual mind", affirms Brown, "which, in intellectual investigation, is at once the object and the observer." (L. IX, 138) How then does one locate the center, the reality which is both and yet neither? The answer, of course, is that it eludes comprehension. As Georges Gusdorf has remarked in La découverte de soi: "all we ever find [are] the products it leaves in its wake."¹⁵ At every stage, one is abandoned to the moment with only the sustaining hope, fostered by memory (L. IX, 138), that 'this' moment bears some relation to 'that' one, and that both together might stand in relation to an unseen 'Other'. They are, you might say, waiting helplessly for Godot. "Of the essence

¹⁴The Creative Mind, tr. M. L. Andison (N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1946), pp. 205-6.

¹⁵La découverte de soi (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948).

of mind, then, we know nothing, but in relation to the states or feelings that form, or have formed, our momentary consciousness" (L. IX, 138).

Nevertheless, in so far as the 'unknown' is believed in, we are rescued from the certain chaos and despair of a mere aggregate and succession of states. Analysis cannot touch what it cannot find. Therefore the vision of mind as simple and indivisible remains intact. Moreover, the insight into its unifying power bears fruit in the ordering of our mental experience into suggestions simple and relative: the former bringing into focus "mere conceptions, or fainter images of the past" (an idea borrowed from Hume and the sensationalists), and the latter binding our separate perceptions or conceptions according to their relations with each other (a resurrection in white of the faded notions of 'judgment' and 'comparison'). It is, muses Brown,

"as if our mind could give its own unity to the innumerable objects which it comprehends, and, like that mighty Spirit which once hovered over the confusion of unformed nature, convert into a universe what was only chaos before."

(L. LI, 283)

Brown is at least a *critical* philosopher in poulterer's duds.

That hint of a mystery still to be resolved compels us to retrace the steps taken by Brown in his pursuit of a finer analysis. I have been slowly manoeuvring

Brown into position under the spotlight, across a broad stage of history. That background is no longer 'present' but remains 'compresent': it is there together with that which follows.

In the early part of his career, Brown restricted himself to sharpening his philosophical tools at the expense of his predecessors. There was nothing particularly unusual about this development since it is a rather common malady among philosophers. His extended remarks in 1798 on Darwin's Zoonomia were intended to serve as a commentary, and remain so. Their usefulness lies in disclosing to the researcher some of the first seeds of Brown's eventual assault on the psychological and conceptual muddles connected with sensation, volition, memory, and association. The dissertation which he wrote for his medical degree (in 1803) was a direct reply to Stewart's confusion (also spotted by his friend Prevost) concerning the suspension of mental operations during sleep. Stewart's fatal move had been the observation that "in sleep those operations of the mind are suspended which depend on our volition." Brown and Prévost pounced on the implications of this thesis for the functions of attention and memory, both of which were assumed to depend on an 'effort of will'. Stewart was gracious in defeat, and remained so until he discovered what this disciple

of his was really like! No doubt Brown did not know this himself until he began to write his Lectures for the Moral Philosophy class at Edinburgh in 1808-09. Later, he found himself embroiled in the so-called 'Leslie Affair', an ecclesiastical fiasco of interference over Leslie's appointment in 1805 to the chair of mathematics at the University of Edinburgh. The real scapegoat in the controversy was Hume: in particular, his theory of causation to which John Leslie in his 'Experimental Inquiry into the Nature and Property of Heat' (1804) had shown himself to be sympathetic. Brown felt that Hume had been doubly betrayed: initially, because he had been misread (by the 'moderates' of the General Assembly), and secondly because he had been read through the coloured-glasses of Reid. Although Brown defended Hume's analysis of 'necessary connection' in terms of the constant conjunction of antecedents and consequents, he had a measure of revenge against Hume's 'analysis' and Reid's 'intuition' by accusing both philosophers of saying the same thing: "that we are determined by an irresistible instinct, to the belief of invariableness of antecedence, is allowed by Mr. Hume, - that our belief of power is intuitive, is the opinion of Dr. Reid, - and however opposite his language may be, invariableness of antecedence is the very power for which Dr. Reid contends."

(Inquiry, 1, 195-6)

But our concern is neither with the details of Brown's emerging theory of cause and effect nor, at this early

stage, with his philosophical back-stabbing. For it was through his work in 1805 entitled Observations on the nature and tendency of the doctrine of Mr. Hume concerning the relation of cause and effect (which, by the way, Stewart read in its pamphlet form with "much pleasure and much instruction", - see Welsh, 96-7) that Brown began to fashion for himself those surgical instruments of analysis which are the object of our own inquiry. Whatever Hume could not teach him, Brown taught himself. And the upshot of these lessons was a prescription which would pervade and dominate the whole of Brown's subsequent thought: hold to what can be observed and classify it carefully (L. IX, 133). Hearing this, one is perhaps reminded of a constant refrain in Ferrier's "Philosophy of Consciousness", to the effect that our only safety, as philosophers, lies in the faithfulness and completeness of our observations.

I am tempted to describe the youthful author of the Inquiry as 'power-mad'. (Brown was a mere twenty-seven at the time). There is little doubt that he was intent upon exorcising the devils and hobgoblins of a faulty or non-existent analysis. The idea of power had been swelling into a beast of many connections, and Brown was out to 'scotch this snake'. His operation was conducted on two fronts: the first and more important being phenomenalistic or psychological (French writers,

such as Naville, were fond of comparing the 'phenomenalism' of the Scottish school with the 'psychology' of Maine de Biran) and the second linguistic. Setting before himself a model of the ideal philosopher, he endeavoured to work himself into the "habit of constant and quick analysis of general words" (Inquiry, 2, 137-9 ftn.), words which, however economical, were too often founded on "rude and scanty observations". Like Reid before him, he believed that "due attention to the signs [of a language] may, in many cases, give considerable light to the thing signified by them" (I.P., I, v, 54). But signs are no substitute for the items which they point out. A vicarious analysis is ultimately an empty analysis. As Brown puts it, words are important "only as they suggest ideas" (Inquiry, 2, 153 ftn.). Nevertheless, the line separating the linguistic and phenomenalist analyses is a tenuous one, which we must explore with due caution.

From the outset we are asked to consider the philosophy of mind as a "science of analysis" rather than as the product of "synthetic experiment" or "verbal definition" or the "arrangement of nomenclature" (Inquiry, 2, 13 Preface). Approaching the phenomenal analysis first, we see at work a process of what the French philosopher - psychologist, Hippolyte Taine, later called 'retrenchment'.¹⁶

¹⁶H. Taine, A Study on John Stuart Mill, tr. T. O. Maye (London, 1870), p. 103.

Loosely described, this is a kind of digging in of one's dissecting heels in the face of the temptation to advance by mere accumulation. Stewart, for example, was a great collector of phenomena but on these terms a poor analyst. The field for analysis is what Brown calls this "mighty system of changes"; in other words, a condition of universal flux. Hence from either an external or an internal direction there is a constant 'springing on the mind' of "co-existing objects" or "co-existing series of objects" (Inquiry, 3, 24-5; 2, 46 ftn.). In any "single moment" (Inquiry, 3, 8; 25; 149), some sort of change is taking place: "some sensation, or thought, or emotion, is beginning in the mind, or ceasing, or growing more or less intense" (Inquiry, 3, 8). Locked, as it were, in this present and isolated moment by our "imperfect senses", the series as a "whole" appears to us as "simple" (Inquiry, 3, 148); that is, as not amenable to a finer reduction into its "minuter elementary changes". Furthermore, because there is an "unbounded" field of co-existing series bursting on the scene, we cannot be certain that any two series are mutually and invariably connected (Inquiry, 3, 24-5). Thus a 'simple' phenomenon X at t_1 may or may not be related (or, more strongly, 'bound') to 'simple' phenomenon Y at t_2 . The implication is that these simples *conceal* the whole truth. Nevertheless, since we *believe* that the ever-shifting phenomena are

both connected and regular in their appearance before us, we must turn to reason as the instrument for examining the "relations of our ideas". Analysis, therefore, is the retracing of steps leading up to the "aggregations" of mind, to those "compound" feelings which, although "but one affection", are yet the "succession" of certain other ideas "preceding" them (Inquiry, 2, 18-19). More sharply still, analysis is the detecting of concealed elements (Inquiry, 3, 148) within the compass of simple disguises. If Brown is correct, the breaking down of simples is the break-through to discovery.

Yet here again Brown seems to place a metaphysical restriction on the analysis of phenomena. In mind as in matter there can be no final penetration to the 'most elementary thing', the ultimate particular. We are always stopping short to pick up and examine the penultimate clue. Locke had hinted at a similar 'present limitation' of our powers of discernment, but the French 'progressivists' had taken this as an indication that the future would yield what the present knows not. As usual, Brown is suspicious of any view which rides on the hope of finding that internal mechanism which will explain everything. And he derides those thinkers who state that there are "influences concerned, which are at once hidden from our view, and yet of a kind which require no observation to

reveal them to us" (Inquiry, 3, 243). One is reminded of Brown's dictum that we must hold to what can be observed and classify it carefully.

To the trick of breaking down simples, Brown adds a linguistic device. The language-user is requested to find in his experience not only the 'impression' (in the Humean sense) which serves as the prototype for the supposed 'idea of Power', but also the 'thing' denoted by the 'word' power. Brown makes it clear that when he calls upon the user to perform this secondary function, he expects him to regard both the way in which he 'ought to use' that word and the way in which he 'ought to perceive' that sequential phenomenon. (Introspective analysts were always telling other people what they ought to be seeing; hence Ryle's more recent bursts of sarcasm.) Brown effects a transition from a categorical to a hypothetical perspective, from statements about 'power processes' taking place to statements suggesting 'dispositional behaviour-patterns'. The transition is recognizably modern:

"When a spark falls upon gunpowder, and kindles it into explosion, every one ascribes to the spark the power of kindling the inflammable mass. But . . . he means nothing more than this very simple belief - that, in all similar circumstances, the explosion of gunpowder will be the immediate and uniform consequence of the application of a spark."

(Inquiry, 3, 27)

But there is a compresent analysis lurking beneath this

piece of sophistication, an analysis which compels the individual to observe again that 'simple' which initially conceals its 'history'. Thus linguistic analysis finds itself paralysed and barren without the assistance of a phenomenal retrenchment. The two operations are thus mutually dependent, although Brown clearly gives the edge to the latter.

The final recourse to phenomenal analysis is Brown's bow to empiricism. While it seems true to say that we always pause before the penultimate phenomenon, this in itself does not limit the indefinite analysis of complex appearances and their relations. The idea of power, Brown concedes, is a general notion, a linguistic short-hand for successions of a certain type. Yet for that very reason, it expresses and reflects such relations as are found to exist between phenomena. These relations are constantly open to review. We may conclude, then, that nowhere in Brown's canon on general ideas is there a rule which precludes the indefinite analysis of (supposed) simples into their (actual) elemental parts. As long as there remains any possibility that the relations implicit in a certain general idea may change - and no limit can be logically assigned to this contingency, - we must stand ready to adjust, or if need be to dispense with, even the most coveted generalizations about our experience. Especially cogent is Brown's intimation of a dual process

of involution and evolution, whereby as phenomenal analysis 'involves' towards those germinal elements, linguistic analysis 'evolves' towards their simple and lucid expression. As he remarks: "All languages . . . must, to a certain extent, be analytical; evolving, in many successive words, the complex feeling of a single moment." (Inquiry, 3, 124) Should either end of the process move too quickly, their complementariness is seized, items are lost or smothered, and words are driven to airy nothingness. Analysis is a taut and delicate balance.

Brown's struggle with analysis lends to one's reading of the Lectures and the last-minute Sketch a highly dramatic quality. I have gone back over early ground in an attempt to show just where and how Brown found his analytic feet. But once discovered the method had to be controlled; otherwise it, like styles, would run away with the man. The empirical side of Brown favoured an unlimited use of phenomenal analysis, a continual 'loosening' of knots and joints, a breaking down and breaking through. The philosophy of mind "as analytical" must be "science of progressive discovery" (L. XI, 162). Since there was seemingly no end to the 'appearances' which mind would leave in its wake, the field would be inexhaustible". Brown's Credo to this effect is a masterpiece of understatement: ". . . the mind cannot exist, without forming continually new combinations, that modify

its subsequent affections, and vary therefore, the products, which it is the labour of our intellectual analysis to reduce to their original elements". (Ibid.) It was with good reason, then, that Brown compared the analysis of mind to the chemical analysis of compounds (an idea imbedded in the soil of Hartley and the French *Idéologues*). For "it is only slowly", as Brown repeated to himself, that we discover the elements and relations of both (L. XI, 163). Yet implicit in this view of mind, as giving over its hand-me-downs for its own amusement and clarification, is the other face of Brown: the face which did not dare to challenge the assumption of mind *simple and indivisible*. And so in the midst of empirical testing, we find a metaphysical clinging to unity, an almost tender regard for the transcending whole. (The active voice is necessary to convey the sense of mind in flight, away from its manifestations). The result is a case of analytic schizophrenia.

In its final form, mental analysis becomes "virtual only" (Sketch, p. 20). The analogy between mind and matter is nipped in the bud by Brown's realization that there is no "essential union" in the latter, but only a kind of "accidental apposition" (L. X, 152) among the "multitude" of "separate existences". How unlike this material picture is our limited view of the mind's "products":

"even the most complex feeling is still only one feeling; for we cannot divide the states or affections of our mind into separate self-existing fractions . . . nor distinguish half a joy or sorrow from a whole joy or sorrow."

(L. X, 152)

What we cannot see fully we can nevertheless feel, and what we sense, as through a mist, is the deep inter-penetration of the parts of the whole. Here, as Bergson testified in Time and Free Will,

"we feel a thousand different elements which dissolve into and permeate one another without any precise outlines, without the least tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another; hence the originality."¹⁷

Significantly, both writers turn to emotional states for examples of that which "the analytic power of reflection or reason" (L. X, 152) cannot fathom. And both return to a more lucid understanding of those 'surface' structures of abstraction and association, wherein the 'separating spaces' are at best only 'loosely joined'. Brown stands before the "products" of himself, Bergson before his own "shadow". They recite their Credo:

"we believe that we have analysed our feeling, while we have really replaced it by a juxtaposition of lifeless states which can be translated into words, and each of which constitutes the common element, the impersonal residue, of the impressions felt in a given case by the whole of society."¹⁸

¹⁷Time and Free Will, tr. F. L. Pogson (London: George Allen & Co. Ltd., 1913), p. 132.

¹⁸Op. cit., p. 133.

Two voices in unison, but disenchanting.

There is, then, a compresent sadness in the bold and optimistic schemes which Brown pushes forward in the name of a new Science of Mind. He is like a writhing monster at odds with himself in the moment of truth, - a public lecture. He twists and plunges, contradicts and straightens himself out. Witness the struggle:

"Yet, wonderful, or even absurd, as it may seem, notwithstanding the absolute simplicity of the mind itself, and consequently of all its feeling or momentary states, - the Science of Mind is, in its most important respects, a source of analysis, or of a process which I have said to be virtually the same as analysis; and it is only, as it is in this virtual sense analytical, that any discovery, at least that any important discovery, can be expected to be made in it".

(L. X, 151)

Who, except perhaps a fellow with a warped sense of humour, would laugh now at Brown's misery? The decision to proceed, to give the science of analysis his blessing, was to cause Brown as philosopher and poet, the enduring anguish of misrepresentation. But never one to leave his readers in a fit of depression, Brown recollects himself as often as he forgets. Speaking of memory, he wrote:

"To this wonderful endowment . . . which gives us the past to compare with the present, we owe that most wonderful of relations, of which the same being is at once the object and the subject, contemplating itself, in the same manner, as it casts its view on objects that are distant from it, comparing thought with thought, emotion with emotion, approving its own moral actions . . . or passing sentence on itself, as if on a wretch whom it loathed, that was trembling with conscious delinquency, under the inquisition of a severe and all-knowing judge."

(L. IX, 139)

Here, our analyst in the dock has mushroomed into a two-headed creature, part 'conscious delinquent' and part 'all-knowing judge'. His reality, if one can speak so, lies somewhere in between, not so much in a 'point' as in a 'tension'. So described, Brown's philosophy is, I believe, a representative study of man.

The unveiling now of James F. Ferrier's rebuke of Brown will not, I trust, come too early for a fair verdict. Much remains to be said concerning Brown's quest for a sound analytic method and his application of this method at various stages of his career to a wide range of philosophic problems. Nevertheless, this first sketch ought at least to impede an over-anxious acceptance of the point of view conveyed so strikingly by Ferrier.

"The human mind, not to speak it profanely, is like the goose that laid golden eggs. The metaphysician resembles the analytic poulterer who slew it to get at them in a lump, and found nothing for his pains. Leave the mind to its own natural workings, as manifested in the imagination of the poet, the fire and rapid combinations of the orator, the memory of the mathematician, the gigantic activities and never-failing resources of the warrior and statesman, or even the manifold powers put forth in everyday life by the most ordinary of men; and what can be more wonderful and precious than its productions? Cut into it metaphysically, with a view of grasping the embryo truth, and of ascertaining the process by which, all these bright results are elaborated in the womb, and every trace of 'what has been' vanishes beneath the knife; the breathing realities are dead, and lifeless abstractions are in their place; the divinity has left its shrine, and the devotee worships at a deserted altar; the fire from heaven is lost in chaotic darkness, and the godlike is nothing but an empty name. Look at thought, and feeling, and passion, as they glow on the pages of Shakespeare. Golden eggs, indeed! Look at the same as

they stagnate on the dissecting-table of Dr. Brown, and marvel at the change. Behold how shapeless and extinct they have become! Man is a 'living soul'; but science has been trained among the dead."¹⁹

Such a picture of the man is, as I shall increasingly maintain, an erroneous one and must yield to a more just representation. In philosophy only false opinion must be allowed to stagnate.

¹⁹'Philosophy of Consciousness', in Works (2nd ed.; Edinburgh and London: Wm. Blackwood and Sons, 1875), III, 16-17.

PART ONE

INVOLUTIONS

No reasoning is more fallacious than this; that, because two things are constantly conjoined, therefore one must be the cause of the other. Day and night have been joined in a constant succession since the beginning of the world; but who is so foolish as to conclude from this that day is the cause of night, or night the cause of the following day?

- Thomas REID

Of no phaenomenon, as observed, need we think *the* cause; but of every phenomenon must we think *a* cause. The former we *may* learn, through a process of induction and generalization; the latter we *must* always and at once admit. . . . On this, not sunken rock, Dr. Brown and others have been shipwrecked.

- Sir William HAMILTON

I

AN ASSEMBLY OF OPINION

Brown's entrance on the side of the 'defence counsel' in the Leslie controversy marked a dramatic seizure of philosophic acclaim. The voluminous commentary on Darwin's Zoonomia was but a minor prelude to the sudden, orchestral, challenge of his illustrious forebearers, notably Hume, Reid and Stewart, the latter himself a participant. The theory of causation which he brought forward on this occasion - largely in agreement with but at the same time critical of aspects of Hume's position, - was commended by John Playfair (see Welsh, 126) and rather extensively adopted by James Mill.¹ It also found favour with Alexander Campbell Fraser, who was ready to confess that he had indeed been saved by Brown's "abstract" analysis of and "ingenious" inquiry into the nature of "cause and effect". His 'sin' apparently had been an unthinking acceptance of the "illusion" that *cause* is a term referring to an invisible "power" which mysteriously produces in objects the observed changes called *effects*. The distance between his worship of Baal

¹Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind, ed. J. S. Mill (London, 1869), II, 256.

and a "blind trust" in the notion of power as a mere pattern of "invariable antecedence" was, however, too great for him and he relapsed into "universal uncertainty" and thence into "Cartesianism".² As usual, it was the compresence of Hume *with* Brown, and therefore to his mind of "Positivism", which fed his doubt and that of others. Schopenhauer was similarly attracted to the non-empirical element in Brown's theory - the emphasis on "innate, intuitive, and instinctive conviction",³ - which he promptly misconstrued, along Kantian lines, as turning the law of causality into an *a priori* condition of all experience. The remainder he shrugged aside as pure "tediousness". Not surprisingly, Brown's heroic stand was greeted as much by confusion as by applause.

That same confusion and indecision were rife among his bitterest opponents as well. Reid more than anyone was probably responsible for this, since he had drawn the lines against Hume (Brown complained that the members of the General Assembly had preferred to study Hume's testimony, as it were, second-hand through Reid, thus doubly betraying the former, - (Inquiry, 2, 186-9 ftn.)

²Biographia Philosophica (Edinburgh and London: Wm. Blackwood and Sons, 1904), pp. 47-9.

³The World as Will and Idea, tr. Haldane and Kemp (London: Trubner and Co., 1886), II, 207.

but not with an adequate and, one might add, his customary lucidity. Adhering somewhat closely to Newton,⁴ "to whose language", remarks Stewart, "he was superstitiously attached" (A.P., II, 28 ftn.), Reid had argued that natural philosophers "have never discovered the efficient cause of any one phenomenon; nor do those who have distinct notions of the principles of the science, make any such pretence" (A.P., I, vi, 47); and so, "when they *pretend* to show the cause of any phenomenon of nature, they mean by the cause, a *law of nature* of which that phenomenon is a *necessary consequence*" (A.P., I, vi, 46; italics mine). Stewart objects, almost regretfully, that such a position is tantamount to using "the phrases *physical causes* and *efficient causes* as synonymous" (A.P., II, 28 ftn.). Had Newton been less "guilty of indefinite and ambiguous expression", and Reid less slavish in his following of him, Stewart

"cannot help thinking that [Reid] would have reconciled some apparent inconsistencies which occur in his later publications, and obviated some of the cavils with which

⁴For a comparison of their positions see L. L. Laudan, "Thomas Reid and the Newtonian Turn of British Methodological Thought", in The Methodological Heritage of Newton, ed. R. E. Butts and J. W. Davis (U. of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 127-31. Laudan contends that "Newton was in rather a quandary about causal questions" but that Reid managed to capture and elucidate the "spirit" of Newton's position.

he has been assailed by his not always candid opponents."

(Who else but Brown?)

Ironically, when Brown himself equates physical and efficient cause - "the *physical* cause . . . which has been, is, and always will be, followed by a certain change, is the *efficient* cause of that change" (Inquiry, 3, 89), - both John Wilson⁵ and Hamilton, defending Reid, pounce on Brown in turn, alleging that his equation rules out the "idea" or "quality of necessity" in causal relations.⁶ The situation becomes hopelessly muddled when one recalls: (a) that Stewart supported Reid in the view that efficient (or 'metaphysical') causes belong exclusively to the realm of human or divine agency (*cf.* Reid, A.P., I, v, 40; IV, ii, 270; IV, iii, 280-1) and that, on the other hand, in natural philosophy "when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two are *constantly conjoined*, so that when we see the one we may expect the other" (A.P., II, 24: Stewart calls this type of cause, learned "from experience alone", a *physical* cause); (b) that Brown supposed Hume's instinctive belief in "invariableness of antecedence" to be comparable

⁵In Blackwood's Magazine, vol. xl, p. 122 ff.

⁶Sir William Hamilton, Lectures on Metaphysics (Edinburgh, 1859), II, 384.

(after the linguistic disguise is removed) to Reid's intuitive belief "of power", with the result that they were actually of the *same* opinion (Inquiry, 2, 195-204); (c) that Reid, like Hume and Brown, denies that there is any *observable* 'power' (or 'cause') "upon the application of one body to another" (I.P., II, xviii, 273) or between events "one succeeding another" (I.P., VI, v, 628; A.P., IV, iii, 278), either in nature or in the "operations of our minds", yet in opposition to them is able to derive the "idea of power" from "our own voluntary actions" (A.P., I, v, 40), which power everyone has "over his own actions, and the determinations of his will" (I.P., VI, v, 630) and such things as "gravitation" and "magnetism" possess in "latent" form if not "manifest" to sense experience (I.P., II, xviii, 273-4; Brown comments that this latency or "continued power" is a product of the imagination, - Inquiry, 4, 130); and finally (d) that Brown believes he has served the very cause of *necessity* by demonstrating that the proposition, "Every thing which begins to exist must have had a cause of its existence" is dependent on and reducible to the proposition, "Every change has had a cause of its existence, in some circumstance, or combination of circumstances, immediately prior" (Inquiry, 2, 117). This last 'tidying up' and strengthening of Hume's doctrine can be witnessed at great length in Brown's recurrent approaches to the

notion of 'invariability'. The foregoing series of twists and counter-twists will perhaps explain his persistence and illustrate the kind of terrain his challenge had to navigate.

By the time Brown's Inquiry had reached its third edition, the apology for Hume in support of Leslie had been relegated to a condensed and summary fourth chapter. Although Henry Laurie has found this to be the only instructive portion,⁷ I have chosen to pay heed to those aspects of the work which reveal the systematic probings of a maturing mind: in particular, those which indicate the general development of Brown's theory and analysis of mental transformations. What emerges will, I hope, be a view of a complex methodology rising almost surreptitiously to the foreground of Brown's attention.

⁷Scottish Philosophy in its National Development
(Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1902), pp. 238-9.

THE DOCTRINE MOST INVARIABLE

The analysis of cause and effect which Brown undertook in these early years became in time a means of self-assertion. To the picture of a balanced interweaving of methodological components, both linguistic and phenomenal, one has to add the portrait of a mind which is tightly strung, eager at first and yet uncertain. Through this tension one is then able to decipher a resolution in embryonic form, a growing determination in which Brown begins to recognize his need to give greater play to the phenomenal operation. At the outset, and still in its rather loose phase, the interaction of these functions appears somewhat as follows.

Among the array of possible objects which might confront the observer at any one moment, observes Brown, only certain "simple trains" lend themselves easily to the description of "a series of antecedents and consequents" (Inquiry, 3, 25; also 387 Note A). Such a series must, of course, be regarded initially as a 'whole'. This is the force of its being termed a 'simple' series, at least within the framework of our previous reconstruction. Yet it can also be designated a 'simple' series in another sense; that is, as a "separate" (Ibid.) or distinct grouping of "progressive" (Inquiry, 3, 148) elements.

The point is a difficult one and must be rendered more explicit.

In its immediate impact, the bombardment of our senses can be said to constitute what Russell at one time called the 'data of acquaintance'. Since it is pre-abstractive, the question of order becomes secondary. Hence the concurrence of several series will tend to make the eventual task of selection both arbitrary and falsifiable. When we reach the point of carving out the delineations of each series, we are apt to confuse the arrangement of parts and so *either* assign a cause where none exists *or* assign the wrong cause to the alteration of objects or events. Automobile accidents, for example, frequently create this kind of dilemma, and it is not only a matter of human reconstruction, but also of the unique filtration of events through the senses of the persons involved. Furthermore, if we take each series to be a separate or isolatable 'episode' in the total sequence, it will be proper to label one part the 'antecedent' and another the 'consequent'; yet this rule may not be applicable to the entire collection of series. Suppose that one were to pull first a match then a cigarette out of one's pocket (Series A); suppose, next, that as one ignited the match and cigarette, some leaking gas was touched off (Series B); again, with the ensuing explosion, one was propelled backwards (Series C); and finally, on

striking a window, one sent the glass flying (Series D). Within the scope of Series A or Series D, it would make sense to speak of a group of antecedents and consequents, but not within the bounds of Series AD. The match being drawn out of the pocket does not have as *its* consequent the window being broken or the glass being dispersed in all directions. Moreover, there might be an intervening series (called Series Jupiter) to be accounted for which would make it extremely difficult to depict the situation readily in terms of either direct or indirect repercussions. Brown has just such a pattern in mind when he argues, against Hume, (a) that concurring trains *may or may not* (the matter is one of contingency) stand in a causal relation to one another; and (b) that owing to the incessant barrage of co-existing objects, one series may be absent or ineffectual if present, while a second or later series may take place through the intervention of a third and simultaneous series (Inquiry, 387-8 Note A).

In the illustration I have used above, a case might be imagined where a spark from a short-circuiting light-switch made the striking or igniting of the match an irrelevant or 'weak' feature of the resulting scene. H.P. Grice, in his examination of "The Causal Theory of Perception", cites an instance of the same kind of 'causal' ambiguity:

"it might be that it looked to me as if there were a

certain sort of pillar in a certain direction at a certain distance, and there might actually be such a pillar in that place; but unknown to me, there were a mirror interposed between myself and the pillar, which reflected a numerically different though similar pillar, it would certainly be incorrect to say that I saw the first pillar, and correct to say that I saw the second; and it is extremely tempting to explain this linguistic fact by saying that the first pillar was, and the second was not, causally irrelevant to the way things looked to me."¹

According to Brown, the language we employ when we speak of 'antecedents' and 'consequents' is determined in the strictest sense by the particular *context* in which the 'simples' of any one moment are assembled. Beyond these separate series, there is only an interminable booming and buzzing (*à la* William James) of co-existing objects striking the observer. The shaping of these contexts, however, is not the product of linguistic analysis but of the phenomenal analysis which breaks down those simples to discover their components. Brown cannot discuss the language of causality without conceding the crucial importance of that other function.

Given that qualification, Brown's definitions of cause and effect, power and susceptibility are seen to proceed *a posteriori* from the nature of our experience of phenomena, whether mental, physical, or a combination

¹H.P. Grice, 'The Causal Theory of Perception', in *Perceiving, Sensing and Knowing*, ed. Robert J. Swartz (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co. Inc. 1965), p. 462.

of both. (See Inquiry, 3, 90-1 & 93: that mind and matter or their interaction are in this respect at least 'all of a piece' is, of course, an essential departure from the division insisted upon by Reid.) In naming the component factors of any observed change in objects or events, Brown argues, we find that we must restrict ourselves to the 'appearances' which particular objects 'present' to us within a certain (that is, separable) context or series. The appearance, for example, of a piece of metal *before it is heated* and the appearance of the object in its liquid form *after heat has been applied to it* are the sole elements which can be said to form a causal sequence. (An "appearance", explains Brown, is "only a short term for expressing certain changes observed", - Inquiry, 3, 163 f.) That these phenomena have been in the past and will continue to be in the future the only appearances to manifest themselves under similar circumstances is the very heart of our notion of and belief in causality. Beyond the walls of this belief, the names 'cause' and 'effect' or 'power' and 'susceptibility' are left to beg and flounder without the 'referents' which alone can render them 'meaningful'.

"We give the name of *cause* to the object which we believe to be the invariable antecedent of a particular change; we give the name of *effect*, reciprocally to that invariable consequent; and the relation itself, *when considered abstractly* [italics mine], we denominate *power* in the object that is the invariable antecedent - *susceptibility* in the object that exhibits, in its change, the invariable consequent."

(Inquiry, 3, 12)



This referential capacity among the four terms which comprises their meaning at the same time defines the range of possible objects or events to which they may on any occasion point. To use any of these terms is to recognize the limitations - past, present and future - of our experience.

It is important, moreover, to be extremely cautious in one's handling of names, these or any other. One can "invent" *names* and suppose that this inventiveness describes the business of the philosophy of mind (Inquiry, 2, 25), but such delusions of grandeur only conceal an "empire of prejudice" and a certain complacency. "Astonishment", on the other hand, is the product of a more industrious pursuit of "elemental parts" (Ibid.). As one digs away at those simple but deceptive wholes, old "hypotheses", "analogies", and "relations of thought" are exhumed in the face of new discoveries (Inquiry, 2, 23). Only in this way, Brown contends, does one lay a proper foundation.

In a similar vein, one can invent "qualities" of a body and suppose that these are more than simply the *names* we use to express definite "effects" known to or observed by us (Inquiry, 3, 163-4). On being acquainted with the colour, shape or hardness of a ball, we perhaps feel entitled to say that we know also that among its other qualities it *possesses* the 'susceptibility' of

falling if previously dropped from our hand. But unless this tendency to fall has been the observed effect of the ball being dropped from our hand, we cannot "predict with certainty" the appearance of the "fall" from the mere appearance on one occasion of the "dropping" (Inquiry, 3, 170) nor, if this condition is satisfied, we can assume that the susceptibility in question is *anything more than* a "name" which we assign to the manifest consequent (Inquiry, 3, 180). To attribute susceptibility to the ball or power to the hand which makes it drop is to furnish a proposed 'explanation' for the train of events, where none exists.

"We must not think that words of our own invention, convenient as they may be for expressing what we believe [but cannot infer], are at all explanatory of the belief, which they merely designate. . . . We do not believe that a particular sensation will arise in us, because we have termed a certain object red; but we term the object red, because we believe, that, on its presence in light, a particular sensation will arise in us. . . . It is the rise of these very feelings . . . which the names of the sensible qualities themselves were invented by us to denote. They indicate our belief of the recurrence of the sensations, on every recurrence of the same external circumstances; but they only indicate the belief without explaining it." (Inquiry, 3, 180-1)

Hence the note of caution: there is only one person worse than a namedropper and he is the counterfeiter.

To this slurring of names one must add the abominable practice of raising metaphysical smoke-screens. Again, it is the misuse and over-extension of language which breeds false inference and supposition.

This noxious habit begins when we extend to "whole classes of phenomena" what is known to be true only of "particular phenomena comprehended in them" (Inquiry, 3, 244). In the analytic search for elemental parts, of course, we strive to break beneath the surface of immediate sensible wholes. But the discovery of "elementary changes of things", when made, can lead us to speculate that "there *may* be affections of *this kind* [italics mine], too minute to be distinguishable by us, yet similar to the impulses, and re-actions and compositions and balancings of forces, in the masses which we are capable of perceiving" (Inquiry, 3, 242). It is but a short step to the ready inference that, deeper yet, there must be some *internal mechanism* which, if uncovered by "a finer knowledge", would make possible the certain anticipation or prediction of future events. As I noted earlier, Brown contributes to the charade a bemused insight into the contradictory statements of the opposing claimants that there are "influences concerned, which are at once hidden from our view, and yet of a kind which require no observation to reveal them to us" (Inquiry, 3, 243). Putting this another way, we might say that the evidence from a fraction of the class of phenomena has been utilized to make a generalisation concerning the whole, with the additional anchor of a decisive 'mechanism' at the end. Brown is more than wary about both the function of general terms and this

inroad of metaphysical "obscurity". But has he, in the course of his objections to the above process, applied a brake to the very analytic regression towards 'elemental parts'?

Briefly stated, Brown's attack on the generalisations of language raises the charge that the admittedly useful 'conciseness' of generalisations is too often taken for granted and carelessly employed to obscure the very complexity of phenomena which it was intended to refine. If errors continue to abound in science, the explanation for this lies in a perpetual disregard for the "innumerable phenomena" which ought to make it impossible - assuming one has any intellectual integrity, - to pass lightly from "the most striking phenomena, to other striking phenomena" (Inquiry, 2, 137 ff ftn.). Brown shows himself here to be particularly sensitive to those subtle shadings which can alter the complexion of our apprehension of phenomena. When Reid objected that, under Hume's theory, 'day' and 'night' would have to be said mutually to 'cause' one another since they uniformly succeed each other (I.P., VI, vi, 660), he failed to obtain the depth of illumination open to him. Alert to the opportunity Brown explores, with the deft hand of a word-artist, the multifarious character of these two terms, loosening with every stroke any connection which might bind them more directly together. (Inquiry, 1, 22 ff; 2, 137 ff ftn.; 3,

300-4).

"It should be remembered, that *day* and *night* are not words which devote two particular phenomena, but are words invented by us to express long series of phenomena. What various appearances of Nature, from the freshness of the first morning beam, to the last soft tint that fades into the twilight of the evening sky, changing with the progress of the Seasons, and dependent on the accidents of temperature, and vapour, and wind, are included in every day! These are not one, because the word which expresses them is one; and it is the believed relation of physical events, not the arbitrary combinations of language, which Mr. HUME professes to explain. . . . If we consider [those terms] philosophically, they are the series of positions in relation to the sun, at which the earth arrives, in the course of its diurnal revolution; and, in this view, there is surely no one who doubts that the motion of the earth, immediately before sunrise, is the cause of the subsequent position which renders that glorious luminary visible to us."

(Inquiry, 3, 301-2)

Analysis, it seems, proceeds as much on the basis of poetical fervour as it does by means of philosophical distinction.

Overlooking the clumsiness of less acute analysts, however, Brown affirms against the 'heresy' of the nominalists (Inquiry, 2, 152 ftn.) that general ideas *do* exist as "affections of mind existing independently of the words which express them" (Inquiry, 2, 153 ftn.) and serve as an "artificial memory, *suggesting to us by association* the phenomena comprehended in them" (Inquiry, 2, 139 ftn.; italics mine). The thought of 'triangleness', for example, suggests to us any number of particular triangles we may have perceived (and about each of which, as particulars, we can have no general idea) without at

the same time suggesting that we can *formulate* a general proposition regarding *all* triangles (cf. Reid, I.P., VI, i, 534-5). More than simply a convenient linguistic shorthand, general ideas express and reflect the "relations" implicit in them (Inquiry, 2, 153 ftn.). Such relations as may be said to be implicit in the idea of triangleness - the number of sides, the sum of the angles, and so on, - play a crucial role in distinguishing triangles from other geometrical figures: "unless we admit the existence of general ideas, an equilateral triangle differs as much from a scalene . . . triangle, as from a square" (ibid.). Furthermore, and here perhaps Brown reveals his trump card, our apprehension of these relations depends on our *belief* in the uniform character of phenomena. When we think of the 'whiteness' of snow, the 'heaviness' of iron, or the 'ductility' of gold, we have in mind not only "past sensations" in which particular objects have been present to us in their observed effects, but also the "future qualities" which we believe will *always* be manifest to us with respect to snow, iron, or gold (Inquiry, 1, 12-13). The apprehension of a particular piece of iron as heavy does not itself, of course, engender the "idea of heaviness", yet neither is anything expressed in the manifestation which would limit the idea to one phenomenon (Inquiry, 2, 153 ftn.). Curious as his course might seem at this stage, if Brown is to

preserve the existence of general ideas with any sort of logical justification he must steer a delicate course between the nominalist pitfall into particularity and the realist perception of an "external essence of general images" (Inquiry, 2, 152 ftn.). If he succeeds at all, the reason may be that he endeavours to *tie* general ideas (a) initially to a belief in uniformity, (b) with equal force to the function of suggestiveness, and (c) only less so to a real presence as *mental affections*. From this standpoint, general ideas would appear to be both economical and practical while at the same time being intuitively felt and hence empirically grounded.

We have noted that general terms, such as 'heaviness' or 'sweetness' are inextricably bound to a belief in uniformity. Taking the propositions 'Iron is heavy' or 'Sugar is sweet' we *mean to assert*, suggests Brown, that iron "will, tomorrow and for ever" be heavy, and sugar sweet (Inquiry, 1, 12-13). In an almost Spinozistic way, this sheer 'power to be' some characteristic or another, in this case heavy or sweet, defines the respects in which anything can meaningfully be affirmed about a quality or property of an object. We may say, for example, that 'th loadstone is magnetic' (where this is intended in the universal sense of 'All loadstones are magnetic'), and suppose that *its being magnetic* is the reason or *explanation* for the attraction of iron to it (Inquiry, 3,

182). And saying this, we may further suppose that we have asserted something special or *significant* about a certain property of iron. But the very fact that we think there is something *significant* in our assertion gives wind to the suspicion that we are fishing about with 'pointers' to detect in the loadstone a surreptitiously *efficient* or immediate *cause* for the subsequent attraction of iron to it. Explanations of this sort - and to Brown, of course, they are not explanations at all - are shabby excuses for metaphysical wool-gathering. What *does* explain the attraction of iron to loadstone is the "uniform and invariable antecedence" of the latter to the appearance of the former. Reason does not demonstrate this; belief attests to it. Brown concludes, therefore, that 'magnetism' is only a *name* "for our belief of the continuance of [the iron's] tendency to approach a loadstone" (Ibid.). What is true of 'magnetism' in one context is said to be true of 'heaviness' or 'sweetness' in another.

The intent of Brown's analysis of such predicates as 'magnetic', 'heavy', and 'sweet' is to reveal their *durability* for subsequent use in empirical statements. In his paper "A Query on Confirmation", Nelson Goodman has described predicates of this sort as "projectible", that is to say, as capable of being projected from confirmed instances in the past to future cases. Further

expounding this view, Henry E. Kyburg Jr. writes:

"He [Goodman] takes projectibility to be an empirical property of the predicates . . . so that we can only have *evidence* that a predicate is projectible: we take 'green' to be projectible, because we have projected it successfully in the past, and that provides evidence that it is generally projectible. But we might be wrong, though rational."²

Brown's choice of the word 'invariable' is probably unfortunate for he undoubtedly has in mind this 'projectible' feature of his own examples. Yet it is perhaps significant that he elects a path more akin to deductive certainty, in so far as the function of belief in his philosophy is to give force both to the linguistic operations of naming and describing and to the contingency of all statements of matter of fact. He is, I think, in this respect torn between Humean scepticism and some form of rationalism. As Kyburg suggests, it may be "rational" to expect the loadstone to be 'magnetic' at t_n in the future, although on the basis of evidence at the time quite "wrong" to say so.

The above delineations might, however, fall short of certain expectations. To some it might appear that science has been deprived of its excursions into the dense jungles of minute observation. Conceptual revision

²Philosophy of Science: A Formal Approach (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 311.

is seemingly a very distant relative of the search for (real or actual) causes which is said to typify more immediate experimentation. But that this opinion is misguided (if temptingly natural) and that Brown was aware of its obfuscation (if only partially so) can perhaps be shown in either one of two ways.

In the first place, whatever it is, explanation is not something which one might snare in an experimental trap. Discovering an additional item 'somewhere' is not the same sort of thing as coming across an explanation, although it might provide a basis for devising an explanatory scheme. Confronted by a piece of evidence we could remark, 'There, that's the explanation'. Our bewilderment over certain marks on the contents of a plate and the loss of portions of it might be relieved by our inadvertently stumbling on a mouse under the coal-box in the corner. But the nose and feet indentations are not to be accounted for *because the mouse is a mouse*. As Brown affirms in another context, we have not assigned a "reason" when we say "that grass is green, because it is green" (Inquiry, 3, 181). To argue that grass is green because we have repeatedly observed it to be so is merely to put forward a *generalisation* as a straw-man substitute for the genuine article. A recent philosopher of science, D. W. Theobald, has given strength to Brown's insight: "laws and generalisations", he asserts, "do not

by themselves explain since they are merely the summary reports of what has been observed."³ Brown seems to regard the philosophical safari in pursuit of 'power sources' as a further case in point. Some individuals might be lured into thinking that as long as there remains even a remote chance of uncovering these hitherto undetected centres, we must continue to allow that the *real causes* of observed events lie somewhere in such regions. The assumption underlying this notion, of course, is that with the discovery of such sources we will be able to provide 'explanations' for what happens in the universe around us. But in so thinking, we are right back in the mouse trap. What these individuals seem to miss is the recognition that observations are innocuous little items unless they are *understood* within some sort of framework. And understanding them is part and parcel of putting together convincing explanations. "Only theories . . . explain in the sense of enabling us to completely *understand* our observations."⁴

But again that feeling of dissatisfaction creeps over us. Surely the hunters on the philosophical safari,

³An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 76; italics mine.

⁴Ibid. I will have occasion to return to this subject later.

someone might object, are dealing wholesale in theory; if, that is, we understand by 'theory' simply a reflective way of *seeing* (from the Greek *theorein*, to see) events around us. Allowing that a satisfactory explanation is, among other things, a theoretical construct which not only makes certain 'ontological claims' but also anchors these in such a manner as to make intelligible some phenomena,⁵ we must presumably permit the hunters to have their 'power sources' and their 'reasons' too. The question of whether or not their explanation, so-called, is a satisfactory one thus becomes the sole ground of dispute. Brown cannot deny them this victory, merely a share in the spoils.

If the objector is correct, Brown is faced with a much more difficult task. On the other hand, should he succeed he would further refine the question at issue. His answer has already been foreshadowed and would seem to take the following form. (a) A theoretical construct which makes 'ontological claims' is not thereby permitted to make contradictory claims; for example that the 'existents are *unobserved* yet somehow (from beneath the sybil's stool) *revealed* to us (Inquiry, 3, 243). (b) Within the context of the successive phenomena passing

⁵Ibid., p. 77.

before us, such 'powers' if they existed at all would simply be one more item in the parade (Inquiry, 1, 8-9; Inquiry, 2, 35-6; Inquiry, 3, 92). (c) Given this stipulation, 'powers' - if one must use that term (Inquiry, 3, 201-2), - are better explained by what is actually known about the performances of objects or events. (d) What is known, of course, is that phenomena tend to be grouped in (line themselves up according to) different series, about which it is meaningful to say that some items are 'antecedents' and others 'consequents'. (e) It is meaningful to say this if we regard, say, an 'antecedent' in the strictest sense (hence in the only reliable one) as that which *precedes* a 'consequent' not merely on one occasion but continually (Inquiry, 2, 46). (f) Since continuity implies an indefinite stretch into the future, we must affirm that specific 'antecedents' are at once *uniform* - this is attested to by past observations, - and *invariable*, - this we owe to an intuitive *belief* (Inquiry, 3, 175). (g) The term 'power' has no other signification. As though to provide invincible proof for this point, Brown argues skillfully that both Hume, with his admission of a determinative 'irresistible instinct' and Reid, with his belief in 'active power', have (perhaps unwittingly) agreed with Brown that power *means* (refers to) nothing but "the belief on invariableness of antecedence" (Inquiry, 2, 195-6). (h) Thus the explanation of, let

us say, the magnetism of the loadstone is based on our belief in the invariability of its performance. This invariability, moreover, can neither be perceived nor inferred (Inquiry, 2, 203-4). (i) An explanation of this kind is *more satisfactory* in so far as it meets more fully the exigencies of the situation; that is, in so far as it makes more intelligible the passing array of phenomena within the limits of what can be known and said about them. ("It is no small part of science [Brown remarks] to be well acquainted with its boundaries of inquiry." Inquiry, 2, 35). Finally (j) in the last analysis, we are forced to conclude that "it is our faith itself which, in a great measure, makes the surrounding objects what they truly are to us, by rendering permanent, in our voluntary use of them, what otherwise might have seemed to pass away in the moment in which we had chanced to be under their influence" (Inquiry, 3, 11). Brown's conclusion should not come as a surprise: the impact of such 'faith' on our total apprehension of the world around us has been slowly gathering momentum.

In the second place, an explanation serves in part to convey what is already understood by us into virgin territory, as it were, into territory which has not yet been subjected to conceptual delineation. Brown repeatedly warns us against the hazards of too many long analogous journeys into night. Reaching out with one

metaphorical leg, he assures us, is a reasonably safe undertaking: "if the metaphor be even rhetorically just, [it] must always express, at least one resemblance" (Inquiry, 3, 120-1). With respect to the terms 'bond' or 'connection', which we rather glibly apply to causal situations, the analogy hangs on certain identifiable factors of resemblance: their contiguity in space and time or their constant conjunction. (Hume was undoubtedly the pioneer analyst in this area.) Given such resemblances we feel strongly that we are entitled to subsume A and B *under one roof*. The resemblance between 'being under one roof' and 'being analogous' can be said to carry the same force.

When we draw an analogy, part of what we are doing is constructing an imaginative association which somehow overrules the legitimate uniqueness - claims of the parties involved. Any family living together, whether it be a logical or a sociological one, possesses this vital feature of complementary resistances. As a rule, families of either sort do not thrive on total assimilation and submission. As the Chinese would say, *yin* and *yang* are contained as tear-drop on inverted tear-drop within *one* circle. A resemblance, however, need not be the product of our depicting to ourselves or to others something like 'being under one roof' or 'conjoined in a circle'. Our propensity for imagining only makes it *seem* so. Getting

one's mind around the traditional distinction between the analogy of attribution and the analogy of proportionality provides a simple test-case in this regard. On a purely theoretical level, it is possible to separate one form of analogy from another: that is, we can delimit the establishment of a relationship on the basis of actual (or formal) and virtual (or derivative) predicates from the positing of a relationship between formal predicates *in proportion* to the natures of the analogates.⁶ Here, the imaginative bows to the intellectual pursuit of understanding. But with whatever type of expression one might choose to describe or give expression to an analogy, the effect would be to bring together something which one has previously witnessed and something which one is never likely to witness (in any ordinary sense of that word), namely an analogy. Construed in this way, as having a unity in diversity, the analogy of the 'bond' or even that of the 'analogy' itself becomes a useful method of pushing back the frontiers of thought.

But there are occasions when we tend to reach too far with too much.

"Other circumstances are soon added, and gradually extended, which, though true of the object from which the

⁶cf. F. Ferré, *Language, Logic, and God* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962), pp. 67-77.

the figure was taken, may not be true of the object, to which, on account perhaps of that single resemblance, it was originally applied."

(Ibid,)

Returning to the original illustration, we find that the analogy has been overloaded with certain unidentified factors, which afford little or no resemblance to the terms 'bond' or 'connection'. On the basis of these factors, we do not feel that the bond has been fastened, but rather that the whole analogy has been loosened and rendered clumsy in its step. Brown rightly suspects at this point that some unannounced metaphysical intermediary has been endeavouring to slip its way into the analogical fold. In fact, of course, the whole enterprise is doomed to collapse:

"it will be found that the metaphor does not really express the existence of *any thing interposed* since the very supposition of any such link would only transfer an imaginary difficulty from one observed object to another object unobserved and leave, between the new hypothetical antecedent and its consequent, an invariableness of sequence as inexplicable as before."

(Inquiry, 3, 119; italics mine)

So much then for bad analogies.

In striking out against pseudo-explanations from this angle, Brown exposes once again the troublesome supposition that if a 'thing interposed' can be found, *it* will constitute *the explanation*. He has, moreover, centred our attention on the ways in which analogies function or fail to function, thus preparing the ground

for his empiricist insistence on analogical delineation from a position of strength. The particular weakness of the opposing argument is that if terms such as 'bond' or 'power' are to be used analogically to *explain* causal sequences, they must be employed according to the rules whereby *all* analogies may be said to operate, and this clearly has not been done. A factor has been inserted which, almost paradoxically, does not belong. Indeed, the paradox is a subtle one.

The thing interposed *does* belong in the sense that some people liken causal sequences to the thrust of an inner generative power, while others think of them in terms of connective fasteners. Analogies, as we have seen, do tend to operate in this way: they lure the unknown in out of the cold and offer it sustenance in familiar surroundings. To this extent we seem to be in the throws of a proper analogy. The question then arises, however: are these surroundings truly 'familiar'? What is it that we *know* about 'inner generative powers' or 'connective fasteners' which would make us want to bring them under the same roof with causal sequences? If there is any point at which Brown collides headlong into Cartesian Occasionalists, Physicalists, Berkeleian spiritualists, and Reidian analysts, this is surely the moment. Resisting the prevalent hypotheses (a) that the universe might be

'hooked up' in such a way as to produce causal efficiency, whether coincidentally or by divine Agency, or (b) that it might 'hinge on' the presence of efficient or 'last minute' devices, Brown affirms that these cannot be the bases for analogical explanation (Inquiry, 2, 104 ff; 3, 87 ff). They do *not* belong for two very simple reasons: (a) the things interposed, by whatever name one prefers to call them, are not items within our experiential framework (that they *could be* is a consideration waived by the second point); and (b) even if there were things interposed, they would merely be *new links* in the sequential trains which we have adequately delineated by the concepts 'antecedents' and 'consequents'. Since we find ourselves obligated to explain causal sequences by analogy, it is only fitting that we should select the most precise means. If some people prefer to cling to bad analogies, then "invariableness of sequence [will remain] as inexplicable as ever" (Ibid.). Brown himself, of course, might well be accused here of clinging to bad reductivism. Of this his critics were convinced and adamantly so.

I have adhered rather closely throughout this second argument to a position carefully enunciated by W.K. Clifford in his essay entitled the 'Aims and Instruments of Scientific Thought'.⁷ At least in principle, he and

⁷Lectures and Essays (Macmillan & Co., 1879) pp. 124-57.

Brown seem to agree on the nature and purpose of analogical explanation. There are three basic tenets to their position: (a) that in explaining any phenomenon, one is attempting to describe the unknown in terms of or as being 'made up of' what is already known or understood;⁸ (b) that this process is analytical in so far as one is concerned to break down the unknown or intractable into "simpler constituents which are already familiar to us";⁹ and (c) that the particular way in which one chooses to use the word 'cause' will depend on one's attainment of a level of satisfaction with regard to the objects or events under surveillance. In this last connection Clifford's exposition bears a striking resemblance to many accounts of this sort in Brown's Inquiry:

"When you have made out any sequence of events to your entire satisfaction, so that you know all about it, the laws involved being so familiar that you seem to see how the beginning must have been followed by the end, then you apply that as a simile to all other events whatever, and your idea of cause is determined by it."¹⁰

I would not wish to leave the impression, however, that Clifford and Brown are at one, or close to being so, in more than these respects. Clifford is peculiarly reluctant

⁸Ibid., p. 148.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 150.

to accept singular or all-encompassing solutions, and he does not attempt to fix a universal criterion for causality. His is very much a mixed attitude of cautious pragmatism and quiet determination. Brown is sensitive to the vicissitudes of life and yet is inclined to be more spirited and single-minded (I would not go so far as to say dogmatic) in his views. In many ways, he follows Hume in being disposed to proceed on the basis of a rigorous methodology of what I should call 'prototypical reference' (Inquiry, 2, 118 ff; also 3, 267 ff). Time and again, we are called upon to submit our ideas to the test of certain instinctive 'beliefs' which, when all is revealed, *make the world what it is for us*.

One final consideration remains: namely, the question of prediction. The terms 'explanation; and 'prediction' are frequently taken to be synonymous, or at least interdependent. It is said that if we can uncover a satisfactory explanation for a particular set of events, then that set becomes 'predictible'. There are a number of underlying assumptions here which stand in need of reappraisal.

Firstly, it is not clear whether the inference to be drawn from the achievement of a satisfactory explanation to our ability to predict the movements of a certain set of events is a deductive or an inductive one. If it is

the former, the assumption would be that the course of these events (Es) can be demonstrated *a priori* and thereby must have the force or *necessity* of a theorem in geometry or a mathematical equation. The mathematical orientation of such thinkers is only too obvious (cf. Inquiry, 2, 82 ff; also 3, 184 ff). Brown like Hume is just as certain (now on the strength of conviction) that natural phenomena cannot be dealt with in this fashion.

"If there be nothing to be measured, there is no opportunity for mathematical reasoning; and if there be something to be measured, it is not to the science of measurement that we owe our knowledge of it, but to some other source."

(Inquiry, 3, 186)

If the inference is of the latter kind, the assumption would be *either* that inductive inferences are of the same logical type as deductive ones - which is to say that they could be reduced to the latter - *or* that inductive inferences have the sort of status which would enable someone to make an *accurate prediction* on the basis of particular pieces of evidence. It is difficult to see how either alternative could be deemed acceptable. The second has distinct possibilities, assuming again that the evidence is 'strong' enough to yield an 'informative' conclusion and prediction;¹¹ yet whatever its merits *in its own right*, it plays a highly suspect role as a

¹¹See Theobald, op. cit., p. 66.

bridge between explanation and prediction. Explanations differ widely in character and structure;¹² they are theoretical constructs, not observable phenomena; a decision regarding their very satisfactoriness might be made on the basis of the predictive factor itself; and supposing they are satisfactory, we may or may not have occasion to think of them in relation to predictions. What sort of claim would it be, then, which would make us *reason* that if we have an explanation for Es we can predict Es?

Secondly, perhaps the argument does not rest on an inferential assumption after all. Perhaps what is assumed is that when we say 'x explains Es' we are at the same time affirming 'x predicts Es'; that is, that the words 'explain' or 'predict' can be used interchangeably.¹³ But if this is the case how is it that when we say 'Tom will beat her again tomorrow when she gets home' we are predicting the occurrence of the beating but not answering

¹²Ibid., p. 103.

¹³Carl Hempel is today responsible for fathering the thesis that explanations and predictions are essentially synonymous. Regarded *in the past* an event may yield an explanation, while projected *into the future* the same event will yield a prediction. Hence the synonymity is conditioned only by temporal considerations. For an elaboration of this thesis, see Henry E. Kyburg Jr., op. cit., pp. 3-4 and 234-5.

everyone's anxious but silent appeals for an explanation? Or, as I suggested above, why is it that when we are sometimes in possession of an explanation - 'His stomach was bothering him throughout the concert', - we would never think to tie this to a prediction about the course of events on the next occasion ('Suppose he has a stomach-ache next week; will he wring his hands like that again?')? Brown might interject at this point that the linguistic assumption of synonymity rests on still another assumption, which has something to do with the way some people regard the world.

Thirdly, then, the assertion fusing together explanations and predictions may depend on an assumption of universal 'regularity'. Rejecting the inferential assumption, and waiving a detailed consideration of the linguistic one, Brown lights on this third possibility as being perhaps the most instructive. This is not to say that he concurs fully with its viewpoint, but rather that he sees its potential as an instrument for clarifying what we can affirm about causal sequences. What must be denied at the outset is the variation on this assumption which asserts that given a new set of circumstances (Cs_2) for Es , we are able to predict Es with the same 'certainty' with which we predicted Es in Cs_1 . On the one hand, the alleged certainty is ill-founded resting as it does,

Brown suspects, on those misleading inductive and deductive orientations.

"There is no phenomenon whatever, of which the prediction is not contingent, even after innumerable instances of it, in past sequences, have been observed by us: and, before it has been observed by us at all, the uncertainty cannot in any instance be less, but must, on the contrary, be much greater."

(Inquiry, 3, 239)

On the other hand, it takes for granted that Es in Cs₂ would remain unaltered:

"the reasoning proceeds on an assumption which is contradicted by our general physical knowledge, the assumption that bodies, in new circumstances of combination always retain their former tendencies, and have no additional phenomenon that results from their joint action."

(Inquiry, 3, 239-40; also 2, 88-89)

Yet although we may want to attest to the powerlessness of reason and observation to penetrate the inscrutable face of Nature, we want at the same time to concede that it is on the basis of observation alone that we are able to judge of "the particular case" (Es in Cs₂) at hand (Inquiry, 3, 236).¹⁴ While it might appear that Brown

¹⁴Dugald Stewart takes a similar 'contextualist' approach, allowing that variations in circumstances will tend to erase whatever 'certainty' past conditions have built up under the guise of anticipation. One noticeable amendment to Brown's theory appears in the form of a "subject" which, according to Stewart, stands (logically) between cause and effect, and on which the former 'operates'. Specifically, then, whenever the subject finds itself in different circumstances, the same cause working on it will produce an effect not previously encountered or accounted for. Whatever happens, "our ignorance concerning *the state of the subject*" defeats predictive certainty. Stewart's model is

is yielding ground, he is in fact only trying to protect what he deems to be valuable in the empiricist enterprise; namely, the placing of strict limits on what can actually be said about observed phenomena. But more than this, he is returning to his view of the universe as a vast system of changes to enhance his own position on uniformity.

The question of power has already resolved itself into the following form.

"Instead of searching for an Impression, we should first have considered whether it be necessary to seek for one. It matters little, whether, in some technical arrangement, we are to give the name of an Impression or the name of an Idea, to our feeling of power: the great question is, whether we have such a feeling, and in what circumstances it arises."

(Inquiry, 3, 272-3)

Casting our minds back over the phenomena presented to us, we immediately detect the presence of a multitude of sequential patterns. Some of these are too "loose and casual" to evoke any feeling of regularity in their appearance (Inquiry, 3, 276); this type must be carefully segregated from the rest. (Brown accuses Reid of having failed to perceive the need for such a separation (Inquiry,

the human patient to whom, amidst the fluctuations of his disease, the same medicines are administered, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. For Brown, there is no 'subject' as such, but rather the appearance of new physical groupings against which our expectations are powerless. In both cases, however, the key-note is caution with change. See A.P., I, Appendix, 352-3 ftn.

2, 196 ff). Others afford every indication that their appearance is uniformly ordered. Beyond this customary observation of successions of phenomena, however, memory is incapable of supplying us with further leads. Custom is the tool for enabling us to sort carefully through the mixed debris of sequential patterns for the repeated occurrence of antecedents and consequents. *It serves no other end.* The 'feeling' of power owes its emergence to another source.

While experience teaches us to be *cautious* in assigning or determining particular causes for any phenomenon, it does not relate "to the belief of causation of some sort" (Inquiry, 3, 285). We assume that given Es in Cs₁ certain factors will invariably appear as 'antecedents' and 'consequents'; we assume further that given Es in Cs₂, certain *other* factors are *likely to* take their places as 'causes' and 'effects' (we might call this an 'open-ended' assumption). If we now take Es in Cs₁ and Es in Cs₂ as established precedents, we have no doubt that on *every future occasion* when these appear, the factors concerned will be ordered in the same patterns. This belief in the *invariability* of antecedence and consequence is all that can be meant by the term 'causation' (Inquiry, 1, 11 ftn.), and if we isolate the word 'invariability' we have the only

possible source for our feeling of power. Thus,

"*uniform* antecedence, which has reference to the past only, does not imply the idea of power; but *uniform and invariable* antecedence, which has reference not merely to the past, but to *every future case*, is the most exact definition which can be given of power."

(Ibid.)

The foundation for our apprehension of causal sequences is nothing short of an irresistible belief in their past and continued appearance.

It might be objected that Brown has aimed at too high or theoretical a level of exactitude with respect to the future occurrence of Es in Cs_n . I think that this objection is well placed. The detection of uniformity in *past* sequences is at most a tentative one; to be 'exact' in the strictest sense, it would have to accord with the results of an infinite number of memory 'testings'. Projected on to *future* sequences, this same uniformity or (as Brown prefers to call it now) 'invariability' retains and even magnifies that very tentativeness. But perhaps this line of argument merely takes exception to the exuberance of Brown's language ("to every future case") as it concerns our *belief* in the uniformity of certain types of sequential patterns. In spirit at least, Brown's remarks agree with those of the scientist who takes it upon himself to *think beyond* past and present circumstances into the darkness of new possibilities. Without the assumption of uniform antecedence and con-

sequence he would be wallowing in fanciful speculation. As Clifford affirms: "The aim of scientific thought is to apply past experience to new circumstances; the instrument is an observed uniformity in the course of events."¹⁵ We must now turn to this importunate element which has already left its mark on the development of Brown's analysis of the idea of power. Without it, his efforts would themselves have to be numbered among those 'loose and casual' sequences.

¹⁵Clifford, op. cit., pp. 131 and 155.

SOMETHING IRRESISTIBLE

In the previous chapter, we watched Brown steer the idea of Power away from the tempting possibilities of *a priori* reasoning and inductive inference. Having denied to each the power of penetration into the unknown, Brown must now substantiate his own claim and bring into the spotlight his own irresistible candidate. He accomplishes this feat in two ways: first, by taxing to the full the part played by *assumption* in the apprehension and ordering of our experience; and secondly, by reconstructing Hume's theory to show how it erroneously resolved its own scepticism. From this point, it is but a short step to an impassable metaphysical presupposition.

If our customary recollection of past sequences yields only a tentative view of uniformity, it becomes necessary to supply some kind of special underpinning to our conception of sequential patterns under *all* temporal conditions. The very contingency of the array of passing phenomena makes this task particularly difficult. Not only is it the case that not all sequential series lend themselves to conceptual delineation into 'antecedents' and 'consequents', but it is also true that the assortment itself often distracts us from the business of

philosophizing about our experience. Hume, asserts Brown, wrongly reduced all associations or sequential series to the order of causes and effects, implying that in every instance whatever, some factor would "carry the mind" to the conception of its "co-relative" (Inquiry, 1, 31). Such is the inevitable downfall, in his estimation, of anyone who places too great an emphasis on the operations of the *transitional imagination*; such too are the shortcomings of a person who is insensitive to the subtle shadings of the inner world. Brown is as likely to employ this sort of argumentation as he is to give vent to the inward drift of the poet:

"What innumerable images arise every hour in the most unpoetic fancy; and how small a part of life is composed of the actual impressions of external objects! Resemblances, contiguities, and a thousand circumstances, which cannot be included in any formal class of associations, call us perpetually away to the world within. But, while we wander in that world, we are not always philosophizing, and fixing every rising idea, as the effect of a preceding one."

(Inquiry, 1, 35)

Be that as it may - and Brown *has* put his finger on Humean 'sore-spot', - the limitations of memory, association, and perception, in addition to the avowed phenomenal flux, create a need for some "extraordinary" intervention.

The intervention comes, in fact, in the most ordinary fashion. Since we can neither reason nor infer that the future will invariably 'resemble' the past, we must *assume* that this is so (Inquiry, 1, 35). It is not

for us to ask *why* we should assume such resemblance. The question itself would imply a further level of confirmation, and because all other routes have been closed by the assumption, it would have nowhere to go. We can, however, ask for a demonstration of force, as this in itself will bolster morale. That morale should be low is, of course, somewhat ironic. According to Brown, the assumption of invariability is fixed on "the firmest possible foundation" (Inquiry, 1, 40). To feel uneasy on this foundation is to doubt the instinctive realities of human nature. Had Hume been a genuine sceptic, he would have denied "the reality of the instinct" (Ibid.), but this of course he was unable to do. In demanding a show of strength, therefore, we can only be asking for some indication of the ramifications of our resting the case for invariability in the lap of belief. These ramifications Brown is more than willing to explore.

In the first place, by affirming this belief we save ourselves a great deal of time and frustration. Hume had argued that our belief in the resemblance of past and future sequences was based on transitive recall and habitual expectation. When A appears for the n th + 1 or 2 time, we *pass over* in our minds from the *idea* of A to the *idea* of its usual attendant B (the memory factor of transition), and fully *expect* B to make its appearance

(the habitual element). To say that we believe A and B to be causally connected is simply to affirm that we have a customary expectation of their co-appearance in a particular sequential pattern (Treatise, I, iii, 14). Whatever psychological force this feeling of 'of-course-ness' may have (the term is that of H.H. Price), it is not wholly in accord with the conditions of what I should call *phenomenal impact*.

"Various objects at the same moment affect us, and form an aggregate, which is, probably, at no other period exactly the same. If, therefore, the return of antecedents and consequents, exactly similar, were necessary, before any belief could arise, it never would arise."

(Inquiry, 1, 18)

Brown's objection here has some merit: we have seen that memory is unable to produce anything more than the notion of uniformity with regard to past sequences; the factor of expectation implies a resemblance between past and *future* sequences, and so transitive recall is of no help to us. In order to overcome the temporal impasse, and to eliminate the frustrations of sheer contingency, we have the option of bridging the gap between past and future sequences by an appeal to an immediate belief. And so, "it is not from the experience of custom, that we form our conclusion; for all, which that experience tells us, *is not that A is the cause of X*, which is the real phenomenon considered, but merely that B and C, which co-exist with A, are not the cause of X, but are foreign and superfluous circumstances, since they have been often observed before, without the succession of X."

(Inquiry, 2, 125-6)

To put this another way, we can affirm that unless our observation of certain types of sequential patterns is originally accompanied by the belief in the invariability of antecedence and consequence, these patterns will never serve as models for causal expectation in the future.

Brown is clearly in rough straits and he knows this. To admit, as he does, that custom teaches us to observe the uniformity of past sequences, and to observe especially that it is A, not B or C, which is the constant antecedent for X, is to give Hume just the foothold that he needs. For surely this customary uniformity is all that we require to build a psychological expectancy, even in the midst of the most variable of contingencies. Until a contrary experience arises to shatter that expectancy, its objective correlative in a "constant conjunction" remains intact. Does Brown really want to throw out something so well confirmed by our experience?

The answer to this obviously troublesome question is ambiguous. On some occasions, Brown will assert that the evidence of *one* case is as strong as, if not stronger than, the evidence of a *thousand* cases, for at least two reasons: (1) because age tends to weaken not to strengthen convictions; and (2), because in view of the the phenomenal impact no separate series is as 'simple'

as it might at first appear (Inquiry, 1, 17-18). The first of these is open to empirical dispute; the second would seem to dissuade us from adopting an immediate faith in anything. On other occasions, he seems to waver between the position, that belief in causation arises merely from a "known immediate sequence" (Inquiry, 2, 170 ftn.) and the view that a belief of this sort arises, again from a particular case, but now from our assurance that this case will not be falsified by a "contrary experience" (Inquiry, 2, 125-6). With the latter, he clearly bows to the need for confirmation through repeated instances of the particular sequence. Therefore belief cannot be immediate. The only leg on which he might stand is the former case: this would couple the quality of immediacy with the notion of instinctive accompaniment. The observations of the particular sequence clearly must be "made with judgment" (Ibid.). We must recognize that this is in fact a separate series of phenomena, constituting what we would judge to be a 'sequence'. Furthermore, the sequence must be dealt with while it is still within the field of observation; it cannot be allowed to ferment in the casks of memory. If these conditions are satisfied, and we find that we *do* believe A to be the invariable antecedent of X, then we might say that given Es (where A precedes

X) in Cs_n , Es will always take place in Ca_b . But this patching up still will not do: the qualifications are merely extra padding, and point away from immediacy in the direction of a more 'mediate' apprehension. Unless Brown can penetrate the wall of customary expectation which surrounds our attitudes towards causality, he is himself frustrated in his attempt to topple Hume.

The time-saving device must come in the form of something as basic to experience as our perceptual faculties themselves. Brown conceives of this device as "intuition", an aspect of our way of looking at things which "does not stand in the need of argument, but is quick and irresistible as perception itself" (Inquiry, 3, 246). Speed is essential; anything *less rapid* or *immediate* than intuition would have to be 'mediated' by some process of reasoning or habit formation. And nothing must come between the observed set of events Es and the accompanying intuition of Es (where A precedes X) in Cs_1 as *invariable*. Belief is thus a "tendency" with which we are divinely "endowed" (Inquiry, 3, 249) and which is as "instinctive" in us as the urge to suck when we are infants (Inquiry 2, 49; also 3, 171). Moreover, it arises *in conjunction with* the normal means of perception, thereby enhancing rather than denying our experience of the phenomenal impact. Our belief in the invariability of A_x presupposes the appearance of the

the sequence Es (where A precedes X) in Cs_1 ; our intuition, that is, is to grasp *the whole of any sequence*, not merely fragments from a disjointed or incomplete series. The appearance of A with B or C or of A alone is not sufficient to arouse this instinct (Inquiry, 3, 170). Again, if "a very slight difference of the circumstances of bodies produces, or . . . renders apparent to our senses, qualities altogether dissimilar from those with which we were before acquainted" (Inquiry, 2, 90), the belief in the invariability of AX adjusts itself accordingly. We would then affirm that given Es in Cs_2 , A does not precede X, and that this is invariably so. The answer to Hume must therefore be as follows: having observed the whole sequence Es (where A precedes X) in Cs_1 , we believe that A will invariably precede X; the repeated appearance of this sequence will indeed bring about a feeling of 'of-course-ness', but this feeling in no way supplants the original; should the sequence in Cs_2 take a different form, experience alone will enable us to determine the exact nature of this new sequence, and belief alone to grasp its invariability; and finally, what experience informs us concerning the past and present, belief assures us with respect to the future.

The second ramification of adhering to the assumption of invariable resemblance between past and

future is that belief, as an intuitive "faculty", is a way of *making* (from the Latin *facio*, thence *facultas*) the unknown fall within the range of human experience and apprehension. This point requires careful elucidation. What belief does *not* do is to make 'translatable' the unknown into the known; if this were the case, the ordinary instruments of perception, memory, and reason would be able to handle the "evidence of things not seen" (Inquiry, 1, 10). Brown has already gone to considerable lengths to demonstrate that they are not capable of so coping. Nor is belief or intuition geared to pull magical rabbits out of worn-well hats; it does not deal with what *might be*, but with *what is*. And yet, there is a unique feature to its dealing: "it is intuition only that passes over the darkness which is impenetrable to our vision, and speaks to us, as from another world, of the things which are beyond" (Inquiry, 3, 280). One's ears may tingle with the suspicion that this *faith in things from another world* sounds very much like Herder or Kant. It is not within our scope to track down that suspicion, except to insert the comment that it was to this aspect of Brown's Inquiry that Schopenhauer granted his sole applause, assuming perhaps that Brown meant by belief in invariable antecedence what he and Kant meant by an *a priori* category of the understanding. (See The World as Will and Idea, II, 207-8.) I would add only that I see

no justification for his comparison. Whatever Brown may have thought generally of "the things beyond", in the present context he undoubtedly has in mind the inscrutable mask of the future. For the future has this in common with the 'wholes' which we discussed earlier: that both conceal behind their guise of 'simplicity' innumerable fragments and complexities of phenomena. Belief has something to do with the resemblances between past and future in so far as the latter is regarded as a *simple* counterpart of the former. Experience breaks down the simple wholes of invariability just as analysis involves towards the germinal elements of simple perceptions. Yet belief enables us to take a stance towards the future in much the same way, I should think, as general ideas enable us to face the entanglements of linguistic precision and endless qualification. This is surely all that we are saying when we affirm that belief makes the unknown fall within the existential range of human encounter with the phenomenal impact.

Having thus let the cat fully out of the bag, Brown has only to show that Hume's version of belief was well-aimed but ill-founded. In the first and second editions of the Inquiry, his argument is directed in large measure towards the controversy over Leslie in the General Assembly and consists of a critical apology for Hume; by the third edition, it has acquired some of the

sophistication evolved in the foregoing reconstruction. Its direction, however, is quite straightforward: if we ask whether Hume in fact denied that we have any idea of power, the answer must be 'No'; and if we ask whether Hume's theory of power is a just theory, the answer must still be, but now with different force, 'No' (Inquiry, 2, 194). For the expressed benefit of the General Assembly, Brown adds:

"It must, therefore, be consoling, to find that however false his theory of the origin of the idea of power may be, he still asserts, that we have an idea of power, and that, hence, the asserted impossibility of the idea of divine power does not follow from his theory."

(Inquiry, 2, 189 ftn.)

Where, then, did Hume go wrong?

If we are to believe Brown, Hume wandered off the track quite simply because he insisted on trailing after missing impressions. From Brown's point of view, Hume is hopelessly enmeshed in a narrow epistemological criterion. Suspecting that a philosophical term (in this case, the notion of power) lacks meaning, Hume is obliged by the rule of consistency to go scouting about for the 'impression' which it may or may not lack (Inquiry, 3, 267). He finds it - and so saves his scepticism, or loses it, depending on one's perspective - as the "feeling of a customary connection" between elements of a repeated sequence of objects or events (Inquiry, 2, 185-6). Brown quotes in full the 'fatal' passage in which Hume announces that our

"customary transition" from one object to its usual attendant is the very "sentiment or impression from which we Form the Idea of Power or Necessary Connexion"

(Inquiry, 2, 189-90). Hume's mistake, of course, lies in his assumption that he must find a prototype for the idea of power which is its *copy*. The demands of a strict "nominalism", remarks Brown, are precisely that "rash" (Inquiry, 2, 118-20). Unfortunately the prototype he chooses does not at all match the copy:

"In short, Mr. Hume's account of the origin of the idea of power, either proceeds on the belief of the previous idea of power, or supposes it to be a copy of that form from which it is completely different."

(Inquiry, 1, 34)

Hume's search is thereby seen to be both unnecessary and redundant. If he has a feeling of or belief in "necessary connection" or "invariable antecedence" at all, this feeling is "in kind as truly original, as any of our other feelings" (Inquiry, 3, 271), and it becomes quite useless for him to convince himself that his belief is "a genuine feeling" (Inquiry, 3, 268). To the folly of this redundancy, Hume adds the inconsistency of a scepticism which doubts what it believes and believes what it would not doubt.

Is it possible, however, that Brown is ensnared by the same 'reductivist' trap as Hume? Does Brown make belief equal in status and strength to Hume's all-

important impressions? The answer is a perplexing 'yes' and 'no'. We cannot doubt at this stage that belief, for Brown, is as fundamental to our way of dealing with the world as perception, memory or reason. But at the same time, we must allow that since it is only *as fundamental as* any of these, it does not occupy that crucial epistemological position which perceptions hold in Hume's philosophy. Consequently, although it may appear at times that Brown is replacing Hume's 'nominalism' with a type of his own, the impression is an illusory one. Belief in the invariability of antecedence and consequence is a means of penetrating the dark obscurity of the future, not as instrument for recording the crude data of phenomenal impact. It is not the basis for any idea, but rather a feeling of human consciousness as legitimate as any other.

Conclusion:

Addressing himself once more to the question of causality in the Lectures, Brown makes use of the paintings of Titian to illustrate his contention that the proper interpretation of cause and effect springs from the mechanics of *relative suggestion*. "The cause does not suggest the effect," he observes, "merely as a separate object of our thought, nor the effect the cause, as a separate object. It suggests also the new

feeling of their mutual relation. When I look at a picture of Titian, for example, and the conception of the painter instantly arises, I do not think of Titian merely as an individual, unconnected with the object which I perceive, I do not think of him in the same manner as I may have thought of him repeatedly, at other times, when the reading of his name, or the mention of him, in conversation on works of art, or any other accidental circumstance may have recalled him to my mind. If I had only the conception of Titian, as I may have conceived him in those other cases, the suggestion would be truly a simple suggestion; but this simple conception of the artist is instantly followed by another feeling of his connection with that particular work of his art, which is before my eyes, - a relation, which it requires no great analytic discrimination to separate from the simple conception itself, and which arises precisely in the same way as the other relations, which have been considered by us, - the relation of resemblance, for example, when in music, one air suggests to us a similar melody, - or the relation of proportion, when we think of the squares of the sides of a right angled triangle, in Pythagoras's celebrated theorem."

(L. L, 263-4)

It was from this perspective that I maintained earlier that the Inquiry brings to birth some of the first shoots of a growing system of mental transformations. It is necessary, however, to consider further certain resistances in Brown's mind which required this system to grow in one way rather than in another.

One such resistance, and it refers back to what we have said about bad analogies, concerned the derivation of the idea of power either from muscular effort alone or from the wider terrain of physical *and* psychological exertion. Unlike Maine de Biran, Reid and Stewart were reluctant to place the notion of 'will-power' squarely and exclusively in the primitive lap of our muscular system. Reid had remarked that "when we will to do a

thing immediately, the volition is accompanied with an *effort* to execute that which we willed" (A.P. II, i, 63; italics mine). Yet he insisted that this effort should accompany volition "whether [in] body or mind". (The whole idea of accompaniment was, as we shall see, foreign to both Brown and Maine de Biran, the latter in particular fusing the act of will and the muscular effort into a *single* 'consciousness' and that of 'self'.) Stewart, however, sought to reinforce Reid's sentiment:

"It must indeed be acknowledged, that, after having had experience of our own *power*, we come to associate the idea of *force*, or of an animal *nisus*, with that of a *cause*; and hence some have been led to suppose that our only idea of *cause* is derived from our bodily exertions. Hence, too, it is that in natural philosophy our language frequently bears a reference to our own sensations. The ideas of *cause*, however, and of *power*, are more general than that of *force*, and might have been acquired although we had never been conscious of any bodily exertion whatever. There is surely no impropriety in saying that the mind has *power* over the train of its ideas, and over its various faculties, as well as over the members of the body."

(A.P., II, 18)

In a sustained challenge to the idea of volition itself, whose implications Stewart deemed an "abuse of words" wherein "the question concerning the freedom of the will is completely prejudged" (Elements, III, Note C ftn.), Brown struggled to refine these collective observations. In the process he found himself wrestling first, with the problem of voluntary action and then, with his own 'painful' awareness of the complexities of consciousness. Nothing short of human freedom, as Hamilton was fond of

pointing out, was at stake in Brown's deliberations.

PART TWO
EVOLUTIONS

The essential achievement of the will . . . when it is most 'voluntary' is to ATTEND to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind. The so-doing *is* the *fiat*; and it is a mere physiological incident that when the object is thus attended to, immediate motor consequences should ensue.

- William JAMES

It's no good to seize hold of the idea against its will; it then seems so surly that you wonder what attracted you in it. The preferred idea comes only when there is no other idea in its place. Hence you can evoke it only by thinking of nothing else. At times I have spent more than an hour waiting for it. If you have the misfortune, feeling nothing coming, to think: 'I am wasting my time,' it's all over and you *have* wasted your time.

- André GIDE

MONTAGUES AND CAPULETS: A KIND OF VIOLENCE

There is a persistent form of conceptual anxiety connected with our handling of mental and physical terms. Viewed from one angle at least, the history of philosophy becomes a chronicle of continuous pushing and shoving between reductivist advocates of one or other of these groups. Seemingly innocent remarks, such as 'I tried (or wanted) to move my arm, but couldn't' invariably trigger off another row. It is as though philosophy were some kind of 'Romeo and Juliet' tragedy bred of the disease called Montagues and Capulets. Wherever individual members of these 'families' meet, someone tries to capitalize on our hesitation with a scheme for swift and total victory. Yet, more than the traffic in uncertainty between these vaguely defined lines, it is the despair of what E.E. Cummings might describe as 'nonlines' which is the philosopher's headache.

The pounding has of late risen to a crescendo, and this turn-of-events makes historical discussion all the more perplexing. Any post-Rylean observer would be inclined to admit that the notion of a polar field of conflict is misguided. With nothing either to conjoin or

disjoin,¹ it is difficult to imagine which way, if any, logical traffic would move. Even conceding that there are no 'occult' processes taking place in a 'something' or 'place' known as 'the mind' and that behaviouristic methods can be applied to concepts as much as to physical processes, we are left with the feeling that more has been snatched from under our feet than we would care to allow. Our philosophic *ennui* hangs on, as it were, against our better judgment. To step back into the traditional warring game under this cloud is to invite neurotic symptoms² of the first order.

Salvation can only come with a fundamental agreement on aims. In the simplest terms, and freed from excessive qualification we can, I suggest, depict this common end as the desire to flush the mind out of its mystery. Ortega y Gasset once remarked: "Contrary to what is usually assumed, philosophy is a gigantic effort at superficiality, that is to say, at bringing up to the surface and making open, clear, and evident that which was subterranean, mysterious, and latent."³ The play on

¹G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (N.Y.: Barnes & Noble, 1962), p. 22.

²I have in mind the sort of anxiety (known as attention-turned-neurosis) which has been described with compassion and wit by Irwin Edman in his essay "The Philosophic Neurosis", Philosopher's Quest (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1947), ch. 3.

³What is Philosophy?, op. cit., p. 111.

the word "superficial" should be regarded as a curative whenever we are overwhelmed by the temptation to take too seriously our own methodological approach to the task at hand. Philosophical sanity is largely a matter of finding footholds, however weak or illusory; in this respect, mutual toleration and assistance are the more humane guides to an assault on mind and body.

Given this background of reservations, an investigation of Brown's analysis of the relation between our *willing* to do something and our *doing* it is none too easy. The term 'volition' not surprisingly caused him a great deal of consternation. I shall endeavour in this chapter to illustrate just how this word brings about a philosophical traffic-jam and the manner in which Brown sought to resolve the problem. To give breadth and possibly depth to his discussion, I will make occasional allusions to other and contrasting formulations or dissolutions of the question. It is not my purpose to wage a full-scale attack on the history of the idea. One must recognize, however, that Brown neither dealt with nor apprehended the concept of volition in a historical vacuum. Uncovering such a concept, and its accomplices, is in part spinning out facets of its lineage. More recent analysis has tended to ridicule (or simply ignore) the sorts of presuppositions which imposed themselves on the traditional rules of play. Significantly, this mood is almost wholly in accord with

with Brown's own empirical iconoclasm; and Brown was still party to the game then in progress! Hence, our traffic-jam becomes somewhat more than a sportive breach of philosophical peace. We must decide where and in what sense a traffic-jam might even occur.

While treating of the complexity of our ordinary states of mind in his final Sketch of a System of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Brown makes a passing reference to the "fuller examination and analysis" of one such state contained in the Inquiry. Termed 'volition' in the earlier work, 'the will' in the later one published shortly before his death, that state of mind will prove to have telling repercussions on Brown's theories of attention, association, (or 'suggestion') and belief. For the moment, it is important only to notice how far the concept of volition has travelled since its first injection into the context of an analysis of Humean causality. Indeed, a more accurate appraisal of its history might be that it emerges as Brown is breaking out of his philosophic cocoon and survives until after his death. Any demarcation of a 'cocoon stage' is bound to be arbitrary, but for two reasons I would place it at the appearance of the second edition of the Inquiry in 1806. On the one hand, both his Observations, published in 1798, and the first edition of the Inquiry are essentially critical works, in which the direction and scope of the

arguments are determined by their original authors. Admittedly the former, particularly in a section entitled "Of Voluntary Ideas", displays germinal elements of a central notion developed by Brown in his later writings. (We will have occasion to return to this portion later.) These elements, however, are understandably fragmentary within a critical context, and do not appear in the first edition of the Inquiry. On the other hand, Brown's own reference in 1820 is to the Inquiry's two subsequent editions (in 1806 and 1818), presumably because these involve the kind of detailed analysis of the concept on which he would insist. That much is clearly stated, and certainly reflects Brown's inclination to be his own master. There is very little variation, in fact, between his first full-born assertions and those posthumously revealed in his Lectures. The changes which do appear concern the philosophical ramifications of the views which he had put forward. It is as though the significance to Brown of his own theory was gradually unfolded during a lifetime of reflection.

The second general feature of this state of mind to be considered involves its relevance to the discussion of cause and effect in which it appears. This point can be summarily dealt with here, although again its implications are rather far-reaching. In large measure, the Inquiry is an effort in philosophical exorcism: what

Brown is concerned to expose is the error of assigning mysterious Powers to the relation between antecedent events and their consequents. That there *are* events external to the mind, objects in the world which undergo change, is never in question. In so far as Brown acknowledges events of this type, however, he must take into account the so-called 'events' which infringe upon this class. These are the causal sequences which are commonly believed to bind the mental and the physical spheres, as when *someone* (not *something*) bends his arm or blushes in embarrassment.⁴ On this view, it is one thing for a person to observe and speculate on the impact of a hammer on a piece of glass and quite another to *feel oneself actively* winking at the world outside. According to Berkeley, only an "incorporeal active substance or spirit" has the "power" to "do anything" (Principles of Human Knowledge, sec.'s 25-28); moreover, the "making and unmaking of ideas" *in the mind itself* not only defines volition but corners the very notion of

⁴The binding is all the more intriguing if one considers the types of 'knowledge-claims' entailed by both. See, for example, Bronowski's remarks on these two kinds of resolutions: "I won't make that flourish again because last time it hit my wife"; and "I won't make that flourish again because last time it embarrassed my wife." The Identity of Man (Garden City, N.Y.: The Natural History Press, 1965), pp. 22-3.

power. Whatever doubts we may have about the relationship of one physical object to another, we can *feel* causality, as it were, from the inside. For Jean-Jacques Rousseau this "feeling" was everything.⁵ Our first glimpse, then, of the conceptual traffic-jam comes in the form of a supposed transfer of the 'idea' of power from the mind, where it is said to be indubitable, to matter, where its origin is less than certifiable.

The quarry now becomes more formidable. If Brown is to eradicate a misconception, he is compelled to give further chase to this new and powerful argument. Noting that there are really two issues here - the movement of limbs and the manipulation of ideas, - Brown endeavours to tackle each in turn. The present chapter will be primarily concerned with the first of these.

We are immediately confronted with definitional uncertainties. Within any system, be it metaphysical or scientific, a certain number of definitions (ideally, a minimum number) have to be assumed. Not to assume any is to spend one's time moving in circles or towards an infinite regress. Occasionally, one suspects that definitions have been regarded in the past rather like the axioms which contain them: that is, as being either

⁵Oeuvres completes (Paris, 1877), tome I, livre iv, 243 (Émile).

self-evident (as Euclid believed of axioms) or un-questionable within the bounds of the system (described in logic today as an *extra-systematic* consideration). Consultation with a dictionary may be very therapeutic, but does little to alleviate the strain of a nasty habit. If one begins a philosophical exercise convinced that the terms one defines are, in some way, infallible, then something of the old 'axiomatic complex' still remains. A similar type of mistake found its way into contemporary philosophy when Norman Malcolm, for example, announced with no hesitation that "ordinary language is correct language",⁶ although the brunt of this formulation has since been toned down. A more modest, if not accurate, appraisal of philosophical activity would seem to be that it strives to *find out* how we can best employ certain concepts within the restrictions laid down by our previous experience of the world. If this procedure entails accepting a preliminary definitional stance, it also involves tentative revision all along the way. There is more pragmatism than strict deduction in our treatment of important terms.

Brown and Reid appear to be at confused odds over

⁶Norman Malcolm, "Moore and Ordinary Language", in *Ordinary Language*, ed. V. C. Chappell (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 18.

this very issue. After 'defining' volition as the determination of the mind either to do or not to do something within our power, the latter asserts:

"If this were given as a strictly logical definition, it would be liable to this objection, that the determination of the mind is only another term for volition. But it ought to be observed, that the most simple acts of the mind do not admit of a logical definition. The way to form a clear notion of them is, *to reflect attentively upon them* as we feel them in ourselves. Without this reflection, no definition can give us a distinct conception of them."

(A.P., II, i, 58-9)

A priority is thus established which is most significant: one begins by reflecting on and distinguishing from others particular mental acts; one then constructs a definition in the light of one's reflective investigations. One discovers, for example, that desires, appetites, hopes and fears are not commensurate with volitions; they are not, as Reid states, "logically equivalent". This phrasing, moreover, must be taken in the less rigorous sense of 'not functioning in linguistically identical ways'. Is Reid then subjecting to reflective analysis certain mental acts, or is he really conducting an examination into the uses of words? If the latter alternative, are these uses to be judged 'more acceptable' than others, and if so, on what grounds? Let us turn now to Brown's *modus operandi*.

At first glance, there appears to be little separating the views of both writers. They seem to agree

that one must ascertain, by reflecting upon one's experience, the conditions under which one could be said to will anything. Blushing and weeping, asserts Brown, are reactions to our "prevailing passions" (Inquiry, 3, 35) of, for example, shame and grief; as such, they are similar *in kind* to changes which are brought about "in phenomena purely material". The movement of an arm, however, involves the "conscious" intention to affect a change in our bodily state. In fact, Brown argues, the only observable difference between blushing and swinging a limb lies in this "prior feeling" of wanting or desiring to do the latter (Inquiry, 3, 36). The relationship between antecedent and consequent holds for both: only when we instantiate the variables do we detect things of a dissimilar "nature". Nowhere, certainly, does a mysterious Power intervene in the transition from one to the other. Having stated this set of conditions, Brown casts his attention back over the voluntary element. But here again, the monster of definition rears his troublesome head.

Although his appeal is still to the evidence of personal reflection, in the sense of interior-bound 'observations', Brown finds it compelling to introduce a verbal distinction between volition and desire. Within the larger design of his theory of cause and effect, the

two terms are used interchangeably. When attending to volition itself, however, he allows for a "commonly" held distinction between them. What emerges is a definitional demarcation ostensibly drawn along lines of accepted usage, but in actual fact geared to counter Reid's proposals and to enhance his own. This is a slippery business and must be entertained gingerly, lest Brown be exposed to abuse of the sort hurled at him by Hamilton in defence of Reid. It will be my contention that Brown is forced by his own theory, and hence on intrinsic grounds, to adopt the distinctions which he does make and at the same time to overlook them whenever he finds it expedient.

Having once decided to contest the issue with Reid, Brown uses much the same linguistic tactics and, not surprisingly, arrives at a different conclusion. At one stage, to be sure, even the conclusions appear to coincide. For according to Reid, the most distinctive feature of a volition is its objective correlation to an action of our own. The logic of the concept, he affirms, is such that "what we will must be an action, and our own action" (A.P., II, i, 60). Limiting his remarks specifically to bodily movements, Brown describes the correlation between volition and action as "immediate". Like Reid, he has in mind not physical but linguistic necessity. One does not say, "I wish to do x or to move y", only to sit back and

wonder whether the doing of x or the moving of y will take place. (Ryle ridicules exponents of voluntary 'executions' *before the act* on just this point: if we postulate 'willing' going on *without* performances, then all chaos can logically break loose. There, however, the similarity ends.) Whether this appeal to what we say or feel under normal circumstances holds up under the strain of an amputee's dilemma remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that both Reid and Brown see an essential link between willing and doing. The contingency of the connection is not here at stake: if willing and doing were regarded equally as 'events', then undoubtedly the relationship would become problematic. The tenor of the arguments put forward by Brown and Reid is rather one of conviction that willing is something highly personal involving, so it would seem, the intimacy of our selves and our bodies. Nevertheless, the alleged necessity or immediacy is only a broad framework within which individual persuasions will manifest themselves.

Reid makes a useful distinction between willing and desiring certain types of things. The mode of our "common language", he asserts, is such that we are entitled to say that we *desire* meat or drink, or ease from pain, but not that we *will* them (ibid.) Why should this be so? Reid adduces at least two reasons. First, although we may desire many things - a pot of gold at the end of a

rainbow perhaps, or a sumptuous feast of cheese and wine, - these objects are quite frequently beyond our grasp at this or any moment. This is not to say that we can never act upon our desires; merely that there is a recessive quality to desires such that from deep within our states of 'wishful thinking', we may not be able, or have the opportunity, to approach the threshold of satisfaction. We speak sometimes of a person virtually 'seething with desire', but it probably does not occur to us that he will actually give play to his impulses, except perhaps for an outward display of agitation. Ordinary physical, social, or even psychological restrictions see to that. Secondly, not a few of our desires are directed well outside our range of capability towards things which might happen to others. We wish one another 'dead', for example, or 'the best of health' or success in a particular venture. That we can desire *for others*, as well as for ourselves, gives to the concept a flexibility of application which, Reid attests, is not the property of volition. Thus, multi-faceted and extrovert, desire is at best an "incitement to will" (ibid.).

Against the sort of qualitative distinctions which Reid presents, Brown enlists the aid of a generative psychology. By doing so he departs, at least initially, from a strictly logical analysis of concepts. Indeed, he can be seen striving to discover the psychological

foundations for the proper use of the terms 'volition' and 'desire'. In spite of this apparent reversal of form, he shares with Reid the notion that desires are felt to be more "complicated" (Inquiry, 3, 45) and less straightforward than volitions. Whereas the latter move "rapidly" towards their termination, the former linger in us as though uncertain about which guise to take. We may desire to ease the pain of an overfed stomach, but as we sit uncomfortably wondering what to do, we may also be looking forward to an after-dinner snooze or a glass of brandy. Out of this complexity a decision may arise to take some antidote, in which case our feet will carry us swiftly to the medicine cabinet. Yet we could just as well remain immersed in our misery, and make no move to alleviate the distress. The marks of volition, therefore, are its brevity and simplicity. It is a feeling "on which certain . . . movements are immediately consequent". By contrast, a desire holds on to itself, as it were, and has "no such direct termination" (Inquiry, 3, 40). In a sense, the man who abstains from the pleasures of life can be said 'never to let himself go'. Using the illustration of bodily movement, Brown observes: "in the free and healthy state of the body, to *desire* the motion of our hand *is to move it*" (Inquiry, 3, 42; italics mine). Far from being inconsistent with what we have said, this remark demonstrates Brown's concern to find here an *order*

of events, from desires to volitions, leading up to and ending in action. For released from the tension of restraint, desires lose their "insignificance" and become operative (ibid.). Viewed as a "train of feelings" (Inquiry, 3, 50), therefore, rather than as a conceptual demarcation, desires and volitions emerge as co-members of the same class poised or idling, as the case may be, at different ends of their unity.

In the long run, Brown pays mere lip-service to the traditional suggestion from Locke (if not, Plato) down through Reid that because desires and volitions are distinct and separable, inaction or wrong action is the product of conflict between them. Furthermore, he is not in the least swayed by the argument that although volition is frequently accompanied by desire, the former can overthrow the determination of the latter. Locke had written:

"though [the] general *desire* of happiness operates constantly and invariably, yet the satisfaction of any particular *desire* can be suspended from determining the *will* to any subservient action, till we have maturely examined whether the particular apparent good which we then desire makes a part of our real happiness, or be consistent or inconsistent with it."

(EHU, ed. J. Yolton, Bk. II,
ch. XXI, 123)

Quite apart from the consideration of ultimate ends, and almost in one voice, Reid adds: "The determination of the mind may be, not to do what we desire to do. But, as desire is often accompanied by will, we are apt to

overlook the distinction between them." (A.P., II, i, 61) Cases of what William James later called (in his Principles of Psychology) "inhibition by antagonistic thoughts" abound in the ordinary sphere of human conduct. In fact, part of what we mean by the term 'will-power' is just this apparent ability on our part to steer activity away from strong currents of desire. While the question of free-will is obviously trying here to mount an offensive, it is only of peripheral interest. The real question is whether Brown has snubbed a reasonable distinction to his own disadvantage.

His argument indicates that he considers the distinction to be somewhat forced and contrary to actual experience. Although from time to time he may give the appearance of being too atomistic in his analytic breakdown of wholes into their elemental parts, he has a subtle feeling for organic unity and interrelatedness. In this respect, he is closer to Condillac and Destutt de Tracy for whom any part of a sequence resulting in overt behaviour is simply an accumulative shading of its predecessors. There is a kind of developmental 'piling-on' which combines internal relatedness with change. In Brown's view, volition is a higher determination in the sense that, given a particular graduation of desires, the final one will yield an expectation of fulfillment. One does not wait at the threshold of action to see

whether or not one's will-power can assert itself to gain the upper hand. To have advanced that far is to possess the assurance that one will in fact *do what one wants*, whatever the outcome. Conceptual delineation, therefore, performs the convenient function of marking out for attention various stages in their progressive completion. This, however, is its sole utility. By abstracting phases out of a complex continuum, we are able to study their arrangement (Inquiry, 3, 42) and relative influence.

By adopting an organic perspective, wherein the whole not the part fixes our attention, we can avoid dwelling on dissimilarities and can, instead, bring to light vital interconnections. The answer to our preceding question, then, would seem to be that Brown deliberately sets himself a difficult, but quite defensible course in order to resist three erroneous suppositions: (a) that volition and desire operate as polar opposites; (b) that where one begins and the other ends, either a struggle ensues or a chasm opens up; and (c) that the occurrence of either eventuality calls into *being* a power of the will not previously accounted for. It is crucial to Brown's argument that he play down the distinction between volition and desire; otherwise, he cannot help but invite the very trouble-maker he wishes to dispel. It is clear, however, that he favours a strengthened version of the genetic position. Here, as

elsewhere, he proceeds by a conceptual analysis which is apparently indistinguishable from the former.

It is necessary to amend this thesis in at least two respects. 1. In the first place, Brown is not alone in emphasising the essential fusion of desire with volition, and therefore does not stand before Reid (or Locke for that matter) completely unarmed. His arsenal of supporters, as it were, includes Condillac and Destutt de Tracy, with a round or two from Hume when the question touches on motivational influences. Three possibilities seemed to open themselves to these writers: either the terms 'desire' and 'volition' are synonymous and hence may be used "indifferently" (the phrase is that of Destutt de Tracy in his Éléments (Sec. II, 54); or desire and volition differ only in degree (again Destutt de Tracy, but primarily the view of Condillac);⁷ or the specification which might allow for a separation of desire and volition stems solely from the latter's terminal contribution to bodily motion or new ideas. (This is the substance of Hume's definition of volition, although he admits that the will is not, strictly speaking, a

⁷Condillac, Traité des Sensations, ed. Georges le Roy (Presses Universitaires de France, 1947), Part 1, ch. 3, sec.'s 6, 9. Compare also Zora Shaupp, 'The Naturalism of Condillac', in University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism No. 6, p. 35.

"passion", - Treatise, II, iii, 1, 399.) Of these three, the third is by far the most important. Yet all three share this common feature: namely, that volition cannot be set apart as a special 'faculty' or 'power'.

We should perhaps remind ourselves at this stage of the germinal elements contained in that notion. Locke had stated that the will is "nothing but a *power in the mind* to direct the operative faculties of a man to motion or rest, as far as they depend on such direction" (EHU, Bk. III, ch. XXI, sec. 29; italics mine). He saw the mind *determining* the will (ibid.) to show a preference for one thing or another (ibid., sec. 23), and some "uneasiness" motivating the mind in turn to bring about a particular change (ibid., sec. 29). Reid and Stewart inherited the idea of determination: the former openly defining volition as an act of determination (A.P., II, i, 58), the latter inserting the suggestion of a subject "Agent" who "self-determines" his course of action (A.P., I, 352-3). Neither denies the motivational factor. Preceding and preconditioning every wilful change is a feeling of pleasure or pain with its respective desire. We want either to maintain or to alter our present state of affairs; and having the 'power' to do so we execute the appropriate act of will. It is a mental 'directive', however, which steers volition in one way or another.

By affirming that "there may be determination and

action without judgment" (A.P., II, ii, 67), Reid makes room for a certain power or "direction" in the affairs of non-rational creatures. "Brutes", "savages" or indeed any human being for whom "appetite, affection, or passion, gives an impulse to a certain action" are well supplied by nature against "the defects of his reason" (ibid., 66). Consequently, we can and do alter our present condition *wihtout* an act of will, and we do so with "a kind of violence", drawn by an impulse "toward a certain object" (ibid., 70). But it is the "brute part" rather than the "manly part of our constitution" which motivates us in such instances, preferring a violent to a "cool principle". The latter is the source of our "self-government", achieving through a "struggle" with the former that state of manhood wherein the individual is "master of himself" (ibid.). The 'ego', in Freudian terms, is thus empowered to *direct* our energies, boosting or retarding them as it sees fit. But only in some cases, Reid admits, can "conception and volition . . . keep pace" with the "motions" of our human frame (ibid., 65).

Stewart's laborious efforts to accentuate the indeterminacy of the state of mind of the subject at any particular moment only confirm this position. Although it seems true to say, on his view, that there is no constant conjunction between motive and action, the same

motives at different times issuing in different actions, and therefore no proper analogy between motive and action and cause and effect, the basic reason for scepticism is this uncertainty about the subject's present condition. Nevertheless, whatever the state of an individual's "intellectual powers" or his "active principles" (A.P., I, 352-3) these *determine* the Agent's act of will. Of the three elements, therefore, namely motive, mind, and volition, the second constitutes the focus for controversy.

Hume forthrightly dismissed the mental directive (or 'reason') from this area. Volition, he argues, is subject to *vivid* ideas of pleasure and pain, and these alone (Treatise, I, iii, 10, 118-9). Both the will and our desires (or 'passions') are the "immediate effects" of pleasure and pain (Treatise, II, iii, 1, 399). Reason has no place among the motives to our will, since the intellect and the passions can never vie with each other for "government of the will and actions" (Treatise, II, iii, 3, 416). Briefly stated, his explanation takes this form. That which is "contrary to truth or reason" is a "judgment of our understanding"; that is to say, something which has "reference to it" or is one of its kind (ibid.); the passions clearly do not belong to the category of "judgments of the understanding", and so can only oppose reason if they are "accompany'd with some judgment or opinion" (ibid.); in that case, of course,

it is the accompanying judgment which is or is not contrary to truth: a passion can be "unreasonable", - if, for example, it is founded on an object which does not exist, or if it chooses the wrong or a foolish means to achieve some end - but then, this again is a matter of "false judgments"; in the last analysis, our passions move us irrevocably in the direction of action, guided perhaps but not propelled with the help of reason.

Although we may listen to reason and learn from it which steps precede or follow which, the motivation to take these and not others stems from those "original existences" or "modifications of existence" called the "passions" (*ibid.*). The direct intervention of a third factor, the mind, is categorically ruled out.

Hume, of course, deliberately steers away from the suggestion that 'mind' and 'power' could be unified under the banner of 'mental power'. He simply finds no empirical justification for such an idea. That this view was distressing to his opponents can be readily seen in the way at least one of these tried to slip through the noose. In his 'Essay on the Difference between the Relation of Motive and Action and That of Cause and Effect, in Physics: on Physical and Mathematical principles', Dr. James Gregory takes exception to Hume's negative appraisal of the *idea* of power. Appealing to the wide acceptance of its ordinary usages, he writes:

"The term *Power* is frequently used in very different meanings, that is, to denote different notions. For example, we say, A man has the power of speaking; the King has the power of dissolving his Parliament; Heat has the power of melting ice; A stream of air is the power in some machines, and the expansion of steam in others; A lever is an useful mechanic power; The second power of the number eight is equal to the third power of the number 4.

As men do not confound those different notions expressed occasionally by the term *Power* . . . it is to be presumed, that the different meanings of the term are sufficiently explained or understood by them from the things to which it is applied.

It is to be presumed, that they have found or fancied some resemblance or analogy among all the things or notions to which the term *Power* is applied; and that it is employed literally and strictly to denote some of them, and metaphorically to denote others."⁸

In its "strict and literal meaning," the phrase "to have power" is synonymous with "to be able". The notion of power, moreover, can be said to entail three factors: first, the idea of a Being which possesses power; secondly, the notion of "intelligence or thought" ('to be able' also means 'having the discretion to'); and thirdly, the notion of "voluntary agency" (power implies the ability to do *something*; the "exertion of power" is the mark of a (free) "Agent") (ibid., 151-2). The inability of a person to acquire or grasp this notion indicates what Gregory calls the "Inertia of Mind":

⁸ Philosophical and Literary Essays, (Edinburgh, 1972), I, 149-50.

"limiting, however, the signification of the phrase to denote merely the incapacity of acting optionally or discretionally, *without motives, or in opposition to all motives* [italics mind], . . . and expressly excluding from the meaning of the phrase the circumstance of *mind* remaining or persevering in any state into which it once gets."

(Ibid., 154-4)

Whatever it is, power is a "transient condition" of mind, a propensity or disposition for doing something, which is to be carefully distinguished from those "mere conditions" of both mind and body, such as "madness", "vivacity", "genius", "knowledge" or "vice" (ibid., 154-5). Blundering into the kind of obscurity which inevitably spoils a good point, Gregory tightens the rope around his own neck. What began as a 'capacity' for action ends up as a positive "*Force of Mind*" (ibid., 153), however transient, and thus prepares itself for evolution into reification.

That 'ideological' disciple of Condillac, Destutt de Tracy, strikes out just as surely, although perhaps not with such expertise, against Locke's presuppositions. Here again, desire is said to have an immediate hold on volition, in the sense that the terminal step into action (or the 'act of will') is a direct product of our desires. According to de Tracy, one can recognize in desire two characteristic features: (a) that desire is "*the source of all our wants*"; and (b) that desire directs "all our actions", and hence is "the source of all our *means*" (Éléments, sec. II, 57). In the first case, the phrase

"source of" implies an inseparability between desires and wants. Thus, if we truly want something, we want to satisfy our desire for it (ibid., 56); again, the "effectiveness" (ibid.) of our want is recorded in our actually and consciously desiring the object or event in question. The second general feature of any desire is its culmination in an *action* which of itself is instrumental in bringing the desire or want closer to its objective. Not only are desires compelling, but they also determine the direction which that compulsion will take. Among the various kinds of action brought about in this way are those which de Tracy designates as our "intellectual operations". These in turn perform a directive function, guiding us in the "employment" of all the other types. Yet even this unique service rendered by the intellect does not qualify it for a position outside that large class of "actions", which de Tracy calls "our means" (Éléments, sec. II, 57). And so, de Tracy remains steadfast in his conviction that "our will directs all our actions, which can be regarded as the means of supplying our wants" (ibid., 59). "Involuntary movements" are discounted on the grounds that they are not, strictly speaking, *means* towards the completion or satisfaction of our wants. Concerning this point he remarks:

"they furnish us no means of modifying, varying, succouring, defending, [or] ameliorating [our existence]. . . . They cannot therefore properly be placed in the rank of

our means, unless we mean to say that our existence itself is our first mean, which is very true but very insignificant; for it is the datum without which we should have nothing to say, and certainly should say nothing."

(ibid., 58; see Appendix B)

We might further clarify de Tracy's position by adding that if we adopt a rigorous sense of real desires and effective means, then the class of significant actions must appear more limited than it otherwise would be. Whether or not this view is correct - and it does seem to favour a distinction between intentional activity and habitual behaviour, - de Tracy allows no room in the termination of desires, or in the immediate progression from wants to actions, for a special and mental intermediary.

There is yet another dimension which Destutt de Tracy lends to our discussion, one which brings us back full circle to Brown and the question of the voluntary movement of limbs. This aspect of volition concerns its relation to the self, or rather, to the consciousness of self.

Condillac had suggested that in the 'fundamental sensation' of respiration, in the very motion of breathing, lay the seeds of self-awareness. Out of this sensation, combined with new sensations and memories of the old, would evolve the *idea* of self.⁹ Presumably, if all else

⁹Schaupp, op. cit., p. 47.

failed, respiration would continue to provide a kind of rudimentary identity-factor. Such hypothetical regressions, however, are not as important or perhaps reasonable, as the notion of an underlying, and physiological, continuum. Other philosophers in the period, many of whom succeeded Condillac, worked on, refined, or gave unique slants to his theory. Rousseau, for example, connects the idea of motion with the *feeling* that one has wished it, and establishes self-discovery on this primitive base. In Émile, he describes the discovery in terms which recall the self-certainty of Descartes. "I feel it," he writes.

"I wish to move my arm, and I move it without that movement having any other immediate cause than my will. It is in vain that one tries by reasoning to destroy this feeling; *it is stronger than any evidence.*"¹⁰

Evidence for what? Evidence that I am (*que je suis*).

Maine de Biran takes the feeling one step further. In moving my arm, I experience the effort of my will (*l'effort voulu*) and this effort, at once intimate and pervasive, assures me that I am.¹¹ Nothing is closer to myself, and therefore more fundamental, than this

¹⁰ Oeuvres completes, op. cit., I, iv, 243; italics mine.

¹¹ Oeuvres de Maine de Biran, ed. P. Tisserand (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1932), VIII, 257-9. cf. P.P. Hallie, Maine de Biran: Reformer of Empiricism, 1776-1824 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 7-8.

straining of my being to reach out of itself, to overcome any obstacle in the path of fulfillment. The *resistance* engendered by or implied in every wilful activity *impresses upon one* the reality of self, in a way in which the merely passive receipt of sense impressions could not.¹² Moreover, this reality is enhanced by and "purified" in the sheer act of willing. Reid for his part insisted that the will "must have an object" (A.P., II, i, 59), but Maine de Biran does not permit that 'impurity' - the 'resistance' not in myself or my limbs but later abstracted and reified as an 'object' outside myself, - to detract from the sheer joy of what one might call 'efforting self'. In a sense, therefore, self-fulfilment is less a matter of obtaining an *object*, and more a question of attaining one's *objective* in the very exercise of the will. Volition, in the philosophy of Maine de Biran, becomes the touchstone of selfhood.¹³

¹² cf. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's account of M. de Biran's philosophy in his History of Modern Philosophy in France (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1899), pp. 326-7.

¹³ Volition is, further, the touchstone of causality (Hallie, op. cit., p. 85). Critics of Brown were convinced that he had failed to comprehend these two implicit aspects of voluntary movement: the consciousness of self, and the intimate experience of causation. Robert Blakey quotes Sir John Herschel's characterization of Brown's theory as one "in which the whole train of arguments is vitiated by one enormous oversight; the omission, namely, of a distinct and immediate personal consciousness of

Destutt de Tracy brings the willing self fully into the open. Not only does he experience his own "sentiment of willing", and thus "the possibility of acting", but he also perceives a resistance to both in the form of *other beings* (Éléments, sec. II, 49). My will confronts that of another; what is *mine* as feeling and willing encounters what is *yours* in these respects. The differences thus brought to the fore confirm me as a *personality* distinct from you, and my *property* as an "inalienable" holding excluded from yours (ibid., 52-3). It follows from this, writes de Tracy, that "we have found how the sentiment of *personality* or the idea of self, and that of property which flows from it necessarily, are derived from our faculty of willing." (ibid., 53) Thus, to the solitary ecstasy of de Biran's willing subject, de Tracy adds the strife and challenge of interaction. Consciousness of self is consciousness of what is *ours* in the way of feelings, volitions, and

causation, in his enumeration of that sequence of events, by which the volition of the mind is made to terminate in the motion of material objects." History of the Philosophy of Mind, (London, 1848); 31 ftn. But the suggestion that volition serves as a 'prototype of causation' presupposes a certain view of causation, a particular *theory about cause and effect*. Brown, I think, holds this 'presupposition' to be the crux of the matter: until one has arrived at a satisfactory account of causation, it is difficult to say what status, if any, volition might have.

actions. As the phenomenologists and existentialists have more recently suggested, self-consciousness is the recognition of what exists *for me*, given the particular 'perspective' which constitutes the 'here' of my body. The property of selves, in de Tracy's terminology, is the *mine* and *thine*, the *here* and *there*, of human intercourse. With typical incisiveness, Ortega y Gasset adds:

"Our 'heres' are mutually exclusive, they are not interpenetrable, they are different; with the result that the perspective in which the world appears to him is always different from mine. . . . Not only am I outside of the other man, but my world is outside of his: we are, mutually, two 'outsides' (*fueras*), and hence radically strangers (*foresteros*)."¹⁴

We have now progressed from the 'luminous interior' to the public thoroughfare along the corridors of individual volition.

It may appear, however, that we have travelled a long way from Brown. But when we have gathered in all the tangential support we will, I think, find ourselves closer to the heart of his theory. If nothing else, the historical buttressing should accentuate the importance of Brown's resistance to 'third parties'. His concern, as we have seen, resolves itself into the following question: if we allow that desire and volition *do* possess rather unique functions, must we also admit that

¹⁴Man and People, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York: W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1963), p. 75.

the gap between them, however slight, holds implications of a more sweeping nature? More simply, if there is a conceptual gap what, if anything, does it contain? Brown's answer, and that of the writers we have mentioned, is quite emphatically, 'Nothing at all substantial'. Individual variations aside, there is general agreement among these philosophers that human actions are the product of a field of inclinations, complex by virtue of its multiplicity and contrast, yet nevertheless singularly determinative when it reaches the point of termination or release. Underlying this field is the consortium of pleasures and pains into which are herded the peculiar propensities fashioned by experience in each person. Thus, behind every instance of volition one can discover active substrata of desires and primordial associations. The relation between volition and desire may be neither necessary nor sufficient, as Maine de Biran¹⁵ and Brown both argue; even the objectives may differ, in the sense that the immediate aim of extending my arm and the 'apple' of my desire are dissimilar ends. (Reid too, it should be noted, recognized a difference in 'objects', insisting that "what we will must be an action, and our own action; [but] what we desire may not be our own

¹⁵cf. Hallie, op. cit., pp. 121-2.

action, it may be no action at all", - A.P. II, i, 60). But such is the relation between them that it becomes more than odd to say that 'the one doeth what the other knoweth not of.' Will-power does not alter the fact that a certain movement has taken place; it merely reveals the last and emphatic step in a series of desires whose combinations and recombinations it has momentarily ceased (Inquiry, 3, 45). The more enlightened the will by the rational appraisal of various situations, the more successful presumably will be the outcome. Yet this corrective to our impulses does not overthrow their determination. Illumination need not remain a theoretical achievement; it can, and does, reach down into the depths of those active substrata. In Reid's hands, these accumulated insights in "every man come to years of understanding" are the basis of a system of *valuations* which, serving as an "exercise of judgment" during periods of "calm in the mind", *determine* his action; moreover, "the determination is wholly imputable to the man, and not in any degree to his passion" (A.P., II, ii, 67-8). It is just this severing of the link between passion and judgment, between 'feeling' and 'value', whether in a mind stormy or at rest, which makes suspect and ultimately falsifies for Brown that 'determination'. In the last analysis, it is the one who divides the house against itself who brings down the roof by calling in reinforcements. This is the

moral propounded by Brown and some at least of his contemporaries.

2. The second qualification to Brown's thesis will already have been implied by much of the foregoing discussion. Clearly, volition and desire can be separated for purposes of analysis and elucidation. What Brown must object to is the view that the products of abstraction are real products: that is, items in the universe of experience having a qualitatively dissimilar nature. Now 'nature' is a big word, one which encompasses notions of 'real things' or 'essences' as well as ideas of 'properties' or 'features'. Feelings are not, properly speaking, 'things' although we are apt to confuse the issue by asking, for example, 'What is this thing called love (or hatred or desire)?' But if we are shown a certain pattern of behaviour, and are told that 'this is a manifestation of love (or hatred or desire)', we might want to characterize this demonstration as being 'sudden' (or 'uncalled for' or 'rash'). We might even describe their 'inner' presence as being 'warm' (or 'upsetting' or 'tormenting'). There are occasions, therefore, when we can, and must, assign predicates to feelings; there are probably many more when we cannot, or refuse to, go beyond the enunciation of the 'feeling-term'. Taking apart the feeling of volition and the feeling of desire would seem to be an instance of the former. Brown performs this operation himself; he

abstracts the appearance of one from the appearance of the other, and characterizes both. There is nothing extraordinary in this procedure. Why, then, should Brown be so cautious about the undertaking? Before answering this question, however, let us complete the characterization put forward by Brown.

We are faced, initially, with a multitude of those feelings called desires. "The number of desires," writes Brown, "of which the mind is susceptible, are as various as the objects of supposed good unpossessed" (Inquiry, 3, 39). Noting judiciously that man's desires are "as unlimited as his power is bounded", Brown divides the most important *objects* of desire into ten categories: continued existence; pleasure; action; society; knowledge; power (directly as avarice); the affection or esteem of others; glory; the happiness of others; and, with utter candour, the *unhappiness* of those we hate.¹⁶ To this

¹⁶L. LXV, 520. In a slight reversal of form, Brown surpasses Reid in the sheer number of desired objects. Reid had singled out only three - namely, power, esteem and knowledge, - although he by no means excludes others from the field. Unlike Brown, however, he offers a clear and useful distinction among appetites, desires and affections. Desires, he asserts, "are distinguished from appetites by this: that there is not an uneasy sensation proper to each, and always accompanying it; and that they are not periodical, but constant, not being sated with their objects for a time, as appetites are" (A.P., III, ii, 128). Affections, on the other hand, are "principles of action in man, which have persons [rather than things] for their immediate object, and imply, in their very nature, our being well or ill affected to some person, or, at least, to some animated being" (A.P., III, iii, 139).

number and variety, we must further add the "innumerable images, that are incessantly mingling in them" (Inquiry, 3, 45). The complexity of the field of desires is thus heightened by the every-shifting direction of that field's intent. Brown does not explore adequately the active relation between desire and image, but he suggests at least that the latter keeps desire on the move, luring it from one possibility to the next in the sheer restlessness of associative recall and imaginative projection. Proust would no doubt appreciate his intimation of an 'involuntary' stream of whiffs, tingles, glimpses, and savourings.

Against this turbulent medley of field-combination stand the "simplicity" and "rapidity" of volition (Inquiry, 3, 45). An act of will takes one, as it were, straight to the mark. Its termination is the substance of its expression: nothing intervenes between the emergence and the completion; no image tempts it to linger over its execution; the 'feeling' is short-lived by virtue of its objective being accomplished. That volitions are so constituted is, for Brown, a matter of logical necessity. The immediacy or 'efficiency' with which this feelings moves its charge determines whether or not it is to be classed among "significant desires", termed *volitions*, or insignificant desires", called simply *desires* (Inquiry, 3, 42-3). Yet even this two-fold classification must be handled carefully, for it merely reflects the analytic break-down of

a single, large class of feelings into significant and insignificant members. The ultimate criterion for differentiation is *order* (Inquiry, 3, 42): significant desires appear last, and they appear under the form of ostensible movement or action; all other desires, however real, are insignificant. Presumably, Brown would treat the amputee's dilemma as a simple case in point. His desire for and even *sense of* movement do not render the state of affairs any more *significant* from the point of view of visible results.¹⁷ Movement must follow desire if that 'desire' is to be deemed an 'act of will'. The necessity, however, extends no further than this. It is neither a sufficient nor a necessary truth that B (the *waving* of an arm) will follow A (*wanting* so to wave it). Only the pattern of antecedence and consequence, invariably repeated, can give rise to such a *belief*. Volition, therefore, is characterized by the belief in the immediate termination of a particular desire (Inquiry, 3, 43-4).

The above analysis exemplifies the difficulty in abstraction of setting one concept apart from another without retaining in the process the original whole as background. The whole in this instance is the train of interconnecting events leading from some point in the

¹⁷See Appendix D.

field-combinations of desire to another point which we might designate the 'terminus in movement'. We see the concepts of desire and volition against the background of this succession, and consequently we see the concepts set over against one another, complementing and fulfilling rather than opposing each other. If Brown resists the interpolation of "something more mysteriously indefinable" (Inquiry, 3, 39), it is for reasons of unity and cohesiveness as much as for want of empirical evidence. He is cautious to extremes in assigning properties to the feelings of desire and volition because he wishes to preserve their interpenetrating unity. Those which he does assign - number and singularity, duration and brevity, complexity and simplicity, - feed on a common class of feelings, revealing that class under the perspective of arrangement. Viewed from one end, the class is a frenzy of mixed groupings; viewed from the other, it is a clear determination. To study this class of feelings, therefore, one must play with telescopic sights, first enlarging then shrinking the field. In reading Brown one is reminded of Bergson's description of the progress of a desire from obscurity to deep passion.

"Now, you will see that the feeble intensity of this desire consisted at first in its appearing to be isolated, and, as it were, foreign to the remainder of your inner life. But little by little it permeates a larger number of psychic elements, tinging them, so to speak, with its own colour: and lo! your outlook on the whole of your surroundings seems now to have changed radically. . . .

The fact is that, the further we penetrate into the depths of consciousness, the less right we have to treat psychic phenomena as things which are set side by side."¹⁸

Brown is not altogether free from the spatial or quantitative depiction of psychic phenomena - his trains of events are largely strung out in linked successions, - but he makes some effort to view them qualitatively, as dynamic shadings of a "growing intensity",¹⁹ whose culmination is an *effort* towards change.

Conclusion:

We have followed Brown through his persistent campaign to oust what Ryle later called the "hypothesis of the occult inner thrusts of actions".²⁰ These "occult precursors of overt acts"²¹ were seen to center on a 'power' of the will, separate from and transcending the multiplicity of desires, but also *attached* to the will in somewhat the same way that 'exists' is sometimes thought to be superadded to 'God'. Brown voices his scepticism in the form of a hypothetical question:

¹⁸Time and Free Will, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰The Concept of Mind, op. cit., p. 67.

²¹Ibid., p. 81.

"Let us suppose our only knowledge and belief, with respect to muscular contraction, to be, that the motion of the hand has followed, does follow, and will uniformly follow, the will to move it. In these circumstances, would our knowledge of this particular phenomenon be less perfect than now; and should we learn anything new, by being told that the will would not merely be invariably followed by the motion of the hand, but that the will would also have the power of moving the hand?"

(Inquiry, 3, 38)²²

Like Ryle, Brown is concerned to weaken the causal thrust of statements about volition, and in particular to free them from the 'myth' of a special pre-act 'execution'²³ or 'power' so to execute. Yet he makes no attempt to extricate himself from the implications of his own version of a causal principle conjoining mental and physical 'events'. Although nothing mysterious surrounds the 'act

²²A remarkable parallel to Brown's scepticism (indeed, to his theory as a whole) appears in Book IV, chapter iii, of Hippolyte Taine's On Intelligence ("Self and the Organized Body"). Even the flair for sardonic 'pushing-to-the-limit' is reminiscent of Brown at his best. "When I say that I have power or force to move my arm, I merely wish to say that my resolution to move my arm is constantly followed by the movement of my arm . . . it is in itself nothing more than a character, a property, a particularity of a fact, the particularity of being always followed by another fact, a particularity detached from the fact by abstraction, set apart by fiction, kept in a distinct state by means of a distinct substantive name, till the mind, forgetting its origin, *believes it to be independent*, and becomes the dupe of *an illusion of its own effecting*." (italics mine) (London: L. Reeve & Co., 1871), I, 203-4.

²³Ryle, op. cit., p. 66.

of will' on his view, there is clearly a *chain* of developing processes which, by abstraction, yields a *mental* antecedent and a *physical* consequent. Such a chain, however, implies more than a succession of events, some preceding, some following others. It suggests a common avenue ('events') along which desires pass towards their destination in physical movement and satisfaction. Hence the physical and the mental are disjoined and conjoined, at once separate and all of a kind. The assumption is that the 'Montagues' and the 'Capulets' (of earlier infamy) are different families who nevertheless belong to the same race.

Erasing that special *effort*, of which Reid and Hamilton attested they were *conscious*, does not therefore alleviate the strain or resolve the conflict of mental and physical terms meeting in the market-place of action. The question of free will, which I suppressed above even as it was brewing into a storm, feeds on this dilemma. The struggle for positioning which arises between Reid and Brown is repeated (just how closely is not surprising) in J.S. Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy (1865; especially in chapter XXVI). On one side, we find the "fact of an invariable sequence between every event and some special combination of antecedent conditions"; on the other, the "consciousness" not of "what I do or feel" but of "what I am *able* to do". In

the latter case, my alleged ability to *determine* the course of events, and this 'in an instant', tends to unite both a *physical* outcome to a *mental* rider and a steed of passion to "some foreign power". (Plato's image to this effect in the Phaedrus appears to have a tight hold on subsequent philosophic debate.) One cannot discuss the freedom of the will without trampling on that linguistic issue or, for that matter, on sensitive toes. That sensitivity would be enough to convert Brown's analysis of volition into a determinist stand of the first (or to some minds, worst) order.

Somewhat in the manner of Sartre or Merleau-Ponty, Brown holds that a *decision* (or on his view, the 'terminus of desire') is a manifestation of significant motivation.

"The motive (for any undertaking) is an antecedent which *acts only through its significance*, and it must be added that it is the decision which affirms the validity of this significance and gives it its force and efficacy. Motive and decision are two elements of a situation; the former is the situation as a fact, the second the situation undertaken."²⁴

Hence, *deliberation* is at best a *post facto* operation, following necessarily on the heels of a decision which of itself *reveals to us* the 'force' or 'significance' of our motives.²⁵ In matters of will, it is the decision that

²⁴Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, tr. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) p. 259; italics mine.

²⁵Ibid., p. 435.

counts; for this alone is our source of information regarding our 'intentions' or designs.²⁶ Again, the significance of any desire is the very *act* by which it is known: in so far as this act is the will, there can be no troublesome gap between 'willing' and 'acting'. Vesey, I think, is right to interpret Wittgenstein as saying that nothing must come between them, lest we resign ourselves to mere 'wishing'.²⁷ The theory of indeter-

²⁶cf. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, tr. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 484. Brown clearly believes that one can trace the order of our intentions back along the train of desires, although this procedure would have to be a reflective one and would entail passing from the light of significant into the obscurity of insignificant ones. He would probably agree with Wisdom that "if a decision has a mental *explanation* at all, it is always in terms of desires; and if desires have a mental explanation at all, it is always in terms of other desires" (Wisdom, op. cit., p. 125; italics mine). It is on the basis of such retrospection that one begins to realize not that one's will opposed one's desires, but rather that there was a struggle among one's desires which terminated in the emergence of the stronger; Brown criticizes Reid's failure to see this 'evolutionary' principal at work among desires. (cf., however, A.P., II, ii, 67) The idea that one could will what one does not desire or desire what one does not will indicates a *short-sightedness* on the part of anyone searching for explanations. If a person examines his desires faithfully enough, he will find that certain desires, which at first sight appear to be stronger, are in fact weaker than others. (Inquiry, 3, 47 ff). The choice of a dull concert over an exciting movie may be determined by what Wisdom has called a "desire to desire"; in other words, one may want a taste for it or to shower oneself with the admiration of others (Wisdom, op. cit., pp. 128-9). Desires, as Reid himself observed, often possess this 'extroverted' quality.

²⁷Vesey, op. cit., p. 54; Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I, 615: "Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself. It cannot be allowed to stop anywhere short of the action."

minism or 'free will' substitutes for the dread tyranny of desire a 'new determination' by the mind or self. Once this foot-hold is established, it is an easy step from 'self-determination' to the notion of 'will-power'. And rightly or wrongly, since no one wants to allow that he might be making a 'fool' of himself, a great deal of weight tends to hang on this notion.²⁸ But we have taken the circular route back to the unique status of the will and its prized executions. Brown stands firmly opposed to such a status, and so must reject indeterminism along with its assumptions. He, like Vesey and Ryle, will not countenance any 'secret' about voluntary action. The pity is that that secret has long been held to contain the only grounds for rational behaviour.

²⁸Karen Horney has stressed the need for people to *recognize* "the disparity between [their] facade of perfection and [their] actual trends." New Ways in Psychoanalysis (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1939), p. 245.

THIS LITTLE STRESS

We were concerned in the previous chapter with what might be called the physical extension of volition. Our initial steps turned on the difficulties entailed by the use of both physical and mental concepts to describe the voluntary movement of limbs. This consideration evolved through the analysis of the terms 'volition' and 'desire' into a prolonged engagement with the exponents of substantivization. The notion of *willpower* as an intervening determination was seen to be both mysterious and unnecessary. Still more important was the discovery that the complexity of influential or motivational factors was not without its own terminating crescendoes. Not only was an external ordering not required, but the transition from desires to volition, and thence immediately into action, was found to be experientially innocent, merely a question of certain desires rising to significance, and of a consequent repeatedly following on the heels of an antecedent. Brown's position never wavered from this emphasis on conceptual elucidation from the vantage-point of experience. This clarification, however, was greatly enhanced by the insights of a number of his contemporaries into the interpenetration of desires and the self-

conscious function of volition.

Yet the voluntary movement of limbs is only half the story. Brown is equally involved in the 'interior' question of the movement of ideas. Our break with the overt manifestations of 'what we will' need not, however, stress the inner nature of this latter process. In fact, it will prove more advantageous to forego the spatial analogy of 'outside' and 'inside' as much as possible. Our subsequent analysis will, instead, concentrate on the ramifications of what might at first appear to be a rather straightforward issue. These, I believe, outweigh in importance the preliminary considerations, and certainly occupied Brown's attention to a greater extent. Continuity is nevertheless provided by the notions of voluntary recall and deliberate shifts of attention. Hence our investigation will proceed naturally from the immediate question to its implications for memory and attention. Lest the opening up of the intricate terrain of those two concepts appear to take an independent course, it is hoped that this evolutionary background will not be forgotten. Indeed, the pursuit of Brown's thinking on these matters forbids such an eventuality.

In reply to Reid, Brown had argued that "the determination of the mind never is, and never can be, to *do* what we do not desire to do" (Inquiry, 2, 69). The force of his objection is both phenomenal and logical.

We cannot dispose of desire by any means whatsoever not only because volition is, in Brown's view, the ultimate fulfilment of desire, but also because any desire which stands ready to be so terminated is "more or less permanent and lively" (Inquiry, 2, 72). Tenacity to the point of persistence is a characteristic of those of our desires which may be said to bear fruit. But this tenacity is instrumental in other respects.

The way of ideas is bound to perplex us since, with the exception of deductively certain sequences of thought, it is not altogether clear whence and how we arrive at many of our notions. There is little or no stretching of language in the remark that an idea 'popped into our heads'; that we 'almost had an idea', or that we 'just remembered something'. These phrases simply indicate the peculiar 'raciness' of thought to which our words are too seldom party. Indeed, the strain of alluding to a fast-flowing 'stream of consciousness' need not be quite so objectionable if we take into account these ordinary expressions of bewilderment. Perhaps it is a good sign that ideas do 'pop up' in such abundance; otherwise, we should be dim-witted.

A second consequence of the way of ideas is that we try to exercise control over some, if not all, of them. It is a natural reaction which breeds on the distresses of the first feature. But it assumes an attitude towards

'will-power' which is scarcely convincing. What is least persuasive about this view is the supposition that we can *will* ideas *into being*. A quite different question is whether it makes sense to talk about wishing *something* into existence: to say, for example, "If I could wish a child into existence, I'd have one." With a modicum of rephrasing and interpretation, we can assess such a statement in terms of the strength of the desire and the feasibility of bringing to pass the desired end. The obvious replies are: "Well, do something about it"; "That's not very practical"; or "You wish for the strangest things". Some, not all, of the things we want are 'far-fetched' (that is, well beyond our immediate reach), and most of these can be specified. But how does one decide under what conditions an idea might or might not make an appearance? How, that is, does one refuse to countenance an idea that is already there?

On the long view, Brown believes that we are as helpless to come upon ideas as we are to get rid of them. They arrive, take their stand, and leave, borne on by a train of suggestibility whose mechanism is virtually self-regulating. As long as they are 'there', present to our minds, they fully occupy consciousness, each, in turn, filling the 'thought-space' which it has both entered and created. If the mind is 'elsewhere', then another idea has 'filled' it. For whatever else it might be, the mind

cannot *be* more than that which it contains, however 'large' the occupation. To transcend our present state is simply to *be in* another; to wish to get out is to be there.

Hence, willing an idea is not only beyond our means, it is redundant. The willing and the idea arrive together, the latter logically subtracting the former in the process.

From this general, and admittedly sweeping, re-statement of Brown's position, we must retrace our steps in search of the subtleties of his argument. We will not, however, recover all of the ground until we reach the discussions of memory and attention, both here and in Part Three.

Brown complains in the Inquiry that "a sort of shadowy and indefinable empire has been assigned to our volition, as if the whole train of thought were in some greater or less degree, directly under its control" (Inquiry 3, 55). The 'tyrant' thus portrayed is only a metaphorical exaggeration of the theory that thought entirely determines itself. A thinking man is one whose will stands in active relation to his ideas, producing, manoeuvring, disposing of them as it sees fit. Perhaps Berkeley's description of that "active substance", Spirit, will serve as well as any to illustrate this point:

"I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than *willing*, and straightway this or that idea

arises in my fancy; and by the same power it is obliterated and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very properly denominate the mind active. Thus much is certain and grounded on experience: but when we talk of unthinking agents, or of exciting ideas exclusive of volition, we only amuse ourselves with words."

(PHK Part I, sec. 28)

If to think is to juggle ideas, and if this operation depends in turn on the 'power' of volition, then the self-determination of thought is a function of the self as Agent. In an editorial comment on Reid's analysis of the Will, Hamilton accuses Brown of having "virtually abolished all rational freedom, all responsible agency, all moral distinctions".¹ Thus, Brown's complaint against the "empire" of volition is turned against him: either he is for reason, so conceived, or he is an anarchist! But has Brown been fairly represented? Is he compelled to accept those alternatives?

What troubles Brown is the suggestion that an idea must be 'absent' in order to be 'called up'; that is, it must 'not be' so that one can will it 'into being'. Conversely, an idea must be 'present' if one is to get rid of it: willing it 'out of being', in other words, presupposes that it 'is'. Where then is the difficulty? If something has to be called forth, obviously it is not

¹Reid, Works, ed. Sir Wm. Hamilton (6th ed.; Edinburgh, 1863), II, 531 ftn.

there; if something has to be disposed of, obviously it *is* there. The child who is late for supper is summoned; the friend who overstays his visit is gently pushed out the door. The difficulty does not lie in the mutual logical exclusion of 'absent' and 'present' or of 'being' and 'non-being'; Brown has no wish to flout reason in that respect. The spurious element is to be found, rather, in the very 'act' of making or unmaking. Reason has gone astray in the logical portrayal of these concepts.

Where would one have to 'look', asks Brown, to find, for the purpose of summoning, an idea? In the case of the child, he might be playing in his room or visiting his little friend next door. If one does not know 'where' to look, one may call out his name or in desperation telephone the police. There is at least a recognizable distinction between 'having an idea where to look' and 'not having the foggiest notion where he might be'. Thus, summoning entails locating and calling into presence. An absent or 'missing' idea, on the other hand, already has a 'place'. One can always be certain about 'where' to find it: in so far as one has the idea 'in mind', regardless of how difficult it may be to grasp, it is *there*. For all we know, ideas may play in spare bedrooms, but if 'having an idea' means anything at all, it means 'having it before one'. And there the analogy between children and ideas decisively ends!

Summoning an idea is therefore a curious activity. The location of the idea is predetermined as being already before one, and the calling into presence must surely deafen its ears. One can only conclude that it is unnecessary to summon it in the first place. Berkeley had observed that when we will "straightway this or that idea arises". Yet the particular idea which we will is already summoned; for it is *this* idea, not that with which we wish to occupy ourselves. If he had called for 'any idea', he would surely have experienced and registered surprise at the coming. Since he nowhere mentions such surprise, we are tempted to say that willing had in fact preceded itself, arriving with the idea before it could call out. The act of willing or summoning an idea is therefore logically self-defeating.

Getting rid of an idea is equally curious. The visitor can be, if necessary, locked out; easing him out with dignity may be problematic, especially if he feeds on your company, but the act of expulsion can in time be achieved. Expelling, then, involves locating-away and removing from presence. An idea destined for this fate has, on the contrary, a location-inside. To whatever 'place' it is sentenced, it carries this location-inside with it.² Certain viscous substances have the same

²I have encountered, coincidentally, the use of very

property. Moreover, there is something almost Falstaffian about ideas: one lives with their hollow but poignant threat, "Banish me, banish all the world." To think on 'something else' is either treacherous or impossible, depending on the state of the idea with its location-inside. If 'treacherous', the idea hangs on like a guilty conscience; if 'impossible', one is simply not thinking on 'anything else', however delusive the feeling. Thus, if one has any sense, one does not banish ideas; one lets them slip away unobtrusively. The logic of expulsion does not apply to ideas, just as it is seldom understood by visitors.

No *act*, therefore, unmakes an idea; only a 'non-act' can eventually succeed. Since willing is an activity, it is wholly unsuited to the task. To wish

similar metaphorical language in Freud's analysis of repression. According to Freud, that which is caused to vanish - the ideational presentation of an instinctual drive, - is absorbed into the unconscious, only to "return" through "substitute-formation" and other "symptoms" left in the "train" of repression. Bearing this in mind, one can readily see the striking parallels in his account. "In general, repression of the ideational presentation of an instinct can surely only have the effect of causing it to vanish from consciousness if it had previously been in consciousness, or of holding it back if it is about to enter it. The difference, after all, is not important; it amounts to much the same thing as the difference between ordering an undesirable guest out of my drawing-room or out of my front hall, and refusing to let him cross my threshold once I have recognized him. . . . I need only add that I have to place a sentinel to keep constant guard over the door which I have forbidden this guest to pass, lest he should burst it open." General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology, ed. Philip Rieff (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1963), p. 110 and p. 110 n.

the non-thought of x is to wish the thought of the non-thought of x , and so on *ad infinitum*. On the other hand, not-wishing the non-thought of x may allow the thought of x to pass over into the thought of y . There is nothing in the logic of not-willing, however, which can overcome even this contingency.

We must now regroup at least some of these distinctions around specific points in Brown's argument, picking up the textual slack as we go. As early as his critique of Darwin's Zoonomia, Brown raises doubts about our ability voluntarily to cummon or reject ideas. "Dr. Darwin ascribes to volition so much power over our ideas," writes Brown, "that he considers it, as not merely capable of inducing, but of destroying them." (Obs., 240) The field of 'induction' is that of recollection, and we will examine this first. Either an idea which is induced "exists" prior to volition or "I will something; I know not what" (Obs., 236). If I will *no particular idea*, the emergent "existence" of any *specific one* "cannot, therefore, be ascribed to the volition" (ibid.); that is, if I take out three wishes on 'nothing' I cannot congratulate any of them on the appearance of 'something'. Of course, by mixing universal negative ($(x) - \phi x$) and existential affirmative ($(\exists x)\phi x$) terms, we only confuse the issue: a null class is not equivalent to a class out of which at least one, but not necessarily *any one*,

member is to be chosen. Or again, the proposition 'No idea is wished' is not equivalent to the proposition 'Some idea is wished'. Brown's point is simply that unless we know in advance which idea we want to recollect, it makes no sense to say that we wish to recollect this and not another idea. In short, the statement 'I want to think x' adds nothing to the statement 'I am thinking x'.

Brown is perhaps never more fully in accord with Ryle than when he removes from assertions about what we are doing the explanatory device of pre-act mental processes. 'Willing' does not make an idea more 'present' to thought than 'thinking' it. Far from *explaining* how the idea came into our heads, the intimation that we *willed* it serves only to derange a perfectly straight-forward description. At the same time, thinking, reflecting upon, or recollecting a certain idea is bound up with the laws of association which govern all thought. Brown's commitment to the principle of association was to mark him in the annals of philosophy as one of the co-founders, with Hartley and James Mill, of the Associationist 'School'.³

³It is difficult to say who was most responsible for this categorization of Brown. V. Cousin, A. Bain, and J.S. Mill all contributed to the mould-casting. Sir William Hamilton's hand is also ominously present in the act of labelling; of that we can be fairly certain. J.S. Mill, for one, obtained a great deal of mileage out of it. See "Bain's Psychology", in Dissertations and Discussions

Unfortunate as this depiction might be, particularly in the light of Brown's obviously spirited independence,⁴ it remains to be shown just how these laws of association were applied to the problem at hand. It may be helpful to consider three such instances. I shall label them respectively, (1) the Dream Case, (2) the Case of Thinking Of, and (3) the Memory Case. The first and third cases will be found to share many, although not all, important characteristics. The third introduces a rather special feature whose relevance to the general context of our discussion will be immediately apparent. All three can be regarded as interdependent variations of the same theme.

(London, 1867), III, 98 & 116; and "Bailey on Berkeley's Theory of Vision", in Dissertations and Discussions (London, 1859), II, 85. Hippolyte Taine, perhaps mercifully, elevated Brown to the stature of a "Psychologist", concerned with others of his breed to define the "soul" and the "*order* of all that it contains" (italics mine). See Life and Letters of H. Taine: 1828-1852, tr. by R.L. Devonshire (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd., 1902), Appendix II. More recently, Gladys Bryson has brought him down again with a thump, accusing him first of being an "eclectic" and then of having "borrowed some ideas from the associationists". Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century (Princeton, N.J.; Princeton U.P., 1945), p. 145. Does a 'borrower' possess the rights of full membership in a 'school'?

⁴See Appendix D.

THE DREAM CASE

Darwin had stated that "we can spontaneously call up our last night's dream before us, tracing it industriously step by step through all its variety of scenery and transaction" (Obs., 236-7). To this affirmation Brown replies not with the argument of inconsistency (according to which we cannot *will* the existence of that which *co-exists* with the volition), but with an argument of a different sort. We begin by assuming that every volition is caused by a particular sensation, one peculiar to it alone. If A, B, and C are the subjects of a dream, then the 'voluntary recollection' of A will stimulate a "fibrous motion" producing a sensation As, which "terminates in the fibrous motion B" (Obs., 237). But the *order* of subject-matter in a dream is not determined by volition for, as Darwin himself had conceded, the will is inoperative during sleep. Thus, D not B may have succeeded A in the context of the dream. B, however, is now firmly connected with A as being A's successor, in the light of (conscious) voluntary recollection. What then becomes of D? The answer can only be that it disappears. Brown concludes:

"one link being lost, the remaining changes of the dream

could not possibly be traced. Unless, therefore, we suppose, that the order of the sensitive, and associate ideas, during sleep, is the same, as the order of our voluntary ideas, during our waking hours (which renders volition useless) the regular causation, by one faculty, of a series of motions, excited by another faculty, is evidently impossible."

(Obs., 237-8)

This ingenious, if curious, argument tells us a great deal about Brown's views on association. The explanation in terms of "fibrous motions" is really unnecessary to the point regarding the incompatibility of conscious and unconscious 'association'. As Brown clearly states, the 'order' of subjects is not the same in both. Whatever 'laws' govern the arrangement of 'content' in one's unconscious moments, these cannot be ascribed to waking experience.¹ Yet far from confirming the power of volition to 'summon up' particular sequences of ideas, this argument strengthens Brown's contention that the unique *order* of conscious ideas undermines that very power; in his words, "renders volition useless". If A triggers the thought of B (however one might choose to describe the mechanics of this 'triggering'), then no act of volition is required to call into presence the idea of B. On the other hand, the idea A makes an appearance, a

¹In this connection, Brown makes no essential advance on the views expressed by Condillac in his Traité; see I, v, 3, 4 and 5; II, ix, 10 and 13; III, viii, 2.

fact for which some account must be given. Do we recollect A by willing it into thought? The argument of inconsistency provides a ready answer, but this argument has been waived.

Let us suppose, again, that it makes sense to say that we 'voluntarily recollect' A. Given A's appearance, B, C, D, and so on, follow; not voluntarily but on the basis of a conjunctive or associative relation. Presumably, a similar sequence would evolve if we 'willed' to recollect B instead of A, or C instead of A or B. But let us assume further that there is no associative binding. Then, having once recollected A by an act of volition, we would have to repeat the volition for B, C, D, and so on. Indeed, wherever we started, this point would be no more and no less compelling than any other; moreover, the same conditions would hold for each idea successively willed into presence. Such voluntary indeterminacy, however, would play havoc with the intelligible reconstruction of a dream. (Of course, a dream might resist any attempt at reconstruction, but that is another matter.) Hence, if the recollection of the dream is to be meaningful, the clues for order must come from another source. Either a pattern exists for the will to follow, in which case volition is irrelevant, or else there is no pattern but only isolated and coincidental objects of willed effort, in which case the recollection is in-

significant. Our ordinary experience in this regard would seem to indicate (a) that it is through a sustained desire to recapture a dream that we remember anything at all, and (b) that we are very much at the mercy of some kind of 'dream relatedness' if and when certain subjects do emerge. These factors have nothing to do with 'remembering *x as . . .*' or 'remembering *that x was or is w . . .*': such patterns concern the *way* in which we remember things. The 'order' with which Brown is concerned involves, rather, the basic succession of ideas brought out in recollection. This may or may not correspond to the 'actual' succession of ideas in the dream, but that consideration is fruitless since we cannot both recollect the 'real' order *and* recollect the 'remembered' order. Brown asks only whether the logic of 'willing' plays any part at all in the formation of a series A, B, C . . . or A, D, F It is his understanding of the problem that volition collides with and does not furnish the 'order' (whatever it is) which is there for our perusal. "The incongruity of our ideas, during sleep," Brown writes, "has always been remarked: yet he, who reviews the adventures of the preceding night, will be able to trace a connection, in the wildest assemblages of fancy." (Obs., 336) Unfortunately, by failing to reveal his trump-card (see case 3), he leaves us at least partially convinced that we do in fact force the initial subject, A,

out of the woods by the sheer 'act' of 'will-power'.

This inference, moreover, is further justified by Brown's apparent uncertainty with respect to the function of volition (if indeed there can be said to be one) in many instances. At one stage, he argues against Darwin that a person who stammers is "excited" towards the remaining syllables of a word not simply by "associate motions, induced by long habit" (Obs., 330), but also by the same "efforts" of volition which had given him the first (Obs., 332).² Both in the Inquiry and in the

²Darwin had been concerned to examine the consequences of a "dissevered" succession of musical notes or verbal syllables. If Z instead of the usual D follows C in a particular succession, how will D be restored to its rightful position behind C? How will the musician get back into the original melody, and how will the stammerer who by now is flustered and anxious progress from the first to the remaining syllables? The harder the latter tries, attests Darwin, the more difficult it will be for him "to rejoin the train" (see Obs., 331). Brown replies: first, that since D has habitually succeeded C, the intervention of Z on just one occasion will scarcely hold weight when the whole series is again repeated; secondly, that the musician needs only to repeat the score to recapture the air; and thirdly, that since, on Darwin's view, volition brings about the utterance of the first syllable of a word, volition with the help of association will induce or "excite" the others. Brown is not at all convinced that the distraught condition of the stammerer prevents his enunciation of a word. School boys, he argues, are not afraid of failing in front of their peers, and yet some stutter; moreover, the anxiety to "shine" produces "eloquence" in the orator not stammering. One might justifiably be skeptical of these counter-instances adduced by Brown, but he may be right that the "cause" of stammering lies elsewhere. Darwin, he claims, has not explained, but rather "[presupposed] the phenomenon" (Obs., 330-5).

Lectures, Brown unravels his confusion and clarifies the matter somewhat, so that he no longer seems to be contradicting himself and handing back to Darwin the tyrannical 'power' of volition he had previously withdrawn!

It is to his credit, on the other hand, that he foresees the necessity of distinguishing between subconscious and conscious 'types' of association. (It should be recalled that Stewart had affirmed that "the same laws of association which regulate the train of our thoughts while we are awake, continue to operate during sleep", - Elements, I, v, 299 f.) Darwin had reasoned that where sleep interrupted the conscious train of ideas induced by volition, "new trains of ideas (Obs., 336) unique to the constitution of our dreams would take over. But if these trains are cut off from voluntary stimuli, what sort of "trains" would these be? They could not resemble our "waking trains" which are largely dependent on volition. They would, in fact, be so unlike these waking trains that they could hardly be regarded as "trains" at all. And yet, disconnected and dissociated as our dreams appear to be, we seem to be able to draw significant patterns from them in our conscious recollections. This, for Brown, is the 'mystery' to be unfolded. We simply have to bear in mind that it is by virtue of the relative *order* of ideas or trains of ideas in their appearance to us that we come to remember

some more than others (Obs., 337). A dream just ended may haunt us with its 'memories' to such a degree that we 'forget' the normal duties of the day. It is this impingement of more recent events on our memories and activities which turns the 'laws of memory' upside down.³ What, on a linear view, ought to be the first memories are generally the 'last' and the last 'first'.

Perhaps it is worth noting that nowhere in the more recent Malcolm-Yost debate on 'Dreaming' does there occur a reference to our 'willed exertions towards recollections'.⁴ The recognition that we often have to struggle to remember and frequently fail to recall our dreams in no way entails either that we first 'will' and then 'remember' dream-contents or that our failure to recall them is a failure of 'will-power'. Yost does speak of a willed effort on the part of an individual to wake up during or in the terminal stages of what he calls a "false-awakening dream".⁵ This is a different, although

³cf. Condillac, Traité, II, xi, 13; III, viii, 2.

⁴Norman Malcolm, "Dreaming and Skepticism", The Philosophical Review, 65 (1956); and R.M. Yost, Jr., "Professor Malcolm on Dreaming and Skepticism", The Philosophical Quarterly, 9 (1959), pp. 142-51 and pp. 231-43.

⁵Yost, op. cit., pp. 241-2.

very revealing, matter. No attempt is being made here to recollect or otherwise manipulate ideas through some voluntary activity. Rather, and this point conflicts with the suppositions of both Darwin and Brown (but agrees with that of Stewart), a claim is made for the exertion of an individual's will during that state referred to as 'sleep'. Malcolm, of course, denies such a possibility on the grounds that willing, in general, is a conscious activity and that the state of sleep logically precludes any conscious activity. (One cannot both *say* that one is asleep and *be* asleep.)⁶ Yost, on the other hand, argues quite convincingly that dreaming and waking experiences, as well as their contents, are similar in more ways than Malcolm will allow, to the extent that people often ascribe to one the 'memories' of the other.⁷

As we have very briefly indicated, there would be very little in the philosophies of Condillac or Brown to dispute such a contention. On their view, the data of recollection are largely, although not entirely, autonomous:

⁶The linguistic ruling seems to be that it makes no sense to talk about 'conscious states' unless one is prepared to provide vocal confirmation of them; having done so, one has 'expressed' *all* that there is or logically *can be*. Presumably, a person is 'conscious' only in so far as he is 'talking' and 'asleep' as long as he says 'nothing'. At one time, latter-day empiricists were satisfied to maintain that 'seeing or touching is believing'; now they insist that 'hearing is knowing all'. This position supposedly makes short work of any nonsense about a "tacit dimension".

⁷Yost, op. cit., p. 240.

they push themselves forward for our attention and reflection. Initially, we might separate them into 'camps', some belonging to dreams, others to conscious activity. Yet it is quite conceivable that we might fall prey to confusion, and momentarily lose the capacity for abstracting certain fragments from other, and more complete, data. This is the substance of Condillac's discussion of the "dream illusion" (Traité, III, viii, 2). Ultimately, the shock of contradiction between the *order* of waking experiences and the *disorder* of dream one restores our cognitive balance, but there can be desperate moments 'off-stride' for the innocent or unwary.

In so far as we can 'forget to remember' we can, moreover, 'forget to recognize'. Barring recognition, 'experiences' are lost. They become so many non-fragments of nothing. The dire consequences of such a loss are magnified if we consider that memory is indispensable both to recognition and to a significant sense of self-history. Condillac's portrayal of his statue's limitations under such circumstances pin-points the dilemma:

"If there remained no recollection of former modifications, then on the occasion of each sensation it would believe itself to be feeling for the first time. Whole years might be swallowed up in each present moment. Were its attention always limited to one mode of being it would never be able to take account of two together, and never be able to judge of their relations. It would enjoy or suffer without having yet either desire or fear."

(Traité, I, ii, 5)

It was thus with due emphasis that Brown took up the study of recollection and gave it a central position in his philosophy of mind.

THE CASE OF THINKING OF

The second instance to be considered will almost certainly prove to be disappointing. Not only does it hold promise of much more than it explicitly offers, but it is also naïvely simplistic. Nevertheless, within the restrictions proposed for ourselves, even that sense of exasperation can be mitigated somewhat by the thought that Brown is at last digging his teeth into far weightier material. It was G.E. Moore's opinion that "this mere *thinking* of a thing which we are *not* directly perceiving . . . is a mental operation which is of the utmost importance."¹ We will be referring to Moore again in the course of our exposition. Meanwhile, it should be taken as a note of encouragement that Brown is more concerned with questions of this sort than with the *pros* and *cons* of whether we can, *in fact*, bandy ideas about *at will*. In retrospect, the road probably appears tortuous to us; in Brown's time, however, it was quite the opposite.

The passage which Brown quotes from Darwin's Zoonomia is a curious mixture of sense and nonsense. In

¹G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962), p. 269.

Brown's opinion, the argument plainly confutes itself. In the first place, it reasons that "I cannot will to think of a black swan, without previously thinking of a black swan" (Obs., 238). The realization that volition is redundant is, of course, Brown's whole point: we can and do entertain ideas without it.² In the second place, however, Darwin contends that "if I now think of a tail, my will is so far free, that I can pursue the ideas linked to this idea of tail as far as my knowledge of the subject extends" (Obs., 238-9). Leaping from a singular depiction or thought of a black swan to a generalized notion about all tailed animals, the argument attempts to reintroduce volition on the wing, as it were. Presumably the thought of all animals having tails makes a difference. But where and why? A particular idea is not a general idea, but both are 'ideas', and the first part of the argument rules that the mere thought of any idea is sufficient.

Brown approaches the question this way:

²Since we have now firmly established Brown's position on this score, it is safe to add the historical comment that George Croom Robertson succeeded Brown in holding to this view. "In regard to representations", he asserts, "we have not the power of voluntarily bringing up what is not in consciousness. We may wish as much as we like to do so, and nevertheless not succeed. The notion is self-contradictory. In order to bring it in by willing, we must already be somehow conscious of it. But then we have not to bring it into consciousness." Elements of Psychology (London, 1896), p. 244.

"The idea of a black swan occurs. I think of its head, of its feet, of its tail, and I wish to know all the animals, that have tails. But I cannot be said to recollect them voluntarily. . . . the tail of the swan suggests the tail of a peacock, but, that the excitation is not voluntary, is proved by Dr. Darwin's argument: for I must then have thought of the peacock's tail, previously to volition, as in the case of the black swan."

(Obs., 239)

Now, what Brown has done is to consider the recollection of all animals having tails as a succession of retrospective thoughts. Looking back over my experience of different animals, I single out those which possess the characteristic particularized by the thought of the black swan's *tail*. Even if I can abstract the idea of 'tail' from the thought of 'black swan' (and, of course, there is no reason why I cannot separate a part from a whole), it does not follow that I can thereby *will* the thought of other animals having tails, or the thought of other tails abstracted from their owners, or the thought of 'tailed animal', or indeed any thought of anything at all. The function known as 'abstracting' does not entail a separate function known as 'willing' by which it is preceded. To wish to abstract a certain part from a conceived whole is to be thinking of that part so separated. Hence, there is no essential difference between thinking of a black swan and thinking of other animals in respect of their tails: volition is precluded by the simple performance of that operation, if and when it takes place. (Brown is here objecting not so much to the possibility that one might,

actively, wish for something - this was Reid's point about the necessity of volition having an *object*, A.P., II, i, 59, - as to the supposition that the activity of the *abstracting* requires a supportive 'activity' to lead the way, as it were. The fact that abstraction could conceivably stand as an 'object' for volition - when, for example, one wishes one could 'separate things in one's mind', - does not intrude upon the argument that volition is *not* a precondition of every act of abstracting, such that I must *will* to abstract some particular aspect from a given whole.) It begins to look very much as though Darwin expected the camouflage of abstraction to conceal the suggestion that one needs volition in order to think beyond particulars to universals. Here as before, Brown smells the rat of superfluity.

Yet we cannot leave the matter there. Brown has gone a step further in his refutation of the voluntary recollection of all tailed animals. He has submitted his own claim that during the mental review of animals possessing tails, "[the] mind is entirely passive" (Obs., p. 239), in the sense that certain phenomena are now *being presented* to it for *consideration*. (Brown's characterization of the situation as 'entirely passive' is probably unfair to what is obviously an admixture of passive or 'receiving' and active or 'reviewing' elements.) The thought of the swan's tail is succeeded by the thought of the peacock's tail. Far from wishing this to be the order of my re-

capitulation, I am *led by suggestion* to pass from the one to the other. If I had thought of the tail of a mina bird instead, this and not the peacock's tail would have stood second in line, with the peacock's tail third, or perhaps that of the ostrich or the sandpiper. Individual experience, learning, and preference might all figure in the determination of rank. "The natural train of ideas," writes Brown, "passes through [the mind], and it is in the power of any stronger association, to turn the course of thought, into another channel" (Obs., 239). What makes the train "natural" (and therefore either 'haphazard' or 'reasonable') need not concern us here, although clearly Brown believes that a body of 'laws' governs the passage from one idea to the next.

So far, we have not introduced Brown's distinction between *simple* and *relative suggestion*, as developed between Lectures XXXIII and XLVI. Aspects of this distinction will appear later in this case and more fully in the next. At the moment, I need only point out (a) that *simple* suggestion is characterized by a certain looseness or 'coincidence' in the conjunction of ideas, and (b) that Brown makes very explicit the type and nature of those laws without which the mind could not operate *as mind*. That peculiar 'contingency' of ideas in *simple* suggestion does not conflict with the possibility of governing laws, but simply defines the latter's status as

empirical (or 'matter of fact'). Brown ultimately reduces the *primary* laws of *simple* suggestion - namely, resemblance, contrast, and contiguity, - to the unitary foundation of "prior coexistence" or "immediate proximity" (L. XXXV, 11), although for the sake of convenience and of others, he effectively retains the Aristotelian trilogy. The nine *secondary* laws of *simple* suggestion - length of time; degree of liveliness; frequency of occurrence; degree of purity; differences of original constitution; temporary differences of emotion; differences of bodily state; and general tendencies produced by prior habits (cf. L. XXXVII, 44 ff), - all tend to offer explanatory support for the *primary* laws and to curb the temptation towards the assignation of "mysterious unions" between the parts of a train (cf. L. XLIII, 146).³ In contrast to the association of ideas in *simple* suggestion, the conjunction of ideas in *relative* suggestion holds *necessarily* (cf. L. XXXIII, 519-20), and so creates, in Brown's words,

³One need have no qualms about lauding Brown's considerable achievement in this connection. H.C. Warren testifies that Brown was "the first to distinguish clearly between the primary and secondary laws of association - between the different *sorts* of union and the factors which determine its *quantitative* variation. In particular, his analysis of the secondary laws is remarkably complete, and his formulation of them is thorough, not to say redundant." A History of the Association Psychology from Hartley to Lewes, op. cit., p. 119. For once, we seem to have a strong instance of Brown's originality with which to counter Hamilton's oft-repeated charge of scandalous "appropriation".

"a suggestion of a very different sort". More important for our purposes at this stage, however, is the implication that suggestibility plays an integral part in our handling of universals.

Let us replay the train of ideas envisaged by Brown in his example. We can assume for the moment Brown's conclusion that the will is "an intruder, without any business of its own" (Obs., 239), and concentrate on the concatenation of ideas itself. "The idea of a black swan occurs." This we can call representation A. "I think of its head, of its feet, of its tail. . . ." *To think of something*, in this context at least, is synonymous with *having an idea of or attending to it*, and so we may label these representations B, C, and D. At this point, "I wish to know all the animals, that have tails." I have, in other words, selected representation D (the tail) for further examination. My thought lingers, as it were, on this representation. But we have arrived at a precarious fork in the road: whether I say 'this A has a D' or 'all A's have D's', I am committed to more than is contained in the particular representation at hand. I have *bon gré, mal gré* involved myself in the language of 'universals'. If Brown realizes this, he does not let on. Of course, this may not be the time or place for judgments. Consequently, we can safely hold to the isolated representations A and D. Even this tactic is

not altogether satisfactory, however, for the relation 'belongs to' is implied by the phrase "its tail". But where did the relation originate? We know from the Lectures that Brown believed relations of this sort - involving two or more objects or ideas, - to be intuitively *felt* (cf. L. XLI, 111-2); they are not built on successive comparisons with other so-and-so's standing in a certain way to a such-and-such. Thus, in advancing beyond A with D in hand, I pass on to other 'complex unities' wherein a particular relation is felt to exist between the subject and its predicates. ". . . the tail of the swan suggests the tail of a peacock" My thought now brings itself to bear on a second complex representation P, having something which goes by *the same name as D*, the tail of the swan. For the sake of convenience, and while awaiting inspection of this curious new arrival, we shall call the representation of the peacock's tail, D_1 . Since our train is momentarily complete, we can run back over the series of events with a view to testing the factor of suggestibility.

The manner in which B, C, and D suggest themselves to me has something to do with my having the thought of A. Merely attending to A brings to mind B, C, and D. The idea of A, which to all appearances is complex, lends itself to diffusion over B, C, and D. Because each of these representations stands *in relation to A* as well as

in relation to one another, the pattern of suggestion whereby the unfolding takes place is a *relative* one. A child, for example, is as much a member of his 'family' as he is the son and brother of his 'parents' and 'brothers or sisters' respectively. But the manner in which $P + D_1$ suggests itself to me after the mere thought of $A + D$ possesses none of the above characteristics. The representation of the peacock's tail is simply there before me. Whereas it would be most peculiar for me to assert that I was surprised by the suggestion of the tail with respect to the peacock, a reaction of surprise would not be unwarranted in the second case; for I might just as easily have thought of a bluejay's tail. The element of surprise, therefore, makes a telling difference between the *simple* suggestion ($A + D$) ($P + D_1$) and the relative suggestion ($A + B, C, D$) or ($P + B_1, C_1, D_1$). Yet this telling difference is not, for Brown, the crucial one. Nor does it help us to understand the implication for 'universals' of the factor of suggestibility.

Suppose someone mentions in passing the name of a mutual friend. While the other fellow drones on oblivious to my inattention, I am captivated by the thought of this friend. Brown uses the expression, "the conception of our friend" (L. XXXIII, 519), but we will retain our previous terminology and refer to the fact that I have drifted away from the mainstream of conversation to 'think

of him'. Now, the *sound* of his name seems to involve "no feeling of any common property" (ibid.) with the *idea* of him, or if you like, with the *image* which I have conjured up and to which I have given my attention. As Brown affirms, it is "precisely the same state of mind, which might have been induced, by various other previous circumstances, by the sight of the chair on which he sat, - of the book which he read to us, - of the landscape which he painted." (ibid.) From the subjective point of view, I experience surprise, mixed with feelings of warmth and nostalgia; from the logical point of view, I am struck by the sheer contingency of simple suggestion. Nothing is shared, and yet any one of these items might suggest my friend. Of course, it is not quite true that there is no connection between them: after all, suggestibility depends on what Brown terms the "bearing" of one idea to another (L. XXXIII, 518). It is not just any chair which brings to mind the image of my friend, but the chair *on which he sat*. The class of chairs, however, does not include my friend as one of its members. Of this, at least, there can be no doubt.

Returning to our original train of ideas, we discover that the case has grown in complexity. Swans and peacocks do have things in common - tails for example, - just as 'head', 'feet', and 'tail' possess standing membership in the idea of 'swan' or 'peacock'. (Should

the club fold, of course, swans and logicians alike would have to revise their thinking on this score.) Whether the relation be one of 'resemblance' or 'prior coexistence', the fact that one idea suggests another arises out of a sense of their 'relatedness'. If 'tail' is a *general term* covering the field of 'like entities', then this term is grounded in a *feeling* which we hold in respect of the tails of these or those individuals. On this point, Brown is quite adamant: general terms, he writes, are "expressive of own internal feelings of resemblance, and of *nothing more*, - expressive of what is in us, and [not] . . . dependent in any degree on laws of matter" (L. XLVI, 184; italics mine). Since suggestion is only another name for the "rise of the feeling of relation" (L. XLV, 174), it becomes the *sine qua non* of our understanding and use of 'universals'. Without it we should not be able to pass from the swan's tail to that of the peacock. Led on by our feeling of resemblance between them, we aptly symbolize the transition by twice employing the word 'tail' or the letter 'D'. And so, it is with firm approbation that Brown cites Reid's testimony concerning the necessity of general words in the formation and structure of language. Deprived of general terms, our "knowledge" would be as "incommunicable as [it would be] vague" (L. XLV, 178-9). This is not the place to explore that question further, but it is clear that Brown believes

suggestibility to be the crux of the age-old problem of universals.

What we must do here, in the way of recapitulation, is to pick up the thread of volition as it relates to our case of 'thinking of'. Far from being irrelevant, the resolution of this facet of the larger question retains a significant grip on the whole. A resemblance or contrast between two objects or ideas is, after all, something which we *notice*, in some, not too literal, sense of that word. But if my attention is directed towards a certain feature of a situation, might that not mean that I perform the directing, in other words, that I *intentionally* regard them in a particular way? It is precisely this inviting use of words to which Brown must pay special heed.

We have already touched on Brown's denial that my 'recollection' of all animals having tails has anything to do with volition. "I cannot be said to recollect them voluntarily", he argues. "My mind is *entirely passive*. the *natural train of ideas* passes through it, and it is in the power of *any stronger association*, to turn the course of thought, into another channel." (Obs., 239; italics mine). With regard to certain of these points, however, there is cause for challenge and query. In the first place, did not Brown himself say immediately before this that "I *wish* to know all the animals, that have

tails"? (*italics mine*) It is not, then, a matter of pure coincidence that my thoughts pass from the swan's tail to that of the peacock. Having chosen to attend exclusively to this feature of the swan, I begin to seek out other objects with the same, or at least a similar, attribute. The *comparison* seems to be quite deliberate. Secondly, the mind cannot be said to be "entirely passive" if, as Brown later insists, the mind's "internal feelings of resemblance" are responsible for the birth of general ideas, such as 'tail'. 'Labour pains' entail a certain amount of *work* on the part of the person involved. Furthermore, the "laws of the mind", unlike some other types of law, are not meant to sit idly on the statute books: either they operate or we cannot think! Thirdly, and this relates back to the first point, my train of ideas is hardly left to the whims of "nature" if I am busy seeking out resemblances. I am trying to recollect and imagine animals with a similar characteristic and, as Coleridge realized, the work of *imagination* is a far cry from that of mere *fancy*. The upshot, then, of our challenge to Brown is that the range of 'suggestibles' is limited both by intent and by logical necessity. It is to the first of these that we must summon Brown's 'rescue party'.

Obviously, what Brown is resisting is the intervention of a *voluntary act* in the midst of the logical

machinery of suggestion. Even more objectionable to him would be an 'intellectual act' whereby general ideas were discovered (or 'seen' in Plato's sense) *outside the mind* and brought to bear on the manifold of particular instances. Surrender here means surrender not only to Realism, but also to the desperate 'evils' of an *a priori* metaphysics. For Brown, the only meaningful course to follow is the one which begins with *what we have*, and that initially is very little. In time, analysis will yield more, but we must not delude ourselves with 'mysteries' purchased at too high a price!

What we have to retain, then, is our simple acquaintance with the "spontaneous" flow of our ideas or states of mind. In a passage illustrative also of Brown's independence of thought, we find the key to his theory of suggestion:

"Our consciousness, during perception, is . . . far from indicating any process of association; and all of which we are conscious, at the time of the suggestion itself, is the mere succession of one feeling to another, *not certainly of any prior process on which this suggestion has depended*. The laws of suggestion, then, as opposed to what may be called association, - or, in other words, the circumstances which seem to regulate *the spontaneous successions of our ideas*, without reference to any former intellectual process, except the simple primary perceptions, from which all our corresponding conceptions are derived, - form a legitimate theory, being a perfect generalization of the known facts, without a single circumstance assumed."

(L. XL, 93; italics mine)

The intellectual processes discounted by Brown include

not only original capacities for conjunction and comparison (cf. L. XL, 88), but also the voluntary recollection of ideas on the occasion of a particular perception. We do not consciously associate one thing with another either at the time of our initial perception or when a certain likeness later occurs to us; nor do we require a special act of willing to recall the resemblance of one thing to another when we are confronted in experience by some object.

"I see two flowers, of the same tints and form, in my path. I lift my eye to two cliffs of corresponding outline, that hang above my head. I look at a picture, and I think of the well known face which it represents; - or I listen to a ballad, and seem almost to hear again some kindred melody, which it wakes in my remembrance. In each of these cases, if the relative suggestion take place, my mind, after existing in the states which constitute perception, or the remembrance of the two similar objects, exists immediately in that state which constitutes the feeling of *resemblance*, as it exists in the state which constitutes the feeling of *difference*, when I think of certain circumstances, in which objects, though similar, perhaps, in other respects, have no correspondence or similarity whatever."

(L. XLV, 173)

Again,

"when I look at two flowers, it is not necessary that I should have formed any intentional comparison. But the similitude strikes me, before any desire of discovering resemblance can have arisen. I may, indeed, resolve to trace, as far as I am able, the resemblances of particular objects, and may study them accordingly; but this very desire presupposes, in the mind, a capacity of relative suggestion, of which it avails itself, in the same manner, as the intention of climbing a hill, or traversing a meadow, implies the power of muscular motion as a part of our physical constitution."

(L. XLV, 174)

The decisive factor in both perception and conception is, therefore, the *immediacy* with which either similarity or difference is *felt* to exist between any two objects or events. Yet, in drawing this case to a close, we must single out a second, an equally important, element which binds the logic of 'thinking of' to that of 'attending to'.

Brown has allowed that there are indeed instances when we *wish* to study a group of objects with a view to 'tracing' their resemblances. The example of the black swan and the peacock is one of these. Desiring to know whether or not *this* particular object shares membership in a certain class with *that* object implies: (a) the *co-presence* in our minds of two or more objects; (b) the capacity first to *abstract* them from the surrounding scene, and secondly to focus on them exclusively; and (c) the disposition to *attend to* the business at hand, viz., the search for relationships and subsequent naming of these. If a person lacks any sort of inclination to explore their common features, he cannot properly be said to be attending to the subject. "To attend", writes Brown, "is to have a desire of knowing that to which we attend, and attention without desire is a verbal *contradiction*, - an inconsistency, at least, as great as if we were said to desire to know without any desire of knowing, or to be attentive without attention." (L. XXXI,

486; italics mine).⁴ This logical inconsistency is brought out when, for example, we catch ourselves inadvertently or absentmindedly staring at a group of objects. When asked to describe what it is we are looking at, we reply (not without some embarrassment): 'Well, actually I wasn't paying very much attention.' By admitting that our minds have been 'elsewhere', we acknowledge that we were *intent upon* something quite different. Similarly, a teacher who senses that her class has lost all desire to follow the lesson knows very well that the situation is hopeless, even though she may struggle painfully to recapture their attention. Nevertheless, we must distinguish between the function of desire in attending to objects or ideas and its function in ascertaining the sort of relations into which they do or must enter. Although desire is an integral part of the operation of attending to something, it may or may not come into play when one thing suggests itself to another. The desire to know more about a

⁴In addition, attention *cum* desire creates an aura of expectancy and fulfilment. cf. Inquiry, 2, 76: "Attention is merely *the lively and permanent desire of those ideas, which we expect to rise immediately.*" Brown later expressed this view in a somewhat different manner: "To attend, is simply to wish to know: we are conscious only of the wish and its effects; and it is truly a beautiful provision in the economy of the mind, that what we wish to know becomes immediately on that very account, by the influence of the ordinary laws of thought and emotion, more easy to be known." (Sketch, 173-4).

certain aspect of an object is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of the *felt apprehension* of its relations. Not infrequently, notes Brown, this apprehension comes about quite *spontaneously* (cf. L. XXXIII, 518). At most, desire may 'co-exist' with the "course of suggestion, which continues still to follow its own laws" (L. XXXIII, 521). The same distinction applies to the 'willing away' or 'banishing' of ideas: we are restricted either to 'forcing' our attention on to other things and letting these carry us willy-nilly by association or allowing the natural flow of suggestion to follow its own course by simply 'relaxing into it' (cf. *Inquiry*, 2, 76ff).

Throughout his writings, Brown is very much concerned to emphasize the autonomous character of suggestibility and, within the present context, to free relations from any sort of psychological dependency on Emotions. Whatever role the latter may assume, whether 'co-existing' or 'mingling' with "our trains of intellectual thought" (L. XXXIII, 517), they are incapable of altering either the nature or the laws of our "mental affections". The only feelings with which we are "intellectually conversant", affirms Brown, are *conceptions* (or "images of the past") and *relations* (L. XXXIII, 518). Hence, the desire which, as it were, ignites attention can sometimes add perseverance to our search for resemblances, but it is neither essential to the progression of suggested relations nor logically

bound up with the work of *comparison*. At least part of Brown's stand here is taken against Condillac's view of comparison as 'transformed sensation'.⁵ It is as important to recognize the difference between 'love or hate' and the sensations of 'smelling or hearing' (L. XXXIII, 515) as it is to distinguish between our emotional and intellectual states of mind (L. XXXIII, 517). Any attempt to reduce the one to the other leads to "excessive simplification", subsumes two separate "effects" under one "cause" (L. XXXIII, 516), and obscures fruitful delineations. Those who insist that all comparison is intentional, and thus governed by 'feelings' of an altogether different sort, are compelled to exclude from consideration those 'leaps of mind' which surprise us with their unexpectedness (L. XXXIII, 518). Brown's solution is to release the

⁵Like Brown, Condillac deciphers a connection between attention and desire. But whereas for Brown this link is a conceptual one (involving what we mean when we use the term 'attention'), for Condillac the binding factor is their comodal evolution from a common base in sensation. The passage to which Brown objects, and which he also believes sets Locke firmly apart from Condillac, appears in Part I, chapter vii, section 2 of the *Traité*: "If we consider that to remember, to compare, to judge, to distinguish, to imagine, to be astonished, to have abstract ideas, to have ideas of number and duration, to know truths, whether general or particular, are but so many modes of being attentive; that to have passions, to love, to hate, to hope, to fear, to will, are but so many different modes of desire; and that *attention*, in the one case, and *desire*, in the other case, of which all these feelings are modes, are themselves, in their origin, nothing more than modes of sensation, we cannot but conclude, that sensation involves in itself - *enveloppe* - all the faculties of the soul." (quoted by Brown in *Lectures*, XXXIII, 506-7).

function of comparison from all such explanations, and then to drop the term once and for all. Rather than invite misunderstanding, he suggests, we would do well to start off on another foot.

We have seen that the problem of 'thinking of' grows into that of 'attending to', and thence into the entire question of universals, the structure of suggestibility, and the relatively minor function of desire with respect to the tracing of resemblances. The shape of the case brings to mind a labyrinth of organic complexity. Only in the Lectures does Brown begin to tackle this whole and each of its interdependent parts. Again, we must observe that in his eagerness to separate the 'desire to study' resemblances from the 'autonomous operation' of suggestion, Brown loses sight of the fact that the former depicts a mind not 'entirely passive' but in some measure at least 'active', although not in the sense of 'voluntarily active'.⁶ And so, while the case with which he began expands into a rich

⁶In the Lectures, Brown disputes the "very ancient" division of mental phenomena into those of the *understanding* (intellectual powers) and those of the *will* (active powers). The overlapping of these 'powers', he contends, occurs much too frequently and is too heavy with indecision to permit such a division to stand (L. XVI, 243 f). The mind, rather, must be deemed *active* "only when some intellectual energy co-exists with desire"; thus, "to will, is to act with desire; and, unless in the production of mere muscular motion, it is only *intellectually* that we can act" (ibid., 244).

promise, it shrinks into a disappointment. The debate with Darwin over the extent of our volitional capability proves to be insufficient for the issues it raises. Our regret must be tempered, however, by the realization that Brown did not assign himself a full-fledged investigation, and only gradually awoke to the wider implications of the subject. In the next and last case, we will follow yet another seedling to its partial flowering.

THE MEMORY CASE

If one were in the mood for careless phrasing, one might herald the third case as the 'clincher'. In Brown's mind, no doubt, it laid to eternal rest the 'nonsense' about our voluntary manipulation of ideas. Unfortunately, such thinking remains wishful only. The truth of the matter is rather that the case relies heavily on the principle of association (which at the time of the Inquiry Brown had not seen fit to call suggestion), and on a peculiar function of desire whose importance is almost overshadowed by the former. One difficulty, certainly, is that Brown asks us to accept too much at face-value. Nevertheless, we have scouted the terrain of suggestion sufficiently to comprehend at least its skeletal workings. We can allow ourselves some breadth, therefore, in manoeuvring that special feature of desire into position. Once again, it will be necessary to tax potentialities to their limit.

Even if one grants, with Brown, that we have no 'direct' voluntary control over our 'trains of thought', one might still reason that 'indirectly' we are capable of wishing a particular idea into the foreground of our attention. The operation would proceed in this way:

"if I wish to remember a piece of news, which was communicated to me by a friend, it is admitted, that I cannot call up directly that particular piece of news; but I am said to have the power of calling up ideas which I know to have been associated with it in place and time, - the idea of the person, of the spot, of many little events that may have happened while we were standing together, and of other circumstances which were the subject of conversation."

(Inquiry, 4, 57-8; cf. L. XLI, 113-4)¹

One would have to assume, of course, that the order of ideas recollected coincides (or nearly so) with the order of events as these originally took place; otherwise, one would never be certain that it was this friend, at that spot, on such-and-such occasion, who had conveyed the piece of news to us. Tests of such correspondence are undoubtedly problematic. We might say, on the one hand, that we have an "obscure sort of consciousness" of the thing remembered (Moore), such that it makes sense to affirm that 'we know very well (when or that) we remember it'; on the other hand, our own memory 'claims' are often as suspect as the alleged 'proofs' which others endeavour to bring forward to refute them. But we may waive consideration of this issue for the moment.

What we cannot overlook is the hidden supposition that *direct willing* of various features of the situation

¹Unmasked, the point is most certainly Reid's; see I.P., III, 7, 381. We will have occasion to return to it in due course.

(with or without the assistance of the so-called 'power of association') *indirectly* generates the remembrance of yet another item. If I can voluntarily 'call up' several elements in a 'memory cluster', what is to prevent me from directly willing the recollection of one more member? The logic applicable to the first case surely meets the conditions of the second. Consequently, it is evident, Brown attests, "that to will the renewal of any one of those ideas is to will that particular idea directly; and if I can effectively will the idea of the person, or of the spot, without any idea of the person, or of the spot, implied in my volition, I may as readily will at once the unknown idea, which is the object of my search." (Inquiry, 4, 58) The claims of "indirect volition", then, are spurious: direct volition is the real accomplice and it, as we already know, has no claim at all to the power of calling up ideas. Either the idea is there in my mind (in which case there is no need to wish it present) or it is not (in which event I am helpless to rush the order of suggestion and recollection). And so, we are forced to the conclusion that if direct volition is an alien without logical status, indirect volition is merely a ridiculous stowaway.

Yet, many would protest that it certainly does make sense to say that we often have to struggle to remember things. Surely when we are thus 'racking our brains', we

want nothing more than to recall that elusive idea. Admittedly, we have to be careful about how we refer to that idea: if we can announce what it is, our search is an exercise in contradiction. That, however, is hardly our intent when we scratch our heads and sigh in exasperation. Moreover, unless we acknowledge that there are times when recollection simply fails us, the logic of 'forgetting' will lose all significance; so too will the sometimes 'sudden remembrance' of things about which we are no longer concerned. These are, in a sense, peripheral aspects of our subject, important in their own right, but secondary to that initial 'struggle' for recollection; for it is from this effort that there will stem either the proud beam of success or what Brown demurely calls, "the hopelessness of gratification" (Inquiry, 4, 59). If we were to make a random collection of even a few words or phrases with which we ordinarily describe the frustrations of a memory lapse, such items would appear as: 'Try as I might . . .'; 'If only I could place the day . . .'; 'Oh, it's on the tip of my tongue'; 'I can remember his brother's name, but not his'; 'I almost had it a moment ago'; and 'There goes the chance of any sleep tonight'. Forgetting is a tolerable condition (tolerable perhaps because unnoticed) until a need for recollection arises or we wish to remember that 'something' in a hurry. Then it becomes a tormentor, seemingly superior to our most strenuous efforts. The

temptation to pit some kind of personal 'power' against this adversary is largely responsible for the belief that if and when success comes, it is this power in the form of 'volition' which has overcome the foe. When we have exerted ourselves to such an extent that the strain is written on our faces, is it not fair to credit ourselves with enormous concentration and *will-power*? The only abuse of language would appear to come from those who endeavour to deprive us of this sense of accomplishment.

That Brown is sensitive to this objection is clearly manifest in the way in which he handles his answer. One cannot espouse the principle of common sense or the methodology of empiricism and at the same time deny the testimony of our everyday experience. Brown is aware of this. Yet in rethinking the structure of events leading up to recollection, he is inclined to doubt the case with which we attribute our success to a 'power' of the above sort. The description is not so much careless as it is overly enthusiastic. Admittedly, pressure is brought to bear on the problem at hand: we need and want to recall a certain object or event. We undergo a 'tensing' of our capabilities in an effort to recapture the missing piece.² By 'keeping up the pressure', as it were, we do

²Since attention is, strictly speaking, an *active* function (i.e. something which we *do* or *engage in*), it seems fitting to refer to the above experience as a

our utmost to shed light on that particular dark corner of our memory. But at no time do we call into play a special faculty called 'volition'; for if the tension created by our desire cannot retrieve the memory, nothing can. Later of course, it may flit across our mental horizon of its own accord, with something akin to an obdurate smirk on its face! Perhaps a better way of putting this would be to say that a complete description of recollection must accommodate those painful instances of sustained pressure and the peculiar toll which they exact. Assigning the name 'volition' to this feature of our experience, however, neither alters nor enlarges upon the description. The "true" theory of voluntary recollection, according to Brown, is essentially a "simple" one, combining "the permanence of the desire, and the natural order of the associate ideas" (Inquiry 4, 58). If we once

'tensing' of our relevant energies. I am indebted to John Macmurray for this point. cf. The Self as Agent (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1957), p. 171. A rather more physiological interpretation of the phenomenon of tensing appeared in Bergson's Time and Free Will, op. cit., pp. 27-8. Taking his lead from Ribot (Le mécanisme de l'attention, 1888), Bergson cites various accompanying muscular changes: the contraction of the frontal muscle, the wrinkling of the forehead skin, the overture of the jaw, and so on. He still speaks of a growing awareness of "tension" in the "soul", but finds reason to rewrite this "impression" in terms of "the feeling of a muscular contraction which spreads over a wider surface or changes its nature, so that the tension becomes pressure, fatigue, and pain."

recognize this special function of desire as maintaining a constant pressure, we should have no difficulty in seeing that it gives free reign to the workings of suggestion.

A perplexing sidelight to Brown's theory of 'pressurized' recollection is the inevitable question of causation. Does the sustained desire bring about the recovery of the lost piece of news in a manner analogous to that in which the application of heat is said to 'cause' the water in the kettle to boil? In Brown's own terminology, do these items stand together as antecedent and invariable consequent? The answer has, in part, been foreshadowed: Brown never insists, of course, that if we wish to remember a certain object or event, we can rest assured that it will come back to us. People often report that things have 'completely slipped their minds', and we must take their word for it that they have tried and failed to recall those elements. Moreover, a quick reappraisal of our intellectual evolution will reveal that forgetting has paradoxically enabled us to grow. For this reason, no doubt, W.K. Clifford once remarked that "oblivion is really a far more marvellous thing than memory."³ On the basis of

³W.K. Clifford, "On Some of the Conditions of Mental Development", Lectures and Essays (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), I, 93.

these reflections, and from Brown's lengthy illustration which we will shortly quote in full, we may conclude that the causal framework and analogy do not hold.

Yet the temptation to attribute the eventual appearance of a memory-item to the constant pressure of desire does not yield easily. There are surely degrees and types of causal 'invariability' such that while factor A might *always* 'cause' factor B, P might only *occasionally* 'cause' Q (when, for example, conditions are found to be ideal). Given this stipulation, we could argue that whenever certain conditions are met, the pressure of desire will 'almost always' bring to mind the required object. Again, we sometimes overhear a parent or teacher telling a child, "You can remember if only you will try a little harder." The unfortunate child is not in a position to reply (as he might): "I don't mind trying, but remember, there is no absolute certainty attached to this." Still, we can perhaps agree with the argument to the extent that we know and accept those "certain conditions". These, however, are rather more difficult to define. Would they depend on a guarantee of 'retentive stability', in other words, that we always remember things in the order of their original appearance? Would the structure of suggested correlates be similarly under the 'pressure' of desire? Must what Brown consistently refers to as the "natural order" of associated ideas subjugate its spon-

taneity to an 'external authority'? And how would one know in advance whether the conditions - whatever these are, - were ripe for continued pressure? One might, for example, decide to give up when in fact the desire was on the verge of pushing the train of suggestion towards its very goal. Such fatalities are the stuff of a conceptual field which is "human all-too-human". The lure of a causal formula for the case at hand really stems from the modelled efficiency of a mechanistic orientation in which individual parts will indeed react to the pressure exerted on them by other parts. As long as the instrument is adequately serviced (here one can talk freely about 'ideal conditions'), a prediction as to relevant effects is entirely in order. But we have not yet learned how to 'service' the human mind to this level of efficiency. More to the point, it is not really clear whether the mind and/or brain is a suitable 'organization' for language of this sort. Perhaps the child cannot remember because he has already lost interest in the subject, because he is distracted by another train of thought; perhaps he cannot remember because there is simply nothing there for him to recall! Nevertheless, there seems to be some kind of interaction between what Wolfgang Köhler called "this little stress of mine"⁴ and the suggested correlates, and

⁴Köhler's own example is worth quoting in full:

it is to this *co-operation* that we must now turn.

Before following with Brown the 'proper' course of recollection, we must insert an important qualification. As a proposed explanation of *some* types of memory, the conjunction of desire and suggestion is necessarily limited (a) by its very scope, and (b) by the probable need for revision in the light of further experience. Although Brown does make it the basis of a definition of 'recollection' (L. XLII, 125), he is aware that not all 'rememberings' take this form and that even those which do are not always model illustrations. Like the ingredients of a cake or pie, desire and suggestion are apt to mix badly so as to produce disastrous consequences. We are sometimes thwarted

"What was the name of that town on the Santa Fé Railroad? There it comes! When I am searching for a name, searching does not occur as one thing apart; nor does the gap of the forgotten name occur as an isolated item among other things - a headache, the noise of the wind, the lamp before me, and so forth. Searching is experienced as directed toward that definite name, hidden as yet, but now, at last, yielding to the stress of my attitude. As it appears, its coming is felt as *being achieved* by just this little stress of mine. I ask again, did I learn gradually through numerous experiences that in this particular situation such an attitude will be *followed* by a name so that now I may venture to guess about their mutual relation? Without previous training, would that noise outdoors be connected with the given attitude as well?" Dr. Wolfgang Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology* (N.Y.: Horace Liveright, 1929), pp. 357-8. Köhler and Brown seem to be agreed that 'attitudes' such as these and 'feelings' of relatedness spring *naturally* from the simple occurrence of the experience (cf. Köhler, pp. 355-6). Brown, it will be remembered, rejected Hume's supposition of a customary build-up of dispositions.

altogether in our search, and at other times we are distracted by more compelling suggestions. Occasionally the trials of recollection succeed only to disappoint: the end result may prove to be a poor copy of its imagined original. The formula, therefore, if one can call it that, is submitted merely as the most likely account, or conceptual rendering, of a limited range of memory-cases. Brown believes it to be well-supported by psychological (or 'introspective') and linguistic evidence. That, of course, does not immunize it against falsification.

The case of the missing 'piece of news' can be read as a balanced interplay of forces, the outcome of which is always in doubt:

"I have a continued desire of remembering something which was told me by my friend, at a certain time; and, during the continuance of this desire, the spot, the events, and other circumstances, rise according to the usual order of our spontaneous trains of thought. The conception of these *can scarcely fail*, at every moment, to suggest something which was said at the time. *If it suggest* that particular part of the conversation, of which I remember only that it was something which interested me, and which I wished therefore to be brought to my mind again, the desire of course ceases with the gratification of it, *when I recognize what is thus suggested*, as that which was the object of my obscure desire. *If it suggest* any other part of it, the desire, continuing, keeps before me the images of the person and the place, *which may almost be said to be involved in the desire itself*, and allows other images, associated with these, to arise, till I either remember what I wish, *or the wish itself die away*, in the hopeless ness of gratification, or in the occurrence of new and more interesting objects."

(Inquiry, 4, 59; italics mine)

One sees in this record a dual contingency. In the first

place, the desire may or may not sustain itself over the whole course of the investigation: it may be satisfied with just a fragment of its object or it may wane prematurely as new concerns arise. Secondly, the pattern of suggested correlates may or may not yield the right object: the force of this contingency is contained in the repeated phrase, "If it suggest" ⁵ Nevertheless, recollection seems to take place, if and when it does, on the heels of their successful interaction.

Again, not all memories conform to this pattern of "intentional reminiscence". "We as little will the varying

⁵The tenuousness of that condition was noted by Schopenhauer, who supposed that if the train of associated ideas were to falter, the art of mnemonics might be employed to render assistance. ". . . the impossibility of the appearance of a thought without its sufficient occasion, even when there is the strongest desire to call it up, is proved by all the cases in which we weary ourselves in vain to *recollect* something, and go through the whole store of our thoughts in order to find any one that may be associated with the one we seek; if we find the former, the latter is also found. Whoever wishes to call up something in his memory first seeks for a thread with which it is connected by the association of thoughts. . . . the worst of it is that these occasioners themselves have first to be recalled, and this again requires an occasioner. . . . sometimes we do not trust ourselves to connect directly the name of *this* person, or town, river, mountain, plant, animal, &c., with the thought of each so firmly that it will call each of them up of itself; and then we assist ourselves mnemonically, and connect the image of the person or thing with any perceptible quality the name of which occurs in that of the person or thing. Yet this is only a temporary prop to lean on; later we let it drop, for the association of thoughts becomes an immediate support." The World as Will and Idea, II, 324-6.

scenery of our reveries, and all the strange forms which seem to people them, as we will the conception of any one with whom we are acquainted, when it rises to us in instant suggestion, merely on reading his familiar name."

(L. XLII, 126) Not surprisingly, on the threshold of a Proustian insight, Brown never quite takes the plunge. The element of chance is there. Brown agrees with Proust that it is often pointless for us "to try to evoke our past; all our intellectual efforts are futile. It lies hidden beyond the reach of the mind, in some unsuspected material object (rather in the sensation which that material object would produce in us). And it depends entirely on chance whether or not we encounter that object before we die."⁶ What is missing is the unique characterization of past experiences entailed by Proust's distinction between voluntary and involuntary memory. In his excellent little book entitled The Seventh Solitude, Ralph Harper depicts the lack of cogency (or "self-revelation") in the former:

"One does not love the past only because it is a revelation of the really present and mysterious, but because it reveals the mystery of *self-experience*, our past. And yet no revelation comes when voluntary memory recalls the past; all the details are turned by *by force of will*, but lack 'the idea of existence,' or real presence. . . . Voluntary memory can make us see, it cannot move us as if we were in communion with someone."⁷

⁶M. Proust, Du côté de chez Swan, I, 44.

⁷R. Harper, The Seventh Solitude (Baltimore, Md.: The John Harper Press, 1965), Appendix "Remembering Eternity", pp. 146-7.

It is, as it were, a new self which places itself at the helm of remembrance; for the 'I' which now attends to the past *feels* differently from the 'I' which laughed or wept in response to those events in the past.

This is not to say that the seeking out of a memory is entirely devoid of what one might loosely describe as 'feeling-tones'. As John Macmurray has argued, the "intention to attend" is governed by a "motive" born of the *reference* of a "*feeling*" to a "situation".⁸ The desire to recollect the piece of news, for example, places a sense of urgency over against the problem of recovery. The sense of urgency, because it is directive, tends to diminish the possibility of one of those unexpected and, in Proust's sense, 'authenticating' eruptions out of the past. We have, in Brown's scheme of things, a *referential scope* within whose boundaries a series of self-regulating moves and counter-moves determines the progress of fulfilment.⁹ While the object to be recollected may be dimly apprehended (in what way we shall see in a moment),

⁸John Macmurray, The Self as Agent, op. cit. p. 191.

⁹Macmurray rightly describes this series as one which is "progressively determined". Ibid., p. 189. The indeterminacy of the total framework of 'action' makes both possible and necessary a continuous realignment of means and ends.

the stages of recovery are pawns in the hands of its 'agents', namely desire and suggestion. The limits of our referential scope, therefore, merely set the stage for and do not entirely cover its internal functioning. Indeed they are themselves open to revision. To this extent alone does Brown's formula permit of any significant degree of surprise. But then, of course, surprise is not exactly the sort of thing one looks for in voluntary memory. The pity is that Brown did not adequately complete his sketch for a distinction between these two kinds of memory-activity. His primary concern, however, is to lay bare the "true" operation of those 'rememberings' which are 'forced' and which he calls "recollections".

At first glance, it would appear that the desire for something which we are capable of remembering is a desire which can be specified. After all, if we could give expression to the object, we would surely possess it. In that event, however, the logic of 'having' would preclude the logic of 'desiring'. Is there any sense in wanting 'you-know-not-what'? The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. Certainly, people do have vague rumblings of unsatisfied desire: the child in us frequently stamps its feet with impatience until someone comes up with a 'desirable' solution. It does seem strange to say 'I know that I want (or need) something, but I can't tell you what', and yet the other person usually understands the frustration

of your nagging discontent. Is there a type of desire which only discovers its object *after* it has been born? Perhaps so. At least we can say that there are memory-situations in which we are aware *that* an object exists without necessarily knowing *what* it is, in whole or in part. E. J. Furlong has labelled these "negative memory-situations",¹⁰ a typical example of which is the statement, "No, his name was not Thackeray, although it did begin with a T." The subordinate clause ('although it did begin with a T') is said to be a "hidden premiss" which has been "suppressed" in the original denial. Similarly, that which we *desire to remember* can, on the one hand, be concealed from immediate recall and on the other, be implied by our motive for recollection. The child who sets out on a game of 'treasure hunt' believes that he will find something even though that 'something' remains hidden from view and knowledge alike. Indeed, the 'desire to find' may be sufficient to drive him on. The affirmative portion of our answer is therefore restricted to the relatively mild claim that the object of desire is sometimes concealed from us at the outset of our uneasiness. If we resemble the cautious hunter stalking the unknown prey in

¹⁰E. J. Furlong, A Study in Memory: A Philosophical Essay (London, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1951), pp. 32-6.

dense bush, our risk is the price of curiosity.

On the negative side, we find a certain unhappiness with the logic of 'unspecifiable elements'. The scent of Locke's "mysterious substrata" (those 'somethings-I-know-not-what') seems to permeate the air. Reid gives weight to this aspect of the question by asserting: "It may be said, that what we will to remember we must conceive, as there can be no will without a conception of the thing willed" (I.P., III, 7, 381). The force of this argument will be apparent from Brown's analogous denial of a voluntary control over ideas: to wish such-and-such an idea is to have that idea already before one. If we want to recollect a certain object, then that object is a current feature of our memory, revived, apprehended, and drawn into our present state of consciousness. Reid discovers a way through this impasse, although not quite as "easily" as he imagines. Brown takes very much the same step, apparently missing the 'catch' as well. And in the long run, both subscribe to another Lockean view: "If [the idea] be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavour found and brought again in view, 'tis *Recollection*" (EHH, II, xix, 1). The possible validity of each of their respective and mutual views is offset by the unsatisfactory treatment which they give to the expression, "the *thing* we will to remember". The last move in this third case will concern that 'thing'.

Reid attempts a solution along the lines which we have met with above in our affirmative reply to the question, 'Can I want I-know-not-what?' He distinguishes between our awareness *that* a thing exists (to be remembered) and our momentary failure to 'conceive' exactly *what* it is. In Brown's own illustration, the piece of news is attached to the idea of the friend who communicated it to me, or to the spot on which it was told or even to the circumstances under which the sharing of the news took place. *That there is something* to be remembered is an associate feature of any or all of these ideas: without them, I should perhaps never "remember to remember" (Henry Miller) that I have actually managed to forget it. And so I scout around, like the hunter, interpreting noises, scents, and moving shapes as signs of the hidden presence of 'we-know-not-what'. Yet, this 'something' is not 'anything' at all. At some point in my pursuit of the hidden, an idea closely related to it uncovers the prey and in Brown's words, "I recognize what is thus suggested". Recognition implies *knowing* a thing again. That can only mean in this context that *I knew what it was*; for when it revealed itself, I exclaimed, 'Yes, that's it.' There are, of course, situations in which *nothing* exists to be remembered: although I myself may not recall the 'absence' of memory, witnesses can vouch that such-and-such an event

did not in fact happen. In that sense, I could never have known it. But the case at hand is not one of these. Something is there, but lost; something is recognized, although not at first known; and something is remembered, we-know-not-what. The paradoxes are only half the problem; the real difficulty lies in the *approach* to recollection. Either we begin in the dark (the prospects for which seem hopeless) or we proceed with a light: but how, except in retrospect, can we account for the acquisition of that light? "When we will to remember a thing", in Reid's phrase, or "if we wish to remember a piece of news" (now Brown's), we would do well to maintain a judicious silence; for in the formulation of that 'thing', our memory precedes itself.

We do not, of course, make such obvious blunders. The phrases employed by Reid and Brown to denote they-know-not-what are innocent little gleams of possibility: "a thing"; "a commission"; "a piece of news". Less than a sketch and more like a curtained silhouette, these phrases adumbrate the anticipated object of memory *without* at the same time *naming* it. We know from Reid's example¹¹ that

¹¹The example, in full, reads: "I remember that a friend charged me with a commission to be executed at such a place; but I have forgot what the commission was. By applying my thought to what I remember concerning it, that it was given by such a person, upon such an occasion, in consequence of such a conversation, I am led, in a train of thought, to the very thing I had forgot, and recollect distinctly what the commission was." I.P., III, 7, 381.

we must recollect "a commission to be executed at such a place", but we cannot *name* the commission. Whatever else it may entail, the act of naming commits us both to a *specification* ('that one') and to an *immediate description* ('the commission was for me to light the fire in his living-room before he arrived home').¹² The reason why the desired object of recollection cannot be identified is that neither of these conditions for naming can be adequately met. At most, our specification may point out the *area* within which our object stands in relation to others: the neighbourhood, as it were, but not the street. Reid calls this the thing's "relative conception"; Furlong refers to it as a "proposition about the past".¹³ The advantage to Reid of the latter's terms of reference is

¹²I have taken my lead from arguments first put forward by Plato in the Cratylus. The view propounded there seems to be that names possess the dual capacity of 'referential' and 'immediate descriptive' agents. Plato's names not only identify (pick out of a crowd) a certain object as "this one, Zeus" rather than "that one, Hermes", but they also refer to its "nature" (Zeus as "lord" or "author"). Although he does distinguish between proper names and common names, he sometimes fuses the two into an inseparable muddle. Yet the name "Zeus" when it refers to his nature "lord" *describes* (almost in a short-hand fashion) the only (for Plato) *correct* "relation" which can exist between the expression (vocalization) of that name and the sort of thing which is entitled to it. In one quick step, "Zeus" refers both to the god and to the kind of being deserving of the name. cf. Cratylus, 396, 421, 422.

¹³Furlong, op. cit., pp. 36-7.

that he can formulate his dilemma in a highly reasonable and acceptable statement: 'I know he told me to do something, but I can't remember what it was.' Furthermore, unless it is the case that I do *not know* that he told me to do something, the statement is true. Understandably, the darkest hours for memory are those periods during which I cannot be sure whether or not there is something that I ought to remember to recollect.¹⁴ One is then

¹⁴These are perhaps second only to the horror of watching my cherished memories ejected from the very 'homes' which I had believed would feed and nourish them. Returning to the scene of his childhood, Jean Cocteau records the shock which attended his surprise at what he saw (or failed to see) and felt (or failed to feel): "My first sensation was of being lost in space, just as when we are blindfolded and released in one spot when we thought we were in another. Was that my white gate, my trellised fence, my trees, my lawn, the house I was born in, the window of the billiard room? A sand path replaced the grass, the pool, and the flower beds. A high gray building with a barn beside it occupied the site of our house. Grooms were coming and going, and looked at us suspiciously as we passed by. I was holding the bars of the newly painted gate, *like a prisoner outside*, when I felt a staggering pain which was nothing but memories expelled by thrusts of a pitchfork, memories unable to find their habits and the niche where I thought them asleep and waiting for me." The Journals of Jean Cocteau, tr. Wallace Fowlie (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1956), p. 34. Equally frightening is the failure of an object to leave any memory-trace whatsoever. This example from Dazai Osamu's No Longer Human should be held beside those of Brown and Reid: "The face is not merely devoid of expression, it fails even to *leave a memory*. It has no individuality. I have only to shut my eyes after looking at it to forget the face. I can remember the wall of the room, the little heater, but all impression of the face of the principal figure in the room is blotted out; I am unable to recall a single thing about it. . . . I open my eyes. There is not even *the pleasure of recollection*. . . . To state the matter in the most extreme terms: when I open my eyes and look at the photograph a second time, *I still cannot remember it.*" (italics mine)

likely to find oneself in an endless regress of harried desires to remember the remembrance of remembrances past. After a point, one would see the futility of that and simply forget. Forgetting includes the will not to suffer.

The kinds of situation, therefore, in which I am most apt to appear foolish do not concern my 'expressions of intent' to recollect such-and-such a 'thing'. Rather they involve my inability even to reach the threshold of desire. Nothing in the logic of Recollection, as so defined by Locke, Reid or Brown, prevents me from asserting that I wish to remember something-I-know-not-what. The obstacles are all on the side of fear and uncertainty. The 'prisoner within the prisoner' who dominates William Golding's novel Free Fall, describes his plight:

"there began to build up in me the conviction that even if I wanted to I could not remember, would never remember (the information I'm not even certain I have). I could see a layer of concrete build up in my mind over the forgotten thing, the thing down there that I had meant to say. But when that concrete forms in the mind, no internal road drill can break it up. . . . For, of course, you can only remember such a thing by forgetting to remember and then glancing back at it quickly before the concrete has a chance to form. . . . If you only gave me a time not to think but a time to lie down under the sky without steps or pain then the concrete would slip away and the information come blurting out if there is any information and then we could start fair. . . . "

The 'piece of news' with which Brown initiated his examination of voluntary recollection has endured a final transformation in the forge of artistic sensibility.

Perhaps George Croom Robertson was right in saying that

Brown's "analysis of voluntary reminiscence and constructive imagination" was his "chief contribution to the general doctrine of mental association".¹⁵ The nucleus for a full-scale assault on 'memory' was certainly there. Our attention will soon be diverted to that task.

Conclusion:

In The World as Will and Idea, Schopenhauer describes the relation between volition and the association of ideas as one in which the laws of the latter find their basis in the laws governing the former. The will, he writes, "urges its servant the intellect, according to the measure of its powers, to link thought to thought, to recall the similar, the contemporaneous, to recognize reasons and consequents. For it is to the interest of the will that, in general, one should think, so that one may be well equipped for all cases that may arise. Therefore the form of the principle of sufficient reason which governs the association of thoughts and keeps it active is ultimately the law of motivation. For that which rules the sensorium, and determines it to follow the analogy or other association of thoughts in this or that direction, is the will of the thinking subject."¹⁶

I have tried to argue in this that Brown adopts a position more or less similar to the one quoted above. Substitute the word 'desire' for the term 'will', transpose

¹⁵George Croom Robertson, "Association of Ideas," reprinted in his Philosophical Remains, ed. A. Bain and T. Whittaker (London & Edinburgh, 1894), p. 110.

¹⁶The World as Will and Idea, II, 328.

Schopenhauer's "thinking subject" back into the empiricist key of a "series of conscious states", and one is hammering on the door of agreement.

On the whole, it would appear that Brown's early investigations into 'volition' extend well into the domain of his philosophy of mind. Several key concepts cluster around the conclusions drawn from these researches. Both 'attention' and 'memory', for example, are fulfilled in the measure of their determination by desire (L. XLII, 125). Even when the selection of images obeys the sole dictate of suggestion, this type of 'imagination' is to be distinguished from that in which we *intend* a certain configuration of images or groups of images (L. XLII, 128-9). Brown's notion of the 'creative imagination' includes this 'mode of intentionality' which serves as a general framework surrounding any process of composition. Desire, he writes,

"like every other vivid feeling, has a degree of permanence which our vivid feelings only possess; and, by its permanence, tends to keep the accompanying conception of the subject, which is the object of the desire, also permanent before us; and while it is thus permanent, the usual spontaneous suggestions take place; conception following conception, in rapid but relative series, and our judgment, all the time, approving and rejecting, according to those relations of fitness and unfitness to the subject, which it perceives in the parts of the train."

(L. XLII, 129)

In his final and incomplete work on the 'Physiology of the Mind', Brown mounts desire, along with other emotions,

on a level of incontestable 'physical fact'. If the critics to follow thought that he had gone mad with 'physicalism', present-day analysts would be similarly dismayed by the appeal to 'psychological' explanation. But Brown is never so crude as to suppose that an account of how emotions *actually* function will constitute a conceptual revelation, or of itself make the understanding of attending and remembering more conclusive. He merely calls upon his reader to *verify* the role played by emotion in both perception and conception by a close observation of his own experience. At the time, this sort of request was rather commonplace: Brown was not alone in thinking that it was possible to build a 'science' of the human mind. (Was it because of opposition to this 'science' that Brown found himself posthumously stuck with the label of an imitator or disciple of Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy?) Unfortunately, this kind of science was to strike the 'scientific' linguists and phenomenologists as a completely bogus undertaking. In one way or another, however, even these purists of the philosophic enterprise were to acknowledge the extent of what Brown then termed the "vivifying influence" of desire (Sketch, 171-2). It has since been accepted by most philosophers that both seeing and thinking are complex activities which involve personal attitudes, dispositions, intentions, motives and interests. Perhaps only those who cling to a rigid dichotomy

between action and reflection would deny that the manner of our response to the world at large is at one with the manner of our thinking about it. Desire constantly shapes and is shaped by both commitments. If, like John Macmurray, we regard the subject primarily as one who *acts*, then thinking acquires a new focus, the thinker a new base, and the thought a new horizon. "Pure thought", concludes Berdyaev, "does not exist; thought is saturated with acts of volition, with emotions and passions and these things play a part in the act of knowing which is not simply negative; they have a positive role to play."¹⁷ It has been assumed throughout that the business of 'having ideas' is a complicated one, and that it is no small matter to 'become conscious' of something. The *freedom* to think, as Sartre has pointed out, is *real* only in so far as it does not issue from a state of 'mere wishing'. If I imagine that I can bandy ideas about *at will*, that I can banish all the world of fact and order at the slightest "whim", then I become a 'dreamer' caught like a fish out of its dimension.¹⁸ In attending to objects or ideas and in remembering specific details

¹⁷N. Berdyaev, The Beginning and the End (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952), p. 16.

¹⁸Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, tr. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. 482-3.

about the past, I am engaged in an open struggle with myself and the world. The chance exigencies of an individual's experience contribute to the idiosyncrasy of his associations. These latter, as we have seen, tend either to thwart or to enhance his reflections. They are the "resistances", in Sartre's sense, which enable his efforts of thought and evaluation. The formidable challenge of that engagement will be our next subject.

PART THREE

EXPLORATIONS FOR A PICTURE

By Memory's circling tie associate bound,
The gleaming phantoms float in mazy round,
Till Fancy's renovating witheries give
The shadowing band again to shine, to live.
Then opes, in deeper gloom, the noiseless reign,
Where dwells Abstraction with her shapeless train,
all dim to sense . . .

- BROWN, 'To Dugald Stewart, Esq.'

An experienced event is finite - at any rate, confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before it and after it.

- Walter BENJAMIN

MEASURING THE FRAME

As early as his medical dissertation on sleep, Brown was intrigued by the functional interplay between memory and attention. This interest was to sustain itself well into the Lectures. It begins, however, as a question regarding the claims which both perceptual experience and reminiscence make upon our present attentiveness. To which can α should we be alert? Brown's answer is a play on the delicacy of the situation. If we consider the multifarious sensory disturbances which either attract or distract attention (for we must bear in mind Jean Wahl's dictum that "attention can be directed only to the past"¹ and can therefore only 'arrive' on the scene *ex post facto*), it becomes clear that these *presentations* may vie with our *representations* for what we might call 'reality status'. 'Re-presentations' differ from the former simply by their being 'present again'. And 'being present' under any form would seem to be quite a reasonable criterion for 'being real'. This might be

¹Quoted by Georges Poulet, Studies in Human Time, tr. Elliott Coleman (N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 36.

particularly true if, as Moore states,

"what we *often* mean by seeing an object, is *merely* directly perceiving a sense-datum, which *is* a sign or effect of that object; and by remembering an object, merely directly perceiving an image, which is an image of the object."²

The problem becomes one of trying to squeeze *two* presentational phenomena into one mould.

It was Reid's opinion that this confusion or ambiguity in our use of terms originated with Locke and Hume. Locke attributes to memory the 'power' of *reviving* 'perceptions'. That could only entail, affirms Reid, that the *objects* of memory were themselves perceptions. "If this be so, it will be difficult to find anything in nature but perceptions." (I.P., III, vii, 371) Has not Locke perhaps inadvertently identified the mental *operations* with their characteristic *objects* (ibid.)? Hume, on the other hand, tries to steer a path of degrees between past and present impressions or ideas. In either case, the 'perceptions' are *present to the mind*. But surely if they are separable at all (and they are so by degree according to Hume), then it is on the basis of our 'remembering' that 'impression' P occurred at t_1 that we assess its relative 'weakness' to impression Q occurring at t_2 . Thus, in rejecting the "common acceptance" of

²G. E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 264-5.

memory as an "immediate knowledge of something past" (as Reid claims Hume to have done), the latter has denounced that very aspect of remembering which he takes for granted in his differentiation (ibid., 471-2). Whether it propels or impedes our uncertainty, memory must play a part and a unique one at that.

Brown is equally alert to the possibility that we may confuse the apparitions of memory with the appearances of real things (De Somno, 12). He had found it necessary in the Observations to attack Erasmus Darwin's misapprehensions on this very point. The proper distinction he argued, ought to be that

"Our ideas of perception were mental affections, preceded by organic affections: our ideas of memory are mental affections, not preceded by organic affections."

(ibid.)

The likelihood of our mistaking a memory idea for a perceptual one remains, but now at least on a proper and manageable basis. The difficulty forecast here is, of course, merely an early expression of the *déjà vu* experience. 'Seeing again' has a peculiar logic of its own which includes 'I have seen before' and 'I am seeing now': the 'before' and 'now' are apt to appear as interchangeable lines bisecting the common point 'I see'.

Brown insists in De Somno, however, that perceptual ideas have the capacity to assert their claim to 'reality' ("*ipsa vera efficiunt*"). They compel attention (or

attract our notice) somewhat in the manner suggested by Berkeley in the second dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, which I quoted earlier. But the instrument which, in Brown's view, often brings the mind back to the perceiving of objects outside itself is that same memory which had led it away ("*quae abduxerat*"; De Somno, 12). Remembering that we have been inattentive to the bombardment of our senses ("*multa enim undique externa auditum, viscum, tactum, sollicitant*", - ibid.), and hence once more attentive to it, we curtail our reminiscences of past perceptions, now 'present again' but once more fading 'out of sight, out of mind'.

The shifting of attention from one object to another or from one mode of experience to another, as from perceiving to remembering, has therefore both an *outer* and an *inner* determination. The same is more or less true of memory. In the previous discussion of volition, I suggested one feature of the inner determination of memory, namely our persistent desire to recollect a particular incident in our past. At the same time, the mechanics of association were shown to possess a similar obstinacy, in drawing our attention along from item to item very much according to their own *modus operandi*. This is not to say that some external object or event might not act as a triggering-device to set the train of suggestion in motion. Indeed Brown cites numerous illustrations to show that we are

as much at the mercy of these external coincidences (a certain object appearing before us at a particular time) as we are helpless to resist the reminiscences which they evoke. He intimates in De Somno that since the mind is more agile than its corporeal counterpart, sense perception has been geared or entrusted, presumably by Providence, to prevent memory from running away with us. It pulls us back from reflection or fancy in the direction of our necessary interaction with (other) objects in the world (De Somno, 12). We are beset by urgent demands from our environment, as well as from our own physiological needs.³ These 'facts', as Brown implies, can only be dealt with by an active and integrative thrust into the sphere of immediate concerns. He thus takes seriously an insight which John Macmurray was later to advance, to the effect that it is essentially as an 'agent' situated in and coping with the world that the individual saves his mind from an absurdly endless vacillation (ibid., 12-13).

³According to Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy, these 'physiological needs' (as I have called them) constitute a "second class of impressions" determining "the operations of judgment and of volition". (What we term "sensations" make up the primary class.) The impressions of this unique class are variously described as coming from "les extrémités sentantes internes" and "le sein même du système nerveux"; or in a word, from "déterminations instinctives". P. J. G. Cabanis, Rapports du Physique et du Moral de L'Homme, 'Table Analytique' par D. de Tracy, op. cit., xcv-xcvi.

Memory enjoys a kind of 'free fall' from the time of its release in reflection until its approach to earth and the 'problematic'. From that point, however, it is functionally attentive to the unforgettable, if sometimes undesirable, daily round. It is the habitual - that which happens with monotonous regularity, - which of its nature draws memory into itself.

Brown discusses *habit* in just this spirit. It steers us, he asserts, towards "certain" (that is, pre-selected) "actions", and in due course improves or facilitates our handling of those actions (L., XLIII, 140F). As a guide to action, habit was already well established in the literature of that age. The human machine had been seen to repeat itself. Prévost insisted that habit as well as *interest* "more or less" determine the direction sought by volition in governing attention; the latter, in turn, becomes a precondition with association of the shape of memory.⁴ The zone of the 'familiar' expanded with the mechanics of association to dominate eighteenth and early nineteenth century psychology. It was the *customary* (to use a term much favoured in the period) which spanned the philosophical spectrum from what we might believe to what we ought to do. Yet it

⁴P. Prévost, Essais de Philosophie (Genève, 1805), I, Bk. iv, Part I, sect. 1, ch. 2, pp. 117-8.

was perhaps Bergson who most adequately and compellingly wove habit into the very heart of memory, making the latter the *sine qua non* of all 'conscious action'. Had not Pascal declared that memory was "indispensable for all the operations of reason" (Pensées, 228) and Reid that "all experience supposes memory" (I.P., III, vii, 373)? Without the specific operation of "habit-memory", the entire build-up of past experiences would be laid at the feet of "recollection" for assimilation into and utilization for recurrent and prospective events. Under any scheme, such a responsibility would be considered a functional overload. For Bergson, memory in either form is ultimately related to and expresses itself in action, although admittedly recollection entails consciousness of what is *past* and therefore of what is *not available for action*. Ernst Cassirer has argued in his Philosophy of Symbolic Forms⁵ that Bergson's metaphysics commits him to letting *memory* and *action* go their separate ways, the one taking us with it as it slips relentlessly away from the present, the other driving us forward pitilessly into action and life. In his fine study of Bergson, A. D. Lindsay weaves a pattern of interpretation around this dilemma, I think

⁵The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, vol. III 'The Phenomenology of Knowledge', tr. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1957), pp. 187-8.

with some success. "Action", he writes,

"is always being modified by memory of the past; and memory is approached through action in the present and realises itself in present action. For our action seems to select from memory as it selects from presented objects. It both uses and inhibits pure memory."⁶

The inhibition in question is the obstacle we confront when we seek to indulge in pure "reverie" or personal reflection and find ourselves distracted by the world.

In a highly introductory vein, I have skimmed lightly over certain aspects of the interplay between memory and attention. The analysis reveals the complexity of memory performances from which and into which attention itself operates. For it is at least apparent that from one side, the sorts of things we remember serve in part to establish the things on which we are apt to concentrate and which perhaps we find desirable. From the other side, those items to which we *have* given our attention are likely (although not certain) to reappear either voluntarily or involuntarily in our reminiscences. Consequently, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that memory and attention engage in a kind of mutual resuscitation, breathing both life and character into each other. One wonders, in fact, why the interaction

⁶A. D. Lindsay, The Philosophy of Bergson (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1911), pp. 178 and 183.

(assuming it is that) should not at last be submitted to empirical testing and confirmation. The *philosophes* believed this to be possible for all types of mental activity within their foreseeable future. "The philosophy of Locke and Condillac", asserts Colin Kiernan, "opened up new possibilities and set the *philosophes* on the way to the promised land. All they needed was to underpin the new sensationalist psychology with a scientific proof."⁷ They were divided, however, on the question of a suitable scientific framework: Boyle, Voltaire and Helvétius upheld the mechanistic view-point, while La Mettrie, Diderot, Condillac and Rousseau emerged as advocates for the life-sciences. Whether the house being divided fell or the vehicle of pure introspection proved more tantalizing, the philosophical insight took root and produced its own variants.

⁷Colin Kiernan, "Science and the doctrine of man", Studies on Voltaire and the 18th Century, vol. 59, p. 109.

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The hope that this complex interaction of memory and attention might be pinpointed, scrutinized and dissected somewhere within the bounds of 'experimental space' was one which Brown approached with unusual caution. He was not one to hedge his bets or to hold his tongue; nor was he given to embarrassed blushes at his own appearance on the historical stage attired in the uniform of a 'mental physiologist' (cf. L.I., 13). In his Autobiography, R. G. Collingwood expresses dismay over that turn-of-events in the early nineteenth century which saw the encroachment by "sense and appetite" on the territory of "reason and will".¹ The "problems of logic and ethics", he argues, were thrown wholesale into the lap of "psychology" for resolution and eventual dismissal. This "science", moreover, aspired to no less than the complete reduction of the mental to the "psychical". Yet whatever sweeping effects one might, in retrospect, judge to have occurred the movement itself, I shall contend, had an uneasy birth. It was

¹An Autobiography (London and N.Y.: Oxford U.P., 1970) pp. 94 and 116.

marked by severe traumatic shocks to the persons involved, shocks which reverberated throughout the intellectual world. Brown could not have failed to feel the initial repercussions of what he and others were attempting to bring about. But as I said, he was no coward.

His hesitancy was certainly not a reflection of any misgivings on his part concerning the possibilities of making the mind, like any other aspect of nature, an object of empirical investigation. He was, however, distressed at the readiness of certain of his contemporaries to embark on a programme of inquiry with the only methodology available to them, namely that derived from Newtonian physics and couched in Baconian terminology. The reluctance which he displayed was therefore connected not so much with the aims of the new science as with its methods.

Even at this, he was less sure of himself than his outspokenness would seem to indicate. He was, perhaps naturally, blind to the historical heritage which he would utilize in his very struggle against history. And not infrequently, he represents the operations of volition and suggestibility, of which memory and attention were said to be 'modifications' (suggestibility in particular acting the role of Condillac's sensations), as though these were immediate and observable items of experience instead of the conjectural outlooks or 'ways of seeing' which they

clearly were. Plainly, the distinction between hypothesis and evidence (I shall return to this later) which, according to Reid, had been obscured in David Hartley's research was still not properly illuminated. "It may be observed in general," wrote Reid,

"that Dr. Hartley's work consists of a chain of propositions, with their proofs and corollaries, digested in good order, and in a scientific form. A great part of them, however, are, as he candidly acknowledges, conjectures and hints only; yet these are mixed with the propositions legitimately proved, *without any distinction.*"

(I.P., II, iii, 87; italics mine)

Here, as elsewhere, Reid believes that he is following the lead of the "great Newton" in his "never enough to be admired" Principia as well as the Opticks (I.P., VI, v, 643 and vi, 7, 687).²

Brown's was not the only confusion on this score.

²In this connection, compare also L. L. Laudan, "Thomas Reid and the Newtonian Turn of British Methodological Thought", in The Methodological Heritage of Newton, ed. Robert E. Butts and John W. Davis (U. of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 116 ftn. It might, of course, be doubted whether hypothesis and confirming evidence (or theory and fact) are "categorically separable, except perhaps within a single tradition of normal-scientific practice". See Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, from International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, vol. II, no. 2 (2nd ed.; U. of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 7. Kuhn adds: "That is why the unexpected discovery is not simply factual in its import and why the scientist's world is qualitatively transformed as well as quantitatively enriched by fundamental novelties of either fact or theory." (ibid.)

Hypotheses were only just emerging from behind the cloud of Newton. (The obfuscation, of course, had really been an interpreter's nightmare for which *hypotheses non fingo* was only a partial excuse.) P. B. Medawar has recently drawn attention to and commended the efforts of Dr. John Gregory and Dugald Stewart to liberate post-Newtonian science from an "indiscriminate zeal against hypotheses" (Stewart's words). Reid and J. S. Mill, on the other hand, are depicted as frightened creatures, rhetorical spokesman for a misguided and already outmoded conception of scientific 'invention', cursed with a seventeenth-century abhorrence of the imagination and its 'vain' projections.³ This is somewhat overdone: it does little or no justice to Reid and, depending on the strength of one's allegiance to him (a point which Medawar concedes), little to Mill whose treatment of hypothetical constructs, like Brown's, placed them in the more qualified position of being suggestive frameworks for future observation. Such a qualification sets both Mill and Brown squarely in the tradition of Bacon; for the latter was, as Paolo Rossi has shown, the champion of 'direction' in experimental science.

"Bacon's logic was, indeed, an instrument made by man for

³See The Art of the Soluble (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), pp. 157, 159 and 168.

the domination of a resisting, recalcitrant nature; he stressed the inadequacy of abstract, theoretical methods in natural research, and the necessity of referring to experimental data to prove the authority of definitions and theories; he denied the correlation of elegantly constructed theories and practical scientific results; and he saw theoretical methods only as means of directing and encouraging experiments."⁴

I will elaborate on Brown's own propositions to this effect in the final chapter.

Although it is undoubtedly true that Reid was wary of the 'ingenious' hypothesis (or "conjecture"), his caution must not be taken as a sign of impaired judgment. He believed that "men should have a clear and distinct understanding of the nature of hypotheses in philosophy, and of the regard that is due to them" (I.P., II, iii, 43). To this end he too allows that they might "suggest experiments, or direct our inquiries" (I.P., II, iii, 91). What he calls "just induction", on the other hand, looks the other way, towards "doctrines" or "truths" which have already been substantiated by means of 'productive' experimentation (see I.P., II, iii, 85 and 91).⁵ This

⁴Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science, tr. Sacha Rabinovitch (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 223.

⁵Compare Reid's letter to Kames, 16 December 1780, in Works, ed. Hamilton (6th ed.; Edinburgh, 1863), I, 56. Laudan contends that although Reid's position with respect to hypotheses may seem to be 'ambiguous' - in part denunciation and in part support (somewhat along the lines of Brown and Mill), - nevertheless the "thrust of almost all Reid's arguments is towards discrediting those philosophers (e.g., David Hartley) and scientists (e.g., the Cartesians) who did use hypotheses, however sparingly"; op. cit., p. 117.

backward and forward-looking movement has the advantage of creating for the scientist a context of confirmed and prospective experiences, a temporal juncture from which induction and hypothesis take flight into past and future. Newton himself, affirms Reid, stood at such a cross-road:

"[He] took great care to distinguish his doctrines, which he pretended to prove by just induction, from his conjectures, which were to stand or fall, according as future experiments and observations should establish or refute them."

(I.P., II, iii, 85)

Perhaps the time-slices are too serialistic, too firmly divided into separate installments. Perhaps what is missing is their closer integration, whereby induction would be merely another name for experimental testing, both complete and incomplete, of specific hypotheses. As I have indicated above, Reid criticizes Hartley for just this admixture of fact and conjecture, for the development of a system (of vibrations) which combines "strong" as well as "weak" links. The latter, according to Reid, constitute an 'adulteration' of true philosophy (I.P., II, iii, 87). It seems clear, therefore, that Reid was concerned to maintain a viable distinction between "knowledge" and "opinion" (I.P., I, iii, 41), and to credit science with a degree of certainty and conviction uniform at least with Baconian standards.

Devoting an entire chapter to the subject, Reid gives a rather comprehensive and well illustrated exposition

of Bacon's *idols* of shallow and easy opinion. At every available moment he lauds that philosopher's "slow and patient method of induction", by means of which sound judgments might more nearly be approximated (I.P., VI, viii, 691 ff). "The process of induction", he had noted in A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, is "more arduous" and less certain in its conclusions than "reasoning by syllogism", since it is

"an ascent from particular premises to a general conclusion. The evidence of such general conclusions is probable only, not demonstrative: But when the induction is sufficiently copious, and carried on according to the rules of art, it forces conviction no less than demonstration itself does."⁶

Where Bacon's art failed, through the production of "some obscurity in the work, and a defect of proper examples for illustration", Newton "supplied" the necessary correctives; for "in the third book of his Principia and in his Optics, [he] had the rules of the Novum Organum constantly in his eye" (ibid.). Reid's indebtedness to Bacon is profound, in spite of his rejection of the latter's *forms* (Brown concurred in this view) and the method of 'exclusion'. Thus, while Newton undoubtedly furnished the letter, Bacon provided the spirit of the law of induction.⁷

⁶Chapter V, section 2; the 'Analysis' first appeared in Lord Kames's Sketches of the History of Man, published in 1773.

⁷Laudan regards it as a "serious mistake" to take

Over-the-shoulder glances in the direction of Bacon had become a familiar and integral part of the new science of mind. In his authoritative submission to the Royal Society of Edinburgh on the subject of "Lord Bacon",⁸ Napier cites Dr. Stubbe's derisive characterization of seventeenth-century experimentalists as "*a Bacon-faced generation*".⁹ It would be rather more flattering to

Reid as a "Baconian essentially and only incidentally a Newtonian methodologist"; op. cit., p. 120. I find no justification, however, for trying to give the edge to either predecessor: their respective influences on Reid's thought were surely of different kinds. Nor can I see the point of Laudan's conclusion that "Reid was only vaguely familiar with the details of Bacon's Novum Organum": Reid's awareness of Bacon's short-comings as well as his detailed exposition of the *idols* in Essay VI suggest, on the contrary, a familiarity typical of the thoroughness with which the Scotch philosophers read Bacon and the excitement engendered by such reading. The latter will become more apparent in what follows.

⁸Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, vol. VIII (1818), pp. 373-425; reprinted in Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh (Cambridge, 1853), pp. 1-71. Stewart speaks most highly of this essay in a letter to the Lord Provost recommending Napier for the Chair in Moral Philosophy made vacant by Brown's death in 1820. See Selections from the Correspondence of the Lord Macvey Napier, Esq., ed. by his son, Macvey Napier, and 'printed for private circulation only' (London, 1877), p. 9. Leonard Horner and Henry Brougham approached Napier in 1827, on behalf of the Committee of the 'Useful Knowledge Society' with an invitation for him to contribute articles on the Novum Organum and the De Dignitate et Augmentis to the 'Library of Useful Knowledge': "We both ended by being of opinion that they can be confided to no hands so sure of doing them justice as yours." Napier modestly declined. See their exchange of letters in the Selections, pp. 51-6.

⁹Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh, op. cit., p. 48; Transactions, p. 408.

depict the Scottish philosophers at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under the same epithet; for the incentive given to the mood of scientific optimism among the intellectual members of that generation was Bacon's zeal for any knowledge which might serve to benefit human society. Lord Webb Seymour gives personal voice to this feeling during the early stages of the Baconian revival:

"In the course of the winter I have, in company with a friend, read through Lord Bacon's De Augmentis, and we gave every part of it such a discussion, as in times of old you and I were wont to bestow on the pages of Bishop Butler; I hope, too, with equal profit. Though I had reaped no other advantage, I should think myself well repaid by the enthusiasm for science and the improvement in philosophical temper which I must have derived from it. Bacon's mind must have been influenced in all its speculations by an ardent zeal for useful truth, an unaffected candour, and a sublime, yet modest, dignity; qualities which, in the degree to which he possessed them, may be deemed even more extraordinary than the vigour of his comprehensive imagination, and the depth of his judgment. Without habitual sentiments of this kind he could hardly have detected the fallacy of those misguided exertions of the intellect which had been sanctioned by the labours of ages, nor have had the courage to undertake the reformation which he effected. We are now just entering on the Novum Organum."¹⁰

Reflecting a widespread development in the eighteenth century, the Scottish experimentalists insisted that a

¹⁰ Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner op. cit., vol. I, Appendix A: 'Biographical Notice of Lord Webb Seymour' by Henry Hallam, pp. 537-8; the quotation is taken from a letter to Hallam by Webb Seymour, 18th May, 1801.

proper understanding of Nature must include a thorough investigation into *human* nature or, as it was sometimes put, a knowledge of the very 'principles of understanding'. In this, Bacon was still their guide and mentor.

He inspired confidence in the experimental method as a means of reforming the "plan of philosophical inquiry" throughout all "branches of science" and not merely in natural philosophy. The indebtedness which men like Stewart felt towards Bacon was combined with a strong realization of the pioneer efforts which they themselves would have to make. And so the term "reformation" had this double edge. "To this method of philosophizing", observes Stewart

"(which is commonly distinguished by the title of the Method of Induction,) we are indebted for the rapid progress which physical knowledge has made since the time of Lord Bacon. The publication of his writings fixes one of the most important eras in the history of science. . . . The reformation in the plan of philosophical inquiry, which has taken place during the two last centuries, although not entirely confined to physics, has not extended in the same degree to the other branches of science; as sufficiently appears from the prevailing scepticism with respect to the principles of metaphysics and of moral philosophy. This scepticism can only be corrected, by applying to these subjects the method of induction."

(Elements, I, i and ii, 7-8)

Belief in the applicability of experimental methods to the mind depended to a large extent on the sanction of Bacon. Yet this very sanction was tied to the wheel of a vicious circle; for it was through their faith in the ubiquitous scope of experimentation that the 'optimists' saw a

precedent in Bacon.¹¹ Napier, for example, argued that the critics had no grounds for supposing Bacon's method to be restricted to the "physical sciences alone". The nature of philosophy itself, he maintained, determines that the methodology should be universal.

"The object of philosophy, and the principles of philosophizing are the same, whether the investigation relates to the laws of matter or the laws of mind; and thus the logic of the Novum Organum cannot be useful with reference to the one, without having the same character with reference to the other."

(Lord Bacon, p. 12)

Was there not 'factual evidence' in both cases, and did not induction arise through generalization from the 'observation' of such facts?

Stewart pressed the matter home, and in so doing gave witness to the level of certainty to be attained in this the final stage of the Reformation.

"As all our knowledge of the material world rests ultimately on facts ascertained by observation, so all our knowledge of the human mind rests ultimate *on facts for which we*

¹¹This faith is not to be confused with the "rule of faith" in Baconian science (namely, "experience") which Feyerabend has observed to be "logically", although "by no means psychologically vacuous", since there is no way of determining "what experience tells us" except by means of the *theory* which it is supposed to *illustrate*. See Paul K. Feyerabend, "Classical Empiricism", in The Methodological Heritage of Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-1; 154-5. It resembles more closely Kuhn's *paradigm* of scientific procedure, which serves as the eye-glass of all research, the interpretative mould in which both the world and others are cast. See Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

have the evidence of our own consciousness. An attentive examination of such facts will lead in time to the general principles of the human constitution, and will gradually form a science of mind not inferior in certainty to the science of body."

(Elements, I, ii, 8; italics mine)

The wording is crucial: not only with respect to the tone which it set for the subsequent development, from Renouvier to James, of an analytic 'psychology'; but also in terms of the fierce debate which was to snap across the journals during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

That debate saw Stewart and Jeffrey as its principals, with Napier and Brown acting frequently as 'seconds' and sometimes as independent voices. Much of the discussion centred on the science of mind: its historic roots in or at least ready adaptation to the procedures of natural science; its late arrival as a fashionable pursuit among intellectuals; and its utility for ordinary, 'conscious' individuals. The question of utility I will leave for another chapter. That mental science had undoubtedly ignited the attentions of French, English and Scottish philosophers is, of course, a central and continuing note in this thesis. The tendency towards analysis was an aspect, perhaps better still a symptom, of their pre-occupation with the ways and means of understanding. Stemming from Newton himself, this "method of analysis", as Voltaire and others termed it, revealed itself as a

"critical instrument for the exposure of humbug, prejudice, and intellectual pretension",¹² indeed as the precondition of all philosophic ventures. What concerns us now is the transposition of an inductive methodology from its successful debut (itself an open question in the debate) in the Newtonian science to the faculties and operations of Mind. If the mental scientists thought that it was a simple matter of changing keys (up or down, depending on the initial registration), they were due for a surprise. Some members of their audience reacted almost violently, as though the perpetrators of this transposition had struck a sour note or invented, well before their time, atonal music. Even in science, it seems, there are classicists who prefer established forms to unruly innovations.

Stewart refers explicitly to Priestley as one of those "writers of the present age" (Hartley and Darwin are among the others) whose "objections" to such a transposition border on sheer prejudice. They are, he states, "similar to the charge which was at first brought against the Newtonian doctrine of gravitation, as being a revival

¹²Henry Guerlac, "Where the Statue Stood: Divergent Loyalties to Newton in the Eighteenth Century", in Aspects of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Earl R. Wasserman (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 318.

of the occult qualities of the Aristotelians" (Elements, I, ii, 8). Since Newton had pointedly disowned the idea that gravity was "an Essential Property of Bodies", that early reaction was foolishness indeed. Stewart, however, is here defending not Newton, but Reid who distinguished between the discoveries of the natural philosopher, on the one hand, and those of the metaphysician, on the other.¹³ That it should fall to the metaphysician, rather than to the natural philosopher, to explore operating causes, whether in matter or in mind, was as much a part of Priestley's disenchantment as the application to the latter of the "method of induction", to which Stewart gives his unqualified assent (Elements I, ii, 8). Quite naturally for a materialist, Priestley finds this metaphysical role both alarming in the first instance and theoretically unsound in the second.

It is really Jeffrey, however, who by leaping into the fray creates a storm of protest.¹⁴ His is not the objection of a materialist to alleged 'metaphysical

¹³ Reid to Kames, 16 December, 1780; quoted by Laudan, op. cit., p. 129.

¹⁴ See Francis Jeffrey's reviews of Stewart's Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid, D.D., F.R.S., Edinburgh (January 1804) and Philosophical Essays (November, 1810), in Contributions to the Edinburgh Review by Francis Jeffrey (London, 1846), II, 593-608; and 664-5.

speculation', although his attack is directed against those "metaphysical writers" who have dabbled - wrongly, he maintains, - in experimental affairs. He wishes rather to chide Stewart and others for advocating what he regards as an erroneous extension of Baconian methodology from the 'department of proper Experiment' into that of "mere Observation" (Jeffrey, 1804, 594-5). It should be noted at this stage that the critical line taken by Jeffrey does not engage the quite distinct, and probably more important, question regarding the validity of "physiologico-metaphysical theories" which attempt to *explain* the "*causes or mechanism* by which the intellectual phenomena are supposed to be produced" (the words are those of Stewart's apologist, Macvey Napier¹⁵). Adhering strictly to the positions of Reid and Newton, Stewart dismisses the idea that there is any relation whatsoever between mental science or the "philosophy of the mind" and the "metaphysical romances" of the physiologists (Napier, 1811, 3). Jeffrey is guilty (and Napier detects

¹⁵ See Napier's review of Stewart's Philosophical Essays in The Quarterly Review, vol. 6 (October, 1811), pp. 1-37. Jessop wrongly attributes the review to T. Bowdler, for Napier's authorship is confirmed by his son in Selections from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier, Esq., op. cit., pp. 3-6; letters to Napier from Wm. Gifford (25 August and 28 October, 1811) and from Stewart himself (18 December, 1811) are substantial proof of this claim.

this) of a certain amount of bastardization with respect to the word 'metaphysics', a word which, as Napier points out, is "equally applied to the repulsive and visionary speculations of the schoolmen" (*ibid.*, 2). Under Jeffrey's rubric, the metaphysician ought *only* to observe, and then within the strict confines of "methodical arrangement" (Jeffrey, 1805, 595), while *never* so much as entertaining the suggestion of experimental research. The latter is restricted to those "substances" which are "actually in our power" and where "the judgment and artifice of the inquirer can be effectively employed to arrange and combine them in such a way as to disclose their most hidden properties and relations" (Jeffrey, 1804, 594). The mind, so the argument goes, is among that "other class of phenomena" which

"occur in substances that are placed altogether beyond our reach; the order and succession of which we are generally unable to control; and as to which we can do little more than collect and record the laws by which they appear to be governed."

Apart from the sense in which Jeffrey's distinction somewhat inverts the Stoical order of things which are 'in our power' and those which are 'beyond our control' (Epictetus), there is at least an apparent agreement with Reid and Stewart regarding the mental philosopher's basic concern for the "*laws of thought*", rather than for the "essence of the thinking principle" (Napier, 1811, 3).

The aim of Jeffrey's critical apparatus, however,

believes this appearance. The aspects of mental science which he singles out for attack are the very features of our conscious experience which those metaphysicians had sought to elucidate in their analytic inquiries (the term has a pejorative ring throughout the reviews) and which he has obviously failed to grasp. Insisting that as mere spectators we are 'powerless' to alter that which we observe, he reasons that the classifier of mental phenomena can neither "decompose" or "analyze" nor "know more of them than has always been known to all to whom they had been imparted" (Jeffrey, 1804, 596; 1810, 651). What crucibles and prisms may be to the scientist who *experiments* "upon matter", reflection and attention cannot, by any stretch of analogical reasoning, be to the ordinary individual who feels, perceives or remembers, *observes that* he is doing so, and "knows exactly what it is" that these words "denote" (Jeffrey, 1804, 595, 597). Jeffrey is not decrying that particular kind of reasoning whose evidence, as Campbell put it, is "but a more indirect experience, founded on some remote similitude", and is "hardly ever honoured with the name of proof".¹⁶ Indeed he recognizes the need for such reasoning, at least within the area of natural science; for it is the process

¹⁶Dr. George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1816), I, v, 124-5.

whereby one experiment suggests other "analogous experiments" which leads "naturally to the interminable expansion of enquiry and of knowledge" (Jeffrey, 1810, 655). The evidence provided by mental phenomena, on the other hand, is non-expansive. Instead of 'rousing' or 'inflaming' one's observation, it "centres in itself" and at most 'gratifies' and 'allays' one's "curiosity". It becomes clear that Jeffrey's intention is to root out what he believes to be the fundamental problem: namely, the metaphysician's preoccupation with *analysis* and, deeper still, his conviction that by means of this double-edged instrument of "reflection and attention", he can increase man's knowledge of himself (Jeffrey, 1810, 651).¹⁷

The methodological issue is therefore only half the story, and even this side of Jeffrey's argument cannot be regarded as the break-through which he seems to have hoped for. It is surely by attending to and reflecting on what he does that the natural scientist learns to

¹⁷ Compare Reid himself (*I.P.*, VI, i, 199): "The judgments grounded upon the evidence of sense, of memory, and of consciousness, put all men upon a level. The Philosopher, with regard to these, has no prerogative above the illiterate, or even above the savage. . . . His superiority is in judgments of another kind; in judgments about things abstract and necessary." If Jeffrey had pursued that last point, the debate would likely have taken a different turn.

apply the word 'experimentation' to his efforts. Furthermore, observation is an integral part of that experimentation and not, as Jeffrey seems to allege, a helpless and ineffective by-stander, suitable only for pre-Newtonian "star-gazers" (Jeffrey, 1804, 594) and the common man.¹⁸ Admittedly, there is something "different" in the results of scientific "invention" (Jeffrey, 1804, 596), a way of looking at the world which is either wholly or in part dissimilar from the previous mode of vision. In that sense, each new discovery brings about "an increase of power"; in short, the Baconian dream. Depending on one's interpretation of Newtonian methodology, it might also be true to say that there is an element of disclosure into the "secrets of that internal structure" (whatever it might be), which produces "a pretty correct knowledge of the causes of the phenomena we produce" at some later date (Jeffrey, 1804, 596; 1810, 650). (As I mentioned above, this was by no means the reading of

¹⁸In his paper on Bacon, delivered before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1818, Napier goes to some lengths to show how Bacon revitalized philosophy by 'systematizing' the "true method of discovery". The mode of observation employed by the ancients, Bacon realized, lacked a proper experimental setting; this he provided, at least in principle and thereby founded "the art of observing for the purposes of philosophical discovery". The "regeneration of philosophy" was thus accomplished by means of "a well-regulated use of observation and experiment". Lord Bacon, pp. 13-17.

Newton which Reid gave although it was, no doubt through a kind of wish-fulfilment, the manner in which many eighteenth-century writers held the new science.) But Jeffrey rules out, I think inconsistently, the possibility that there could evolve, through philosophical reflection, *different* ways of seeing ourselves, perhaps even alterations in the structures of self-consciousness (cf. Jeffrey, 1804, 598). The real bite of his attack on Stewart hinges on the belief that there is nothing in the conclusions of mental analysis which was not first "familiar" to every man (Jeffrey, 1804, 597).

In two interesting but confused passages (Jeffrey, 1804, 597-8; 1810, 565-7), Jeffrey tries to find a home for the philosophy of mind. He views it essentially as a 'technical' re-distribution, after observation, of the "particulars" of mind which are, however, "practically known" to all; perhaps by analogy as a sort of 'grammatical' re-arrangement of the language or "correct map" of the districts of mind, again with which we are all intimately acquainted; and finally as a verbal description of the "laws of thought, or connexions of mental operation, that are not so commonly stated in words", but which are "universally known" even to those "who never thought of enouncing them in precise or abstract propositions". He remarks at one point that the philosophy of mind may be "cultivated" by the student "in solitude and silence -

by calm reflection on *our own* mental experiences, and patient attention to the subjects of our consciousness", yet asks at another:

"Is it not, on the contrary, universally understood to be the peculiar and limited province of that philosophy to explain the nature and distinctions of those primary functions of the mind which are possessed in common by men of *all* vocations and *all* conditions? - to treat, in short, of perception, and attention, and memory, and imagination, and volition, and judgment, and all the other powers or faculties into which our intellectual nature may be distinguished?"

It was these, he attests, which "occupied" the attentions of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Reid. Although he has alluded here to the functions of *explanation* and *distinction*, we must assume from everything that he has said that they do not constitute a proper 'analysis', nor may they lay claim to 'discovery' (Jeffrey, 1810, 658). We must also suppose that they were always employed "without study or exertion" (Jeffrey, 1804, 598). What are we to make, finally, of Stewart's "supposed *experiments*" into "those slighter shades of individual character"? Since they do not treat of "what is common to all human beings", and in spite of their occasional usefulness as "illustrations", they "can never be permitted to rank as a legitimate part of that philosophy". The bastard, Jeffrey would have us believe, is Stewart's own off-spring: a naughty child at that, who feigns *discovery* where there is none to be had, owing to the 'fact' that the adult community knows every-

thing there is to know about itself in advance, that is, "by nature" (Jeffrey, 1804, 596).

Jeffrey had maintained that Bacon's "code of laws" for the "regulation of experimental induction" could only be observed where there was 'clearly' something to be discovered. Having quite arbitrarily excluded the domain of mental phenomena, he then felt justified in mocking the pretensions of the metaphysicians to rights under the law. Yet behind those declarations of concern for the protection of legitimate science, one begins to notice that negative assumption and, in particular, the way in which it determines the outcome of the argument. The battle of the methodologies flags under this insight. (It should be recalled, for example, that there was never any question of trying to discover the *causes* of mental phenomena or their operations: Reid and Stewart, Napier and Jeffrey were here in agreement.) Suppose one does *not* acknowledge with Jeffrey that there is "no opaque skin . . . on the mind" (Jeffrey, 1810, 652), or that it is at all easy for anyone to arrive at "a perfect knowledge" of his mind: one will then begin to think, if one is optimistic and a progressivist, in terms of a *gradual increase* in our understanding of ourselves. It is Napier who finally restores a measure of balance to the discussion, and he does so by attaching himself to this point inspired, as he himself admits, not only by Stewart but by that

"penetrating writer", David Hume (Napier, 1811, 9).

Napier is not even faintly troubled by the whereabouts of the word 'discovery' on that map which 'strictly' defines the area of mental philosophy.

"If the intellectual philosopher is not to be ranked as a discoverer, because all the facts with which his science is conversant have always existed in our consciousness, this is merely a matter of verbal criticism, and does not at all affect the proposition that our knowledge of the laws to which these facts belong is capable of being substantially increased by metaphysical inquiry."

(Napier, 1811, 9)

The shifting of attention, away from the 'facts' of consciousness (that we perceive, imagine, remember, and so forth) towards the 'laws' which govern their behaviour and thus thought itself, is subtle yet telling. Jeffrey believed that one might *describe* these laws, but not that one must *ascertain* them by a higher act of consciousness which effectively makes that which was equal in consciousness *unequal* in reflection. What Napier finds distressing in Jeffrey's attack upon Stewart is his inability, or unwillingness, to subject 'consciousness' itself to analysis, and thereby to realize the strain involved in holding fast, even for description, what is "merely that *involuntary* and *momentary* perception which the mind has of any *present* thought or feeling." The view here taken of consciousness is plainly Reid's, and will be examined in another context. Napier's handling of it is important to us at this stage for the way in which he supports the

claims of mental science. "Its fugitive intimations",
he writes,

"leave no traces whatever in the memory, and only become subservient to our knowledge of the laws which regulate the intellectual phenomena, in so far as they are made the objects of careful and continued *reflexion*. It is owing to the great difficulty and complexity of this operation, and the fugitive and subtle nature of its objects, that there is so much uncertainty and contradiction in our metaphysical opinions. Reflexion involves the deliberate exercise of attention, recollection, and comparison; - processes to which the bulk of mankind never think of subjecting their thoughts, but to which it is necessary habitually and methodically to subject them, in order to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the laws of the mind. It is only in this way that we can discover the latent relations and dependencies of its various phenomena; and every unnoticed relation which reflexion enables us to perceive, forms a real addition to our intellectual knowledge."

(Napier, 1811, 9)

Jeffrey might still question the usefulness or purpose of these 'additions', but his doing so would amount to a refusal to recognize the (quite familiar) distinction between things only vaguely and things more "fully understood" (*ibid.*, 10). Such a distinction could conceivably be "wholly unsuspected by those who have not been instructed by mental analysis", although this need not imply that an individual may not *instruct himself* by means of reflection on his own experience. Indeed, such is the process - and it is not entered into (to use Hume's phrase) "without pains", - by which alone we can come to any understanding of ourselves. Nevertheless, even a modest extension and refinement of this technique, with the assistance of the

mental philosopher, enables us to *trace* and *develop* the "various ideas and circumstances which combine in, or are connected with our different operations and feelings" (*ibid.*). Jeffrey notwithstanding, there is no escape from analysis: "by reflexion", notes a "writer of the greatest metaphysical acumen" (Napier alludes here to and quotes Brown), "we analyse our thoughts". One might equally observe that through *analysis* we begin to reflect on the thoughts we entertain.

While Jeffrey's protest centered on the *misuse* by philosophers of mind of the Baconian method of induction, Brown's objections were directed against what he regarded as a significant error in that method. The application of inductive principles to the science of mind met with his general approval, and so in this connection he was able to support the cause of Stewart and Napier against Jeffrey. On the other hand, he could agree to no more than a limited use of the method, especially in its Baconian form. Basically what he found objectionable in the latter was the taint of methodological essentialism; that is, Bacon's search for the *Essences* or *Forms* of material (or by transposition, mental) substances under the aegis of an inductive procedure.¹⁹ In opposition to this, Brown

¹⁹ See Appendix E.

put forward his own brand of methodological *nominalism* in which he insisted, for example, that one must build on the basis of the succession of *particular* states of consciousness, no one of which *is* mind, but "in which mind exists at that particular moment" (L. XII, 259). That the mental scientist should arrive at these 'elements' by *decomposing* or *analyzing* the complex phenomena of mind was, of course, never in question. Brown was not at all satisfied, however, that Bacon had furnished such an experimental model, for it seemed to him that Bacon had exceeded the limits of true induction in pursuing the "essential differences" among things as though these and not the "simple fact itself", having been regularly observed, were the underlying 'principles' of any operation or relation (Inquiry, 3, 456-8 Note L). Like Reid and Newton before him, he considers "every thing beyond" the actual circumstances "before observed" to be "only conjectural", a "presumption, which may or may not be verified by subsequent observation" (ibid.).

Whether he would support the distinction laid down by Brewster, Leslie and later J. D. Forbes, between "a superficial and a profound version of empiricism"²⁰ (Bacon's being the former), is at first sight difficult

²⁰See G. E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect (Edinburgh: the University Press, 1961), p. 184.

to judge. The contrast between types of empiricism depends on the latter clearly having "an anti-atomistic organic character". Brown's own method of 'chemical analysis' would, in spite of Ferrier's characterization of it, agreeably fit into this. Finding, as Brewster suggested, "some predominating fact or relationship"²¹ was very much the procedure utilized by Brown in reaching "general laws" of mental behaviour. Nevertheless, Brown was apt on occasion to slip into an 'atomistic' mode of reasoning, somewhat after the fashion of his teacher, Dugald Stewart, developing out of *units* of experience a broader picture of their inter-relationship. Such moments were no doubt inevitable: the ideal of simultaneity which was intended to govern the movement of his analysis, at once 'involving' and 'evolving', was not always workable in practice. Yet the fact that he should choose to employ such a method is perhaps the best indication of his tendency towards an empiricism more 'profound' than that offered by Baconian induction.

The experimentalist of mind should now be ready to demonstrate his skills. Stewart's portrait of this newly conceived creature, and Jeffrey's caricature of the same (by no means flattering) might, as it were, have

²¹Quoted by Davie, op. cit., pp. 184-5.

dangled from the walls of Brown's 'laboratory', but they were not on the whole distracting. He was busy testing the ground beneath such states of consciousness as memory and attention. At times he came dangerously close to solutions which, although in keeping with the sort of questions posed, were clearly unacceptable to him. Other mental scientists found, and still do find, security rather than abhorrence in the prospect. Fortunately perhaps for Brown, there was the living example of Erasmus Darwin an experimentatist, as he discovered, of an entirely different species. Observing him closely, Brown began to recognize his own affinity for a truer method of philosophic inquiry. That method originated in, but did not stop at, what I shall call the 'operational' level.

A VIEW OF OPERATIONS

It is precisely because someone like Brown could ask (with apparent philosophical impunity) 'how does memory work?' and expect an answer borne out by the experience of an inward-turning self towards its own 'landscape' that a new breed of mental scientists could envisage a final and totally mechanistic solution. Such an outcome would certainly have been repugnant to the initial questioners, but their shock would be naïvely founded. For the questions they ask *in that particular way* constitute a quite definite class. Writing in 1830, Abercrombie shrewdly observed that questions of this sort, regarding the processes of the mind, seek to ascertain "how it performs them".¹ "On this subject," he notes,

"we find great differences among philosophers. . . . Some appear to have spoken in too unqualified terms respecting various and distinct FACULTIES of the mind, and have enumerated a variety of these, corresponding to the various mental operations. Dr. Brown, on the other hand, has followed a very different course, by referring all our mental processes to the two principles of simple and relative suggestion."

(Inquiries, 184-5)

¹Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 184.

If mental 'faculties' are, by their nature and definition, *empowered* to attend, abstract or associate, it becomes reasonable to ask *how* this or that power or faculty is or can be implemented (which is simply another way of asking 'how does it function?'). Even the more 'refined' question, 'what does it *mean* to attend to something or to remember it?' can be swung around to join hands with 'show me *in what way* attention is necessary for retention and recall.' It is possible, in other words, to convert conceptual clarifications into introspective soundings, into common-sense appeals to what each of us supposedly knows about the mechanics of his everyday apprehensions.

Stewart's philosophy of intellectual education includes the idea of training the attentions of the young (Elements, I, vi, 338) and of honing the instrument of memorization while its powers are greatest (ibid., 373). It is interesting to note that Abercrombie himself tries to shift the ground of the question from *how* to *what*. "My object", he states, "has been simply to inquire *what* the mind does, without entering on the question *how* it does so." (Inquiries, 186) Naturally he wants to avoid identification either with the faculty psychology of Reid and Stewart or with the rather different hypotheses of that "eloquent and ingenious writer", Dr. Brown (ibid., p. 185). Nevertheless, the mental "operations" which he unfolds lend themselves as answers to queries about how

habit influences attention or how attention conditions memory. It might be true to say that even those writers who, following Hume's lead, made a point of distinguishing the study of *effects* from the study of causes were not always clear in their minds (hence conceptually) where the one left off and the other began. The mere temptation to *explain* the operation of those effects gave rise to that slippery question 'how?' Perhaps the only way out was to abandon altogether the appeal to experience, the "rule of faith" in classical empiricism.

The same type of question, whatever its historical matrix, will tend to breed answers of a similar species. That species I have endeavoured to describe as broadly mechanistic. It addresses itself to the framework of Galilean physics out of which, according to Husserl, was born modern naturalistic or behaviouristic psychology. As Aron Gurwitsch interprets this idea, "modern psychology has developed not only in historical but also in *logical continuity* with modern physics."² Thus that seemingly

²"The Phenomenological and the Psychological Approach to Consciousness", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, vol. XV (March, 1955), p. 312. He goes on to say: "What has to be stressed is not so much the definition of psychological concepts in analogy to concepts of physics. More important is the reference to physics in the very formulation of psychological problems, especially problems concerning perception. To account for perception, the psychologist accepts, and starts from, the universe as conceived in

innocent interrogative 'how' (with its ready accomplice 'why')³ is apt to lead an unsuspecting 'mind' into the inviting arms of 'matter'. For this reason, even the most 'behaviouristic' of our ordinary-language analysts feels obligated to pose *new questions*.

There are "boundary conditions", asserts Michael Polanyi, to which we must always be alert. The boundary conditions of the laws of mechanics, for example, do not rule out "the operational principles which define a machine"; conditions binding muscular action may be controlled "by a pattern of purposive behaviour, like that of going for a walk".⁴ Similarly, operational principles governing the

physical science and considers the human organism as a physical system acted upon by physical events. Independently of any theories to be advanced, the very problems which the theories of psychology are meant to solve are determined by allowance for the science of physics." (pp. 312-3) Husserl himself was relentless in his condemnation of "the deceptive image of a scientific method modeled on that of the physicochemical method"; he adds: "It is not without significance that the fathers of experimentally exact psychology were physiologists and physicists. The true method follows the nature of the things to be investigated and not our prejudices and preconceptions". Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, tr. Quentin Lauer (N.Y.: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 102.

³For we seek an explanation of these processes in terms of "the laws and relations by which they are regulated". Abercrombie, Inquiries, 68.

⁴Michael Polanyi, "The structure of Consciousness" (1965), in Knowing and Being (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 216-7.

mind are not apprehended in those governing its physiology; nor do they "interfere with" or overrule the physiological mechanisms, although they seem clearly to rely on the "services" of the latter.⁵ At stake is what Polanyi calls a "comprehensive entity", *co-operating* with mutual and tolerant exclusion on two levels. In fairness to Brown, it was just this sort of distinction which enabled him to resist the clamouring of mechanists in his time for the complete and sweeping destruction of Cartesian dualism. That they were not 'clamouring' in this sense but were, instead, moving quietly towards a materialist hypothesis might depend on how much force and irony one attaches to the following statement by Joseph Priestley:

"I am rather inclined to think that, though the subject is beyond our comprehension at present, man does not consist of two principles, so essentially different from one another as *matter* and *spirit*, which are always described as having not one common property, by means of which they can effect or act upon each other; the one occupying space, and the other not only not occupying the least imaginable portion of space, but incapable of bearing relation to it; insomuch that, properly speaking, my mind is no more, *in my body*, than it is in the moon. I rather think that the whole man is of some *uniform composition*, and that the property of perception, as well as the other powers that are termed *mental*, is the result (whether necessary or not) of such an organical structure as that of the brain. Consequently, that the whole man becomes extinct at death, and that we have no hope of surviving the grave but what is derived from the scheme of revelation."⁶

⁵ Ibid., p. 221.

⁶ Joseph Priestley, "Introductory Essays" to Hartley's Theory of The Human Mind (2nd ed.; London, 1790), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

The opening phrase, "I am rather inclined to think", and the final bow to divine revelation were probably deceptive enough to fool some of the 'immaterialists' only some of the time.

It is worth remembering that Brown first drew attention to his talents by observing the *scientific* as well as the philosophic discrepancies in Erasmus Darwin's Zoonomia.⁷ Indeed, if one gives credence to the view of one American historian, Brown's efforts were *confined* to the sphere of scientific innovation. "The systems of Brown and Erasmus Darwin were foundations for scientific work in physiological psychology and biology, but they had no contribution to make toward moral and religious knowledge."⁸ I regard this assessment as myopic and

⁷"Mr. Brown is the first formidable antagonist whom the novelty of Dr. Darwin's theories has provoked. He has entered on his investigation, however, with all the respect due to the great talents and extensive knowledge of the author whom he criticizes; and whatever may have been our partiality to the beautiful fabric which he attempts to overthrow, we must consider him as a champion worthy of being admitted to the encounter. . . . this book is a very respectable specimen of the author's talents and attainments." Review of Brown's Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin in the Monthly Review, June and July, 1799. (Welsh attributes this review to "Dr. Duncan, senior"; see Welsh, 67.)

⁸Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy (N.Y.: Columbia U.P., 1946), p. 247. Schneider maintains further that Brown was "more nearly on the borderline of academic 'science'. He became the chief object of opposition among theologians, because they felt

misleading, but obviously an impression had been made and left in the memories of Brown's students, both Scottish and foreign.

Darwin had clearly been on his way to erecting a one-tier system. It was Darwin's belief, notes a more recent commentator,

"that all appetites and all intellectual life can be explained on the basis of physiology. Analyze organic life with its muscles, nerves and fibres, and you will discover the source of not only the physical, but also the intricate moral and emotional life of mankind."⁹

Ideas were thought by Darwin to consist of "contractions", "motions" or "configurations" of "fibres" in our sense organs (Obs., 111). Brown takes this 'definition' to mean that of the two "effects" brought about by the "action of the external object" - the "organic affection" and the "mental affection", the one causally preceding

that his 'rationalism,' as they usually labeled Brown's attempt at a thoroughly mechanistic or associationist psychology, was headed for materialism." (ibid.) It should be remarked in this connection, however, that Brown's early paper from the Inquiry, entitled "On the Credibility of Miracles", was republished in A Collection of Theological Essays from Various Authors, edited by George R. Noyes (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1856). At least *some* of his better admirers, therefore, *were* theologians; for whatever theological category Brown's views might fit, there can be no doubt that his religious faith was deeply felt and unflinchingly expressed.

⁹ J. V. Logan, The Poetry and Aesthetics of Erasmus Darwin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1936), p. 21.

the other, - *ideas* belong "simply" to the former. Darwin does not help his case by applying the term 'idea' variously to both parts of the process (Obs., 113), but he is, after all, endeavouring to prove "the identity of the mental, and organic affections" (Obs., 116). Ideas are said to be analogous to "muscular motions", from the comparison of which Darwin ascertains a "similarity of nature" (Obs., 117). The argument between Brown and Darwin then boils down to a discussion of the times relative to the 'performance' of ideas and muscular motions. The debate is neither trivial nor isolated.

If Brown were to concede that *ideas* and *fibrous motions* might be 'clocked' - their actions being of a similar and measurable kind, - he would leave an opening through which Darwin's biological 'reductivism' (cf. Obs., 117) could boldly penetrate. The illustrations cited from the Zoonomia are, to Brown's mind, inconclusive:

"The time taken up in performing an idea . . . is much the same as that taken up in performing a muscular motion. A musician can press the keys of an harpsichord with his fingers, in the order of a tune he has been accustomed to play, in as little time as he can run over those notes in his mind. So we many times in an hour cover our eyeballs with our eyelids without perceiving that we are in the dark; hence the perception or idea of light is not changed for that of darkness in so small a time as the twinkling of an eye.

(quoted, Obs., pp. 118-9)

An initial objection to the identification stems from Darwin himself: the time-span of a dream is commonly

believed to be of "inconceivable" rapidity, such that between the moment when our bedroom-door is pushed ajar and the instant of our awakening, "we sometimes dream a whole history of thieves or fire" (quoted, Obs., 119). Lacking modern experimental apparatus with which to test and observe the speed of the dream in relation to muscular reaction, Darwin has nevertheless 'speculated wisely'. But Brown is surely right to note the faulty conclusions drawn by that ingenious speculator. If the ideas in our minds during sleep can be measured (an assumption which Brown is not quite prepared to make), and if their speed exceeds that of muscular movement, the clocking-procedure proves only that the "performing" times of ideas and muscular action differ. It certainly does not prove that ideas *are* fibrous motions or, less strongly, that they operate according to identical or similar principles.

The case of the musician is rather more perplexing in so far as it tacitly assumes that there is a time for both physical and mental events. Brown states only that "the sounds were the result of muscular motions, and [that] the relative time, as well as tone, of the notes, is associated in the mind" (Obs., 119). We know that a musician sometimes 'keeps time' by tapping his foot, and in that sense we might be able to compare his *performance time*, based on the sounds emitted from the harpsichord, with his *musical time*, as expressed by this rhythmical

tapping. Some might argue (Ryle, for example) that any further appeal to a musical counting "in his head" is not only a redundant but also a misdirected feature of what it means for the musician to know at what tempo to play a particular composition. Brown's sole concern in this matter is to bifurcate the muscular and mental activities so that he may leave adequate room on the side of the latter for a preview of the musical 'intention' of the artist. In terms of his model of "affections", this means that the transition from organic to mental affections must function for both perceiving and willing. In perception, the fibrous motions *precede* the sensorial ones; in volition the process is reversed (Obs., 111 and 118). We have an idea in our minds and a desire to express it: if that idea involves a musical sequence 'understood' in a certain way, then this *pre-conception* has a validity quite apart from what may or may not happen after the fingers strike the keys. Execution is thus carefully segregated from either our memory of a tune or our attention to its 'running off' or from both. Actual clock-time (or better still, metronome time) may or may not coincide with the inner (biological) sense that this is how the running-off should take place. The conception, whatever its form, will not bend to physical quantification.

The 'eyelid' case is perhaps less important than

the two previous examples. The blinking or "twinkling" of our eyes is scarcely an operation for which we would want to have an 'idea' every time it feels necessary. Nor would it be to our advantage if we had to remember to blink each time or to pay heed to the execution. It is the sort of thing which we leave entirely to organic efficiency, becoming conscious of it only when we are told not to blink or not to reopen our eyes. (Even then we often have to struggle against ingrained habit.) Brown suggests that it is "because the organic affection, necessary to the production of the new idea, cannot be changed, in so short a time" (Obs., 119-20). In this instance, he might better have given credit to the performative skill of the body, instead of attributing to it again that lassitude so frequently mentioned. What is significant about his rebuttal of Darwin is the interest which he shows in mental and bodily interaction. This display of attention was not unbecoming in an age which regarded seriously the deterioration of the body as a reliable guide to the conduct of the mind from youth to old age. As Stewart pointed out, there is something to be learned from ascertaining which things we forget first, and why we become preoccupied with childhood reminiscences when we finally cease to attend to present realities (Elements, I, vi, 356 ff).

The idea of memory gives Brown yet another weapon

with which to combat Darwin's reductivism. The principle that, by definition, *all* ideas are fibrous motions will necessarily extend to such ideas as those "of judgment, wisdom, memory, &c." (Letter to Dr. Darwin, 28 Dec., 1796); in other words, to "our reflex ideas" (Obs., 127). Darwin had argued that reflex ideas were "partial repetitions of our perceptions" (ibid.), but he did not explain what sort of 'contractions' were commensurate with 'partial repetitions'. Brown endeavours to come to his aid: perhaps Darwin has in mind *fractions* of a contraction, like a half or a third; or perhaps different *degrees* of contraction; or again, a *numerical* difference among the fibres contracted (Obs., 128). The fractional view, however, is outrageous. The possibility of degree can be rejected on the grounds that every contraction, according to Darwin's theory, must pass through the stage of irritaion, "partial renovations" of a previous contraction from any other source thereby being excluded. And the suggestion that the "number of fibres" contracted can in any way alter or determine the "simple" idea of, for example, 'whiteness' is absurd. The idea of whiteness with one fibre more or less is still the idea of whiteness. (Although Brown uses a general term here he has in mind, I believe, a particular instance of a 'white something-or-other'.) Brown concludes that "my idea of memory cannot, therefore, be the contraction of a less number of

fibres: for these fibres will still constitute the idea of whiteness" (Obs., 129). His concern at this point is to ascertain what takes place when we attend to an impression of a stimulus *for the second time*. What happens, for example, "when the same circular coin is, a second time, pressed on the hand"? The number of fibres contracted must remain the same; and yet "the idea of memory exists" (Obs., 129). If this is the case, "reflex ideas . . . do not differ from our original perceptions, in the number of their fibres" (ibid.).

But the screw turns more tightly still. Suppose we allow Darwin his numerical differentiation:

"the contracted fibre, which constitutes the idea of memory, must have existed, in the same state, in the original perception, and the first motion of the organ of sense have been thus attended with the belief of a previous similar sensation."

(Obs., 129-30)

In the language of the Lectures, we have a 'conception' accompanied by a feeling of the *relation* of 'priority', of something 'past' which, by its 'similarity' to the present conception, is once more realized. But if a "certain stimulus" acts on us "alone", in a single un-repeated instance, an "idea of memory" will have been produced "without any object of remembrance" (Obs., 130). At first glance, much of Brown's argument appears to elude our grasp. In the first place, he has failed to explain what he means by saying that the idea of memory

and the original perception must exist "in the same state". Secondly, he introduces the notion of a "belief" which we can only assume, on Darwin's terms, must be another 'contraction'. A four-fibre *perception*, however, is not identical with a three-fibre *idea of memory*, and the x-fibre *belief* (apparently linked to the latter) has not been *accounted for* in terms of either.

Perhaps Brown is trying to suggest that, whatever their numerical difference, the contractions which constitute both the *perception* and the *memorial idea* would be the same by virtue of their relation to a *common factor*, Q. Should this be the case, that which can be affirmed of the latter will necessarily apply to any description we might make of the former. Such a description would include *for both* the feeling of a *past* sensation Q_1 which bears a certain resemblance to the *present* sensation Q_2 . But if the contraction occurs only once, the stimulus never again repeating itself, the product will be a *complex perceptual idea* one of whose elements Q_1 is not an "object of remembrance". Darwin's theory would therefore entail the confluence of a perceptual and a memorial idea, of Q_2 and Q_1 , where *in fact* no idea of memory could have existed. In the case of the twice-pressed coin, such an idea exists as a result of there being a *second* impression on the hand, or as Brown states, "of the second perception" (Obs., 129). Thus perceptual ideas differ from memorial

ones not as being two variations of the same contraction (however these variations might be conceived) but as being the products respectively of single and successive contractions. Darwin has been guilty of overloading his contractual hypothesis.

Brown repeated his objections under another form in a subsequent letter to Darwin (28 December, 1796).

"My idea of memory" he wrote,

"is itself a particular idea; and if ideas be fibrous motions, my idea of memory must be the contraction of certain fibres. I therefore ask what those fibres are. Let us suppose a person born with the sense of hearing only, let a bell vibrate a second time. The contraction of the fibres is in this case the same; yet he will not have the same idea *alone*. He will be conscious of a previous similar sensation, that is to say, of memory; nor can this be resolved into association, for association cannot take place between a contracted fibre and itself: it may take place between A and B, but not between A and A. Nor will he be conscious of a previous similar sensation alone. He will also receive from the second vibration the ideas of time and of number. Here then are different ideas with the same contraction."

(Welsh, 54-5)

Here again the emphasis is placed on the similarity (or 'sameness') of the contraction. Although the bell vibrates twice, the contraction is the *same* in both instances by virtue of the relation to a common stimulus: it is a physiological reaction brought about by the vibration of a bell near at hand. We might say, following Leibniz and Hume, that the contractions were *numerically* distinct but *qualitatively* similar or 'identical'. Brown, I suspect, is quite aware of this. His basic intention,

however, is to show that "reflex ideas" are not reducible, as Darwin had suggested, to fibrous contractions.

Brown goes about this by contrasting the 'sameness' of the contraction with the 'difference' in ideas. The initial idea or conception is singular and isolated; the second necessarily complex and integrated. While the former stands alone, a wallflower without a partner, the latter is joined by an idea of memory (which, of course, is the original conception in a retentive guise) and by the "ideas of time and of number". The possibility of an "association" between the original conception and itself is ruled out as an incestuous type of logical inbreeding or perhaps as an example of the sin of conceptual narcissism. An original conception can only be said to *resemble* itself, in at least some respect, when it *re-appears* at a later time. The initial vibration of the bell is at most a 'fraction' of our 'total' conception of 'bell ringing'. Depending on the range of our experience at that moment (and Brown does not specify just how much we apprehend), this fraction may be infinitely small or large enough to include a background of other auditory objects variously sensed with different degrees of attention. Yet even this 'widening of our conception' under a 'spatial' aspect (L. XLI, 111) is deprived of the momentum which would carry it forward into the 'whole' sphere of relations in which our apprehension of 'resemblances' takes place.

That momentum is the mobility of subject and object in *temporal succession*. Discussing Valéry's philosophy of time, Georges Poulet notes appropriately:

"In place of being, things now demand to have been. They wish themselves surrounded not simply by patches and places but by causes and time. They claim the right to be annexed to a duration. They entreat the mind to set them against the background of a past, one single past, of all possible pasts."¹⁰

Brown requires the bell to vibrate *again*, experience to repeat itself. Repetition is thus the foundation on which all relations are finally built, and consequently the condition by which alone we are able to attend to, remember, judge or know anything at all.¹¹ Brown's opposition to Darwin extends far beyond the issue of the kind or number of fibrous contractions which may or may not be involved in the perceiving or conceiving of an idea. It reaches into the very heart of his philosophy of the spatial co-existence and temporal succession of both our external and internal affections. In short, the genesis of Brown's metaphysics is the *complex* nature of being. Darwin's simplifications rub against this grain.

The clocking controversy, to which I have alluded

¹⁰ Poulet, Studies in Human Time, op. cit., p. 284.

¹¹ cf. L. XXV, 12; XLV, 171: I must hold the full import of these passages in abeyance until the next chapter.

above, was to figure again in Brown's De Somno, this time in connection with at least three problems: (1) the relative strengths of the ideas of memory and perception; (2) the phenomenon of 'fatigue' or the capacity of the mind for undivided attention; and (3) once more, the 'sluggishness' of muscular motion as contrasted with the ease and speed of attention to ideas in the mind (cf. De Somno, 11-12). The first problem involves an epistemological query: how do we know which of the phenomena present before us to believe? The second and third are largely concerned with volitional puzzles: what is the 'intentional' span for both perception and reflection? if we are engaging an object, a thought or an obstacle, how long can we sustain our purpose for any of these? or again, do we sustain an argument or a difficult stratagem of reasoning in our heads with the same concentration as we would tackle a block of wood on a lathe? what are the consequences for mind and for body of inattention or distraction? To the question of ontological cogency we already have part of the answer. Perceptual phenomena have a way of forcing their 'reality' on us; failure to pay heed to them can result in chaos or disaster: a train missed, a suit scorched by the iron, Dr. Johnson's infamous sore foot. But in addition, the orderly succession of events reappearing as 'our remembrance of what happened at tx' - a succession drawn up by association from a

'confused throng of appearances', - is quite unlike a chain of induction whereby the 'shifting appearances of external things' are sorted, classified, compared and resolved. Not only similar features (Resemblance) but also dissimilar ones (Contrast) may be brought together by the application of our reasoning (Judgment) to the experience of 'random but definite items' (De somno, 11). What Brown does not consider at this stage is the integration or confluence of memory and perception in acts of recognition, at both the immediate and more abstract levels. Nevertheless, he is keen to point out that 'memory schemes', when they are 'alive and vigorous' (cf. De Somno, 6), are even more 'diverse' than their perceptual and interpretative counterparts. The free-play of memory in states of reverie or dreaming is characterized by what Bergson later explained to be a 'disinterestedness' on the part of the subject "in the present situation, in the present action".¹² That situation, described by Bergson as the condition of "common-sense",¹³ demands the "complete adjustment" of the person and his memory-images to the "sensation" at hand.¹⁴ In a statement to which Brown would almost certainly agree, Bergson concludes: "Our attention to this external and social life is the great

¹²Dreams, tr. Edwin E. Slosson (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914), p. 37.

¹³Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 56.

regulator of the succession of our internal states."¹⁵ Whatever it is, memory is not the same when it is left to its own devices: its intention undergoes a change.

At the same time, Brown recognizes that memory as 'habit' or 'reflex' is essential to the efficient operation and survival of the body (De Somno, 12). Habit-memory both eases the strain of 'mere existence' and frees attention for greater gain. Yet attention like memory has its own hum-drum routines in addition to its more rewarding or vivifying moments. Again, it is essential to our everyday survival that attention should be habit-forming; for unless we concentrate on what we are doing, utilizing to the full our accumulated experience of causes and effects, we are destined to fall into repeated error when performing even the simplest tasks. Our so-called 'lapses' of memory and attention amount to suspensions of habit and can expose the subject, often needlessly, to accident and fatality. Forgetting to remember the time, however, or to pay heed to the road might equally be regarded as familiar occurrences since it is also true that new, dazzling, or unexpected items constantly divert us from our occupations. Whether our reasoning is locked in a practical or a theoretical

¹⁵Ibid., p. 57.

quandary the distractions, notes Brown, are many and the resolve weak (ibid., 11 and 13). The interesting thing about these distractions is that they approach one as much from the perceptual as from the memorial 'environment'. I shall consider next and at some length one of Brown's most poignant illustrations of this phenomenon and some of its ramifications.

What is it, Brown wonders, which lends to the dancing-girl (*saltatrix*) her remarkable grace in directing step after step with no apparent effort? Obviously the skill acquired by long and intensive practice enters into the controlled bodily movement (ibid., 13). She does not appear to exert her 'will' over each step; indeed she does not 'consciously' perform the dance at all, if this be taken to mean that she cannot simply 'know how' to alter her moves but must, instead, watch over and direct them. Brown rightly sees the absurdity (as Ryle was later to proclaim) of 'double attention', of attending to y and attending to my attention of y. In his own dialogue on the dance, entitled 'Dance and the Soul', Valéry seized upon this complete absorption of the dancer in her art to convey that swelling silence which awaits *ex tempore* the step back into time's continuum.

"She is entirely in her closed eyes, and quite alone with her soul, in the bosom of the most intimate attention. . . .

She feels in herself that she is becoming some event.¹⁶
 With respect to the chorus of dancers as a whole, he
 remarks: "They know not what they are doing, but they do
 it like gods."¹⁷ So too of Brown's *saltatrix*.

But Brown employs the analogy of the dancing-girl
 to reach yet another insight. The perception of objects
 in the world is primarily the work of the self as agent:
 I do not merely *receive* impressions: I *act upon* them.
 Conscious experience, according to Gabriel Marcel, is a
 mixture of "pure ardour and pure receptivity"¹⁸ rather
 than simply an "absorption" or "ingestion" of items.¹⁹
 Consciousness as such is more akin to an act of "straining
 oneself towards something".²⁰ It would be misleading
 therefore, to say that our impressions in some way 'cause'
 the self to 'will' a particular course of action. That
 this may *seem* to be the case is a fault both of language

¹⁶ Collected Works, tr. Wm. McCausland Stewart
 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), IV, p. 40.

¹⁷ Ibid., 28.

¹⁸ G. Marcel, The Mystery of Being, tr. G. S. Fraser
 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1966), I, 69.

¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

²⁰ Ibid.

and of reflection. What happens, declares Brown, is that these phenomena draw out the already stirring desire, giving it a focus or an object towards which it can 'intend' a result. If, on the other hand, the perceptual impact is too great, such that first one then several items attract the agent's attention, he will be diverted from his course. An unfavourable or irregular surface - one that is either too hard or too soft, - may cause the dancing-girl to break her step and lose her balance. The sudden flash of a disturbing memory may have the same effect. In its more subtle forms, this product of "luminous" intervention (Proust) disrupts as it perhaps dilates routine perceptual situations; in its more dramatic guises, it causes us to stub the toe of disaster. *Inattention and memory*, as so conceived, are conceptual co-ordinates giving point to the inadequacies of even the most habit-bound of human activities.

Lapses of attention to external phenomena may be brought about when peripheral items in our perception obtrude themselves on the focal elements, displacing the latter while they take over and occupy the focal position. A somewhat different effect, yet one whose ultimate consequences may prove to be highly similar, occurs when the 'exterior' mode of attention gives way to the pressures of its 'interior' mode. Remembering or reflecting upon our experience brings attention to bear on

phenomena in terms of which we are logically unable to *intend* further action. We remember and reflect upon what is *past*, however 'present' it may be to our consciousness. The struggle between the 'already' determined and the 'as yet' indetermined is essentially a struggle between the interior and exterior aspects of attention. The one pulls us, either by inclination or by means unknown to ourselves, into the past; the other prepares us with almost feline intensity to launch into the future. (I have previously remarked how Cassirer read this conflict of past and future into the philosophy of Bergson.) A suggestion of 'fatigue' emerges.

Both in the Observations and in De Somno, Brown depicts physical and mental fatigue as an inability to sustain attention for long periods in either of its modes (Obs., 120-1; De Somno, 4-5). To relieve physical tiredness, we can either exercise different muscles or drift into that state of sleep where even our most strenuous 'labours' leave undisturbed the relaxing muscles and nerves. Weariness in the mind has its own peculiar diversions, and indeed its own connotations for the word 'fatigue'. "Dr. Darwin forgets," claims Brown, "that the muscular fibres are not susceptible of the uneasy sensation of fatigue, which can be felt, only by the sentient principle, or spirit of animation. There is, therefore, no analogy of the ideas, and fibrous motions, but of the ideas and motive affections of mind."

(Obs., 120)

The most unique feature of mental inattention, however, is that we seem to be unable to hold an idea or line of reasoning in our minds for any length of time (Obs., 120-1; De Somno, 11). The dancer can apply her attention and limbs to the shape of the music with a seemingly unbroken steadiness. She can 'think of nothing' except the completion of a phrase or series of phrases. In the reflective state, on the other hand, ideas jostle each other in endless disarray: memory supersedes memory; image erases image; and an argument once developed conjures up its opposite. Brown is clearly impressed (perhaps even overwhelmed) by this discovery. It becomes the basis for his sustaining principle of suggestibility and the root cause of his philosophy of mind. He begins to build the remainder of his philosophical structure on the apparently shifting sand of mental inattention. It is not *what* we receive through the senses so much as *how* we receive it that is ultimately important: the integrations, the overlaps, the emotional tinctures, the continual shading of experience, the complex evolution of actions and convictions, the wonder and delight of imagination and reminiscence, - all of these will constitute his growing fascination with his fluctuating subject, man. That this creature is the epitome of distraction is the prism through which we are able to witness his multifarious workings.

Remembering, therefore, entails our yielding attention

to something which is characterized by its 'pastness'. By the same token, it implies inattention to the sphere of action in and design on the world of objects or other individuals. In practice, most of us reveal considerable powers of recovery in swinging back and forth from action to reflection. The theoretical distinction, however, opens that frontier to exploration. Stewart is noticeably preoccupied with our "habits of inattention" (cf. A.P. II, iv, 164-5; and Elements, I, vi, 388 and 418), but he seems to have missed the full impact of his researches into human development. "It was plainly the intention of nature," he asserts,

"that our thoughts should be habitually directed to things external. . . . accordingly the bulk of mankind are not only disposed to overlook the mental phenomena, but are incapable of that degree of reflection which is necessary for their examination."

(A.P. II, iv, 164)

And later on the same page he writes:

"the bulk of mankind are so engrossed with external objects, that they overlook entirely their own mental operations, and even lose the capacity of attending to them; insomuch that the mind is compared by Locke to the eye, which sees every object around us, but cannot see itself."

As statements regarding the absence of an introspective tendency in most individuals, the above quotations do not need to be taken too seriously. Of more interest might be the question, "What does it mean to give attention to one's own 'mental operations'?" or the question, "Under what conditions might it be said that there exists an

interior mode of attention?" Nevertheless, Stewart is working towards an inference of greater note. The habits of inattention which we apparently acquire at an early age impede, in his view, both the capacity for *remembering* (Elements, I, vi, 388-92) and the power of *reflection* (A.P. II, iv, 164-5; Elements I, vi, 429). The man who awakes to this fact in his maturity has already lost the advantage of youth. At the same time, a preponderance of "solitary speculations of the closet" (Elements, I, vi, 422) distracts the understanding from its "complete and prompt command of attention to things external" (ibid.). Too much reflection, therefore, would seem to be equally misguided or unhealthy. But does this not bring us back full circle to the position regarding our attention to items within the horizon of action? Ought we to complain once more about our habits of inattention? The case is indeed circular - thus is its more obvious weakness, - but behind the confusion lies a concern to put straight the balance between 'exterior' and 'interior' attention. It is only as this balance is seen to hang on a delicate web of interlacing that the functions of attention, recognition, memory and reflection can be properly unfolded. Without the proposed balance, the order of mind must revert to a form of chaos of which the struggle between the different modes of attention was a mere harbinger.

For the moment, we must leave this operational picture of memory and attention in order to pursue still another vantage-point. We began by exploring the possibility of a purely scientific investigation into the question, with all of the accompanying baggage of method and pre-supposition which one is led to expect of such a venture. The prospects were seen to be neither remote nor vague, in so far as daring hypotheses to this end had already been put forward in Brown's time. Optimism was in the air, and it was contagious. Brown seems to have been unable to resist taking part in it. Yet in doing so, he discovered his powers of cautious and sustained analysis: tools useful for achieving philosophical gains over the optimists and even for adding to the new and exciting knowledge of mental phenomena, its elements and behaviour as well as its laws. Beyond this point, however, he proved to be the enemy, not the friend, of scientific assumptions. He resolved to work on his own in the laboratory of *mind*, eschewing the researches of his colleagues who found neural and sensory *matter* more advantageous to their designs. Indeed, it was because he could not share their purposes that Brown seems to have withdrawn, even at the threshold, from accepting the challenge of a final reduction. I shall argue later that his highly sensitive understanding of art, morality and religion harnessed him to a different sort of vision for man. Meanwhile, I shall measure the

possibility of yet another and perhaps more perplexing aspiration.

FITTING THE SIZE OF A DEFINITION

It is not wonderful, that we should remember best the objects to which we pay most attention, since this is only to say, that we remember best the objects on which we have dwelt longest, and with greatest interest, and which we have, therefore, known most accurately.

(L. XXXII)

Rejecting the view from scientific space, we might yet see hope from the summits of 'logical space'. In its very general form, this latter view suggests that if one uses words in a certain way - proposing a definition or setting up a language, - then one is responsible for holding to all of the implications which follow for other terms or statements one might choose to employ. Historical revisionism aside such a view would, of course, emanate largely from the twentieth, not the eighteenth, century. The latter, I have suggested, was willing to sell philosophical insight for scientific proof if and where it could get it; at least willing in France if not Germany (in spite of Christian Wolff, Tetens and even Goethe), and in 'Lunar' England if not orthodox Scotland. The point here is not so much that eighteenth-century philosophers eschewed logic - that would entail, among other things, that they tolerated inconsistency, - but rather

that they were interested in any *details* regarding man's experience which might generate more consistent theories about it. I agree with Zora Schaupp, however, in reference to Condillac, that "neither he nor his contemporaries had a very clear idea of the kind of facts which would throw light upon the problems of philosophy".¹ They were fishing in a large and relatively unknown pond and might appear to show a disproportionate amount of enthusiasm over the discovery of a new species. Nevertheless, the approach by way of logical and conceptual analysis will certainly appear to some to be more suitable to the philosopher's task and less unworthy, in its aspirations, of his special calling.

The trick here is to ask the kinds of questions which will stimulate conceptual revelations without at the same time dressing these up as 'answers' or 'factual solutions'. Since introspection was once deemed to be a 'science' analogous to chemistry, and was still the philosopher's 'art' in Brown's time, this trick would hardly have satisfied those who found it thoroughly sensible to look within themselves. Yet not a few of the questions which we might pose today were certainly

¹Zora Schaupp, "The Naturalism of Condillac", University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism, no. 6, p. 23.

part of the subterranean current giving rise to the speculations of such men as Locke, Reid, and Brown. Does it make sense, for example, to say that one *remembers* something to which one had never paid *attention*? Indeed, can we ever know that we *have* attended to a particular except through our memory of it? If 'impressions' are the kinds of things which are 'imprinted' on the 'mind' (Locke and company) or 'brain' (Hobbes and his followers), then their 'retention' by that faculty or organ is a dual function of our capacity to 'attend' to things in the first place and of our ability to 'reproduce' or 'recall' them at some later stage.

The logic underlying this empirical structure would seem to be that the notion of *retaining* presupposes the idea of *obtaining*. This may sound like a rephrasing of the familiar Aristotelian dictum, *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*, but the emphasis has been placed on the *manner* in which items take their place 'in the senses' and in which they determine their own future 'in the intellect'. The theory is that unless these items are acquired *in a certain fashion* (that is, attentively), they will fail to leave their mark in *just that way* which alone permits of retention. An extension of this theory, taken from Erasmus Darwin, will perhaps elucidate the point.

In the Zoonomia, Darwin argues that *ocular spectra*

(variously described as "coloured spots", "phosphenes" or "after-images") are the result of our concentration on a particular type of object under severe lighting conditions. His experiment takes this form:

"Place a circular piece of red silk about an inch in diameter on a sheet of white paper in a strong light. . . . Look for a minute on this area, or till the eye becomes somewhat fatigued, and then, gently closing your eyes, and shading them with your hand, a circular green area of the same apparent diameter becomes visible in the closed eye. This green area is the colour reverse to the red area, which had been previously inspected. . . . Hence it appears that a part of the retina, which had been fatigued by contraction in one direction, relieves itself by exerting the antagonist fibres, and producing a contraction in an opposite direction, as is common in the exertions of our muscles."

(Zoonomia, 3rd ed., I, 18)

The importance which Darwin attaches to the studied gaze on the object in question (to the point at which the stress becomes too great, thereby breaking attention) is revealed in an earlier letter to Benjamin Franklin in which he prescribes that the subject fix his gaze on "luminous objects" for "some time".² Letting the eye wander intermittently around the room simply does not meet the requirement of *fixed attention*. Thus, the very manner and assertiveness of our perception (or what might be another way of saying the same thing, our

²Letter to B. Franklin, 24 January 1744; quoted by Desmond King-Hele, The Essential Writings of Erasmus Darwin (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), p. 31.

'attentiveness') directly determines the nature and degree of the retained image.

Darwin's insight is ill-defined and experimentally clumsy, but the idea was to take root in the minds of Goethe, Helmholtz and later William James. Further distinctions were forthcoming, distinctions based on the 'length of optical exposure' and resulting in terms such as "primary positive after-images" (James), "memory-after-images" and "ordinary after-images" (Fechner), and "after-reverberations" (Richet).³ Experiments were even made to test the effects of "inattention" in extending the range of memory-images available to conscious appraisal.⁴ Again, it is the proportional interplay between attending to an object and the *retentissement* of it (Richet) which proves fascinating to these men. While it might be desirable to forestall the discussion with a discriminatory gesture towards their status as psychologists, the fact remains that they were toying with problems of immense philosophical importance; problems, I might add, which were more than just puzzling to Brown and his immediate predecessors. Eighteenth-century epistemologies might

³Wm. James, Principles of Psychology (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1901), I, 645-7.

⁴Ibid., 646 (Exner).

very well be seen to rise or fall on the basis of at least some sort of resolution to their knotty implications. Indeed, the eighteenth-century suppositions in this regard are rather overwhelming in their scope. Even a brief pre-Brownian review of them confronts us like a labyrinth. Perhaps it is wise to remember, however, that far from revealing an easy exit that same maze trapped, convinced, and to some extent exhilarated nineteenth-century minds as well. Hippolyte Taine still speaks with an eighteenth-century voice when he asserts:

"Whatever may be the kind of attention, voluntary or involuntary, it always acts alike; the image of an object or event is capable of revival, and of complete revival, *in proportion to the degree of attention* with which we have considered the object or event."⁵

The quantification of attention, which owes its beginning to someone like Erasmus Darwin, is virtually consummated.

Initially, however, attention is confined to a 'handy-man' role helping *repetition*, Locke tells us, "to the fixing any *ideas in the memory*" (EHU, II, x, 3). The real task is performed by the impression itself which, assuming it has sufficient force, arouses either a *pleasurable* or a *painful* response. "The great business of the senses", then, is "to make us take notice of what hurts or

⁵On *Intelligence*, I, 77-82; quoted by James, op. cit., p. 671; italics mine.

advantages the body" (ibid.). Our attention is alerted by the conjunction of an incoming impression and its commensurate reaction. Within Locke's retentive vocabulary, of course, we find the nucleus of the "storehouse" theory of memory (ibid., sect. 2) combined with the notion of a "stamp" (sect. 4) or a "print" (sect. 5) which is the 'content' of that repository. Yet Locke is aware that the mind does not remain entirely passive in this operation. Attention, or the mind in a more active state, *can* determine the 'degree' to which the storehouse can acquire and retain its imprints. "Concerning the several *degrees of lasting*", writes Locke,

"wherewith *ideas* are imprinted on the *memory*, we may observe that some of them have been produced in the understanding by an object affecting the senses *once only* and no more than once; others that have more than once offered themselves to the senses have yet been *little taken notice of* [*italics mine*]: the mind either *heedless*, as in children, or *otherwise employed*, as in men, intent only on one thing, *not setting the stamp deep into itself.*"

(ibid., sect. 4)

It would seem from these remarks that Locke considers attention to be a sufficient but not a necessary ground for retention. If one does 'take notice of' an impression, it is bound to stick, the important thing, however, being the proportionate 'degree of lasting'. Presumably when the attention is keen, the imprint is set more deeply into the mind which has regarded it. If there is little or no attention given to the idea as it is laying itself into the repository, then it is apt to leave "no more

footsteps or remaining characters of [itself] than shadows do flying over fields of corn" (*ibid.*). The print, that is, fails to 'take'. This is surely a classic illustration of a mechanical vision, one that is strongly reminiscent of Hooker's idea (also in the seventeenth-century) that memory is a proper 'organ of sense' which receives its 'directives' from the 'soul' (or from Locke's viewpoint, "attention"). Finally, while it may be true for Locke to say that attention is a *sufficient* precondition of memory, this statement is itself limited since it applies *only* to the casting of an imprint on the mould of retention. Recollection, in its turn, presupposes retention, but the latter is not a sufficient condition of it. The fact that we have retained certain imprints 'on the mind' does not imply that we will recollect (or reproduce) them: they may remain buried or dormant for life, although there is a problem as to how we should know that. At any rate, attention does not directly guarantee this 'higher level' of memory. It is *only* the first of at least *three* steps.

Among various others, Stewart, James and W. P. Pillsbury were to argue that the *kind of attention* given to original phenomena determines the *kind of recall* - whether correct or erroneous, - which may eventually take place. Pillsbury is quite emphatic about this:

"recall is always directed by attention".⁶ This is a separate matter which we shall examine in due course, yet one which leaves unresolved or unstated Locke's initial assumptions regarding memory and attention *per se*. There seem to be two questions involved here: (1) if we attend to X, will we recollect X? and (2) if we attend *closely* to X, are we apt to recall it *more accurately*? The answer to the first is a very contingent 'perhaps', and to the second a highly probable 'yes'. Although we find no real certainty in either, this is their only point of similarity.

After Locke and on the Continent, the ambivalence of passive and active functions continues to perplex philosophical writers. The receiving of external stimuli is reconfirmed as the epistemological base from or on which higher mental operations are built: sensations become the 'first truths' of the new wave of empirical investigators. Unfortunately, it is easier to decide in favour of this presupposition than it is to resolve the difficulties of 'receivership'; for the function of '*having an impression*' can be viewed from either a passive or an active standpoint. Condillac sets the trap for himself, and some of his followers, Laromiguière in particular, are quick to push him in. Condillac, in his Essai, had

⁶W. B. Pillsbury, Attention (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1908), p. 148.

defined attention as "that operation by which our consciousness with reference to certain perceptions increases so vividly that they seem to be the only things of which we are aware" (sec. ii, ch. 1). This same "consciousness" which fastens itself on to "certain perceptions" is no mere recipient: it engages and draws the impression into itself, bringing 'these' into focus as it simultaneously rejects 'those'. On the other hand, the very conditions of impingement determine the possibilities for their admission to the focal zone. The more vividly they appear, the better their chances. If we turn to the Traité, we find that the conditions of impingement are, in fact, held to be the substance of Condillac's definition of attention. "At the first smell", he notes, "our statue's capacity of feeling is entirely due to the impression which is made upon its sense organ. This is what I call attention." (Pt. I, ii, 1) One cannot feel something which makes no impingement on the senses, nor can one feel something which does not make itself felt. Only when an object or external stimulus *makes itself felt* can we really be said to be attentive to it, and even then the force must be strong enough to pull us out of reverie should we happen to be quite 'lost' in it. According to Condillac's stratagem, however, the statue reaches that stage of distraction somewhat later. In the beginning, there is only the *feeling* in an organ which is our *attention* to

an incoming stimulus.

Yet attention is not confined to this seemingly passive role. As Condillac unfolds his doctrine of memory, attention gains its spurs. "The smell is not wholly forgotten", he claims,

"when the odiferous substance which caused it has ceased to act on the sense organ, *for the attention retains it*, and an impression remains stronger or weaker according as the attention has been more or less vivid. *This is memory. . . .*"⁷

(*Traité*, I, ii, 6; italics mine)

Once again, "certain perceptions" are seen to be engaged and drawn into "consciousness". Clearly, without attention there would be no retention: the latter, in fact, is the predicative development of the former ('attending retains' is something like 'judging synthesizes'). It is part of the definition of attention, therefore, to say not only that it is a "capacity of feeling" when an organ

⁷In the *Essai*, Condillac gives a more 'linguistic' analysis of memory, defining it there as the *name* or verbal *sign* of a particular past experience. Thus, when we 'remember' an object or event, we can be said to be 'assigning a name' to the experience, not 'reliving' it. Like Tetens, he seems ready to distinguish between a recurring *image* and its *meaning* (cf. A. Wolf, *A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the 18th Century* (2nd ed.; N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1961), II, 690.) Imagination now assumes the task of reviving or 'making present again' the original perception. The author of the *Traité* apparently overlooks this distinction. (See Schaupp, *op. cit.*, p. 37) Within our present context, however, the 'psychological' analysis of the *Traité* will serve our elucidations more adequately.

is "impressed" but also that it is a capacity for 'retaining' when the "cause" of that impression is no longer present or active. There is, however, an indeterminate step, or rather a bridge linking the two parts of the definition together. The statue does not feel sensory impingements on one occasion alone. It feels them repeatedly, successively and/or simultaneously. The impingements constitute a kind of bombardment stretched out over a period of time. Of course, the statue has as yet no apprehension of time, but at least one can say that it feels *more than once*. If this is the case, it attends *by definition* to recurring impingements. This factor marks a new and reserve capacity, one which allows the statue to feel and *feel again without loss*. Condillac states the matter quite dramatically:

"If there remained no recollection of former modifications, then on the occasion of each sensation it would believe itself to be feeling for the first time. Whole years might be swallowed up in each present moment. *Were its attention always limited to one mode of being it would never be able to take account of two together, and never be able to judge of their relations. It would enjoy or suffer without having yet either desire or fear.*"

(Traité, I, ii, 5; italics mine)

We have feelings and we remember them; more than this, however, we attend to both the 'having' and the 'remembering', and we can do so by embracing both together under the same act of mind. Condillac does not explain the intricate mechanism of this operation (as Bergson and Husserl were

later to do, again in different ways), but he intimates a progression of ensuing "transformations" which take their start from this critical *dual capacity*. Although attention and memory can be regarded as joint favourites for the title of '*primary transformations of sensation*', the onus clearly lands on attention, without which there would be no memory at all unless at the subconscious or biological level. This was certainly Brown's verdict on the affair (L. XXXI, 482). The curious feature of Condillac's account is the suggestion in the second definition of attention that 'retention' falls more readily under *its* class-scope than it does under that of memory. Condillac does not explicitly say so, but he might well have asserted that attention *retains* its feeling by virtue of its inherent function of *holding to a perception*. 'Paying attention' is *fastening on to* the subject at hand, and so is much stronger than, for example, 'noticing' or 'catching a glimpse of'. When we pay heed to something, we expend both mental and physical *energy*. Condillac thus paved the way for the eventual investigations into the nature and degree of "muscular effort" expended in attention. Brown was among those philosopher-psychologists who took up the cause (cf. L. XXXII, 493).

Before turning to some critical variations on Condillac's theme, we might note briefly the views of two German thinkers, Christian Wolff and Nicolai Tetens.

Both maintain that an epistemology which assumes the passivity of mind cannot survive a rigorous analysis of experience. That we are the recipients of a sensory assault they do not deny; what they do object to is the suggestion that our *awareness* of the assault is a mere 'reflection' of the encroaching phenomena. The mind is not the sort of thing to sit back on its haunches. It possesses numerous 'powers' or 'faculties', Wolff argues, and it uses them to entertain judgments. Among its activities are the operations of attention and memory: *from* them we acquire 'knowledge' of the world and *into* them we feed the passions and dispositions of our capacity for 'feeling' that world. Wolff declares that attention helps to bring about the 'clarification' of ideas; otherwise the perceptual array (or disarray) would remain aimless and indistinct. As Brown himself affirmed, in the moment of attention "the landscape become to our vision altogether different" (L. XXXI, 485). Nevertheless, if it is called upon to accommodate a vast assortment of ideas, its 'efficiency' decreases proportionately.⁸ (Nineteenth-century psychologists were to lend support to Wolf's insight with a considerable amount of experimental research.) Attention also steers recollection through the natural association of ideas to the

⁸See A. Wolf, op. cit., p. 691.

desired object. The will to recall an object charges attention with the task, first of fixing a retentive 'field', then of fixing a point within that field. The notion that we recall a *whole field* of past experience, instead of isolated bits and pieces, is a foreshadowing of Hamilton's law of "redintegration". Brown's associationism led him to the same direction. The primary function of attention, therefore, is to illuminate those ideas in which we have a decided interest. That light shines through the receding corridors of past experience.

Teten's approach to memory, on the other hand, bears a strong taste of physiology. His Philosophical Essays on Human Nature, published in 1777, resurrect both the perceptual complexes of British empiricism, with their overlapping combinations of impressions and ideas, and the generative hypothesis of the French 'sensationalists'. Some account had to be given of the fact that sensations were not only 'felt' but 'embraced'. Their residual nature might be termed 'ideas' or 'higher transformations', but the important thing was their continuing activity in the mind. The physiological model on which Tetens bases his theory of retention is the same one which puzzled and intrigued Erasmus Darwin, namely *ocular spectra* or visual after-images'.⁹ If the analogy is extended, it would

⁹Ibid., pp. 689-90.

appear that each instance of sensory impingement *leaves a trace* commensurate with its nature and degree of assault. This 'trace' becomes the substance of a definition of memory-activity, for it is the measure of a sensation's survival in the reflective life of the mind. Teten's physiological explanation for this involves a slow oscillation of neural fibres: what we term 'memory' is, as it were, "a lasting echo" of its sensory origins.¹⁰ Indeed, it is to the retained element that we essentially devote our attention. From the inner side, however, feeling rushes to our sensory experience in order to render assistance to the act of attention. Left on its own, the latter will operate at best ineffectively; with feeling it acquires both impetus and focus. Whatever the origin of that subjective state, we can say of feeling that (to quote Cassirer) "it represents a mutation within ourselves, and we accept it as immediately given without relating it to external objects."¹¹ Thus, sensory traces must ultimately be considered as fusions of *received* and *accepting* elements. Reflective analysis may separate these two aspects of the

¹⁰A. A. Roback, History of Psychology and Psychiatry (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1962), p. 52.

¹¹E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, tr. Koelln and Pettegrove (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 116.

phenomenon but, as Brown was to argue, in the form in which they engage us memories are 'mixtures' of external and internal affections, of what comes in and what goes out to meet it. In a sense, therefore, that which is retained *is* that which we want to heed, and *vice versa*. Memory and attention have become two sides of the same experience. With Tetens we are thus farther from Locke and closer to Brown, for the ideas of retention and recollection are now joined and sustained by the mutual feature of *desire*.

In France, the shift away from Condillac follows much the same pattern. Attention is sharply distinguished from passive, primitive sensation; it is viewed as the 'first activity', the primeval effort, as it were, of the soul; passion, volition and habit are seen to govern this effort like a woman behind the throne; and lastly attention joins forces with the association of ideas to comprise the *sine qua non* of memory. Prévost makes this last point quite emphatically. "If these two causes cease to operate", he declares, "there is no longer recollection (*souvenir*).

¹²See W. B. Pillsbury, The History of Psychology (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929), pp. 117-22. Pillsbury devotes a section to Tetens (to his mind a grossly underrated thinker), and wonders what developments *would have transpired* in the nineteenth-century had Tetens emerged in place of Kant as the major figure in late eighteenth-century German philosophy.

And when one is suppressed (*supprimée*), memory is strongly altered" (Essais de Philosophie, vol. I, Bk. IV, Pt. I, sec. 1, ch. 2, 118). Memory without attention is a state of remembrance in which one is left at the mercy of *any* associations of ideas which force their way into the mind. Conversely, memory without such associations would resemble a focusing device deprived of its field of vision. Prévost reiterates Condillac's observation that attention enables us to direct ourselves towards (*se diriger*) several objects at one time with a view to apprehending what they have "in common". This particular "exercise" of attention he calls "abstraction" (Essais, Bk. IV, Pt. I, sec. 3, ch. 1). But attention under any form is "governed by volition" (Essais, Bk. IV, Pt. I, sec. 1, ch. 2), and so we are thrown back on that interior 'force' which both underscores and determines the manner in which our representations are brought before consciousness.

It became apparent to French thinkers after Condillac, as it did to Brown himself, that Condillac's fundamental error lay in the conceptual scope which he had granted to sensation. By assessing such mental functions as attention, memory, comparison and judgment in terms of our primary experiences of external stimuli, he had extended the idea of sensation far beyond its legitimate sphere. Laromiguière, for example, goes to

great lengths to disprove the contention that sensation and attention are "inseparable", the latter being only a 'modification' of the former.¹³ His task is made more difficult by the fact that the supporters of Condillac viewed the soul as being "in an active state when it feels (or senses)" (Leçons, no. 6, 114). Therefore, it is not enough for him merely to distinguish between the inherent *passivity* of sensation and *activity* of attention. A careful restructuring of the conceptual field is required. He agrees with his opponents that the soul cannot 'suffer' and 'be inactive' at one and the same time. He reasons, however, that the activity does not manifest itself in the same instant as the sensation of, for example, pain and that it is certainly not a modification of it. "It is a phenomenon of a nature completely opposite" (ibid., 118). The implication of this argument is that the activity in question (or 'attention') arrives on the scene *after the event* and yet *in time* to catch the aftermath. (Tetens, it will be recalled, had consigned attention to the perception in its 'immediately retained' form, that is, as it initially begins its recession into

¹³P. Laromiguière, Leçons de Philosophie (6th ed.; Paris, 1844); Sixième Leçon: "Objections relatives à l'activité de l'ame et à la nature de l'attention", pp. 114-31.

the 'past'.) Although his insight has every appearance of being a factual inference, Laromiguière obviously wants to separate the terms of sensory and reflective experience. It is into the latter category that attention should properly fall.

Nevertheless, he makes a concession to Condillac with respect to "involuntary attention" (*ibid.*, 118). When a reaction is "instinctive" (when, for example, one leaps back from a sudden flame), it would seem that the attention given to the stimulus is really inseparable from the *feeling* of it. Neither desire nor any deliberative process precedes and governs attention in this instance. And yet one clearly feels the burning sensation, for one's hand or leg takes immediate steps to remove itself: here the body is fortunately quicker than the mind. By contrast, calculated inattention to such a sensation has allowed some individuals to overrule their physiological initiative. Laromiguière is justifiably concerned about this 'pain' factor since the language of 'experiencing' (*épouvant*) lends itself to possible ambiguity. Does it denote a passive or an active function, or perhaps a combination of the two? Laromiguière suspects that Condillac was not quite sure. *I experience* many sensations but "there are very few of them", he writes,

"on which I may react voluntarily or on which I direct my attention. Just now as I speak, I am receiving through the window a multitude (*foule*) of sensations which come to me from the surrounding objects; and my attention,

if I come to give it, instead of bearing on all of these objects which I see simultaneously, bears only on one, on one sensation along."

(Leçons, no. 6, 118-9)

In short, "there are in us more sensations than there are acts of attention" (ibid., 119). Thus, whatever meaning we may attach to the notion of 'experiencing' must take into account this discrepancy between the number of times we 'hear' noises or 'see' objects and the number of occasions on which we actually 'listen to' or 'look at' those items (ibid.). A sharp pair of logical scissors will immediately find grounds to *separate* the totally "passive" *sensation* from the "essentially active" *act of attention* (ibid., 121). The latter, after all, *is* an "action", one of which we "feel the exercise" (ibid., 123), and it is properly allied to such terms as 'fixing', 'paying' and 'giving'.

Laromiguière stresses throughout the impossibility of defining attention. The "true definition" of any idea, he asserts, requires an "anterior idea" from which it can be derived (ibid., 121-2). In the case of attention, we would have to discover an "action" which is psychologically prior to it. None, however, exists. Yet through a logical evolution from this point, we are able to define "comparison" as "a double attention" to the simultaneous presence of "several objects" and "reasoning" as a "double comparison" between a number of ideas, some of which "envelope and

hide" others (ibid.). Nevertheless, certain things can be said *about* attention, and these are significant for our understanding of the shift in French thought.

In the first place, the act of attending to our sensations 'in the first instance of their recession' is a movement from the "interior to the exterior" (ibid. 121) of a person. It is a reciprocal movement which, as it were, comes to meet its counterpart in sensation which is bringing a stimulus "from the outside to the inside". This confrontation, if and when it takes place (for Laromiguière has already quoted the odds), is the only thing which saves us from complete 'ignorance' (ibid., 120). On it the entire structure of our knowledge depends. It is, he affirms, "the cause of all the changes (*changements*) which do not depend immediately on external objects" (ibid., 123). The degree in which we *attend* to what is happening to us is therefore the degree to which we shall ever become *aware* of things. Learning, as Stewart was to point out, is in the hands of attention. Nineteenth and twentieth-century psychology has added little to this insight beyond a plethora of experimental data.

Secondly, attention itself can only be apprehended through the "action" which constitutes it. This action is a "force which we feel inside ourselves" (ibid.), a force as real and basic as any external affection. No definition can elevate it, but experience does and can confirm it.

It is the 'atomic proposition' of the inner world. The answer to Condillac, therefore, lies in the direction of this vital interior movement, this outward extension of the self which, in the sensitive hands of Maine de Biran and Destutt de Tracy, becomes the ultimate determination of what we are, what we do, and what we know. From this standpoint, the problem of memory takes an appropriate twist, establishing itself firmly in the life of reflection, with broad implications for self-identity. The self which *remembers* is the self whose past is alive in its *attentions* to the unfolding present. This reversal of form, wherein memory begins to *flow back into attention*, is the inevitable outcome of the recognition of 'outward movement' from self to object. The theory of 'memory-traces', however these may be sown and cultivated by attention, draws too heavily on the 'inward movement' from object to self, taking this to be the sole determination of consciousness. Laromiguière was among those Frenchmen in the latter part of the eighteenth-century who endeavoured to rectify this imbalance. In Great Britain, a comparable swing was taking place in the wake of Locke and Hume.

Reid finds Locke's position overdrawn on the side of mechanistic presupposition. "I find in my mind", he observes, "a distinct conception and a firm belief of a series of past events; but how this is produced I know not. I call it memory. . . ." (I.P., III, iii, 328)

The real stumbling-block is Locke's *repository* and *revival* hypothesis: Reid can only conceive of the memorial function in terms of an "original faculty" of the mind (cf. I.P., III, vii, 368 f; ii, 328). At the same time he concedes that "it is difficult to attend long to the moments as they pass, without wandering after some other object of thought" (I.P., III, v, 355). The idea is germinal and important. Reflection superimposes its attention to the past on our attention to the present, thereby creating a *struggle of concentration* between memory and sense (I.P., III, v, 349-59) which breeds either 'inattention' to the one or 'abstraction' from the other. Although we cannot *see* what is past, we can nevertheless attend to it, and although we cannot *remember* what is present, we can similarly attend to it (ibid.). Yet there would be no attention to the past without a prior attention to the present, however distinct these operations may be, nor any significant attention to the present without an overlapping attention to the past. As we follow the movement of any body, our 'seeing' and 'remembering' dove-tail into one another. Their flowing together makes it possible for us to say at least three things: (1) 'I see the body move;' (2) 'I saw the body move *just now*;' and (3) 'I saw the body move.' Reid notes, quite rightly I think, that the little phrase 'just now' binds present to past and past to present, in spite of the stringency

of philosophical language which makes us separate seeing from remembering and *vice versa* (ibid.). His summary of the dove-tailing operation deserves to be quoted in full:

"There is no necessity in common life of dividing accurately the provinces of sense and of memory; and therefore we assign to sense, not an indivisible point of time, but that small portion of time which we call the present, which has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Hence it is easy to see, that though in common language we speak with perfect propriety and truth, when we say, that we see a body move, and that motion is an object of sense, yet when as Philosophers we distinguish accurately the province of sense from that of memory, we can no more see what is past, though but a moment ago, than we can remember what is present, so that speaking philosophically, it is only by the aid of memory that we can discern motion or any succession whatsoever. We see the present place of the body; we remember the successive advance it made to that place. The first can then only give us a conception of motion, when joined to the last."

(I.P., III, v, 350)

Thus memory can be as 'original' to our constitution as seeing itself. It is, as Reid affirms, a necessary precondition of the notion of 'duration' (I.P., III, i, 326; v, 351). That notion, in turn, can exist "where there is no succession of ideas in the mind" (I.P., III, v, 351).

The inescapable, and thoroughly logical, conclusion to be drawn from the above example is that the "successive advance" which we "remember" the body to have made is the *product* of our previous *attention* to these *successive stages* in their individual appearance. I am not arguing, as indeed Reid himself would not, that we must count them one by one; perhaps only an extreme 'atomist' of perception would reason thus. Given an infinite number of

points in the 'run-off' (the movement of the body from P to Q) and the velocity with which it may take place, we cannot be expected to recount a full enumeration. Even in 'slow-motion' this would be tedious and inexact. But in some primary way we must be attentive to that very 'progression' which it is in the power of memory to help us to define. Part of that attention may, of necessity, be 'unconscious' (or 'subsidiary' as Polanyi would put it), and yet the whole requires the contributory participation of each. The notion of a 'series' carries the same weight: attention to 'one' makes it possible for us to proceed to 'two', and so on. Much depends, according to Bergson, on whether we have regard for the series or number "in process of formation" or the number "once formed".¹⁴ The infinite divisibility of "successive advances" is an 'objective' feature of the movement "in its finished state"; the 'realization'¹⁵ of points, stages or elements takes place at this level by virtue of the *shape* of 'continuity' or 'wholeness' which the completion of the process confers on it. On the other hand, a movement in the *process of formation*, one which is still 'acquiring its form', appears to be a "discontinuity" of

¹⁴Time and Free Will, op. cit., p. 83; italics mine.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 84.

"indivisible" units. It is on this plane that we perhaps feel justified in speaking of the attention which we pay to each successive phase or unit. Bergson expresses the change of view-point in the following way:

"in order to get a number [series or movement], we are compelled to fix our attention successively on each of the units of which it is compounded. The indivisibility of the act by which we conceive any one of them is then represented under the form of a mathematical point which is separated from the following point by an interval of space. But, while a series of mathematical points arranged in empty space expresses fairly well the process by which we form the idea of number, these mathematical points have a *tendency to develop into lines in proportion as our attention is diverted from them, as if they were trying to reunite with one another. And when we look at number in its finished state . . . the points have become lines, the divisions have been blotted out, the whole displays all the characteristics of continuity.*"¹⁶

We can say, therefore, that if it is the function of attention to care for the 'seedlings' of discontinuity, it is the function of memory to circumvent the tedium of that perspective in order to survey *at a single glance* the 'rows' of continuity.

Before Reid, Hume had been arguing that the *manner* of our attending to any progression of impressions or ideas gives rise to the apprehension of 'succession' and thence of 'time' (Treatise, I, ii, 3 and 5). His thesis contained something of that suggestion which we found in Condillac of 'mental houses' being built on 'foundation-

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 82-3; italics mine.

stones of perception'. It is fair to say that he does not go as far as his French contemporary, nor does he admit, as Mach was to later, that the *way of attention* must yield a "specific sensation" of time. Nevertheless, he exerts himself far enough to hurdle the formidable gap between the experienced *changes in consciousness* and the *consciousness of change*. It does not seem to have occurred to him that if we assume the logical feasibility of this step, it still remains possible for us to shift our ground of attention towards a single item - leaning first towards this aspect of it then to that, - without the piling-on of separate and succeeding factors. (Implied here, of course, is an internal separation of facets within a single item as opposed to the separation of two or more items outside one another.) Such a manoeuvre would itself entail a retentive 'keeping in mind' of the various aspects attended to while the pivotal swing takes place. In any case, our very activities of 'holding to' (Attention) and 'holding again' (Retention) seem to be woven tightly into the temporal fabric; indeed woven in such a way that they must be regarded as both mutually interdependent and constitutive. What we are holding to *now* is intentionally sustained by what we are holding again *just now*; while conversely the latter, the 'just now', *clings to* the former, the 'now', even as it stretches towards the dark recessions of the *remote past*. This elasticity of the

subject across the *moment of relation* to its object expands and contracts between the fingers of attention and memory. It is therefore the *manner* of our 'holding to' and 'holding again' which in part determines a rather different kind of apprehension from the one envisaged by Hume: namely, an apprehension of the potential *breadth* of time held within the 'self' as it turns and glides towards the 'other'. In a sense, to be fully conscious of anything is to fix its time with one's own; a synchronization of *relata*, of the relations which exist not only between the self and the other, but also among the phases of each. Confining consciousness to the 'now' (as Reid did) creates a prejudice towards the 'moment' which, in Hume's hands, shows itself as an inclination to divide rather than to synthesize. Thus it may have happened that, busy 'inscaping' successions of images, Hume quite lost sight of the time.¹⁷

By the time we reach Stewart, the proportionate

¹⁷My account of Hume's theory will perhaps call to mind Husserl's treatment of this problem in his work on The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, notably in sections 31, 39 and 41. The adaptations, however, where they occur, are probably too loose and clumsy to do any justice to the complexity of Husserl's thought. I have disregarded, for example, the necessary inclusion of 'protention' or 'holding before' in my scheme. In the chapter devoted to Memory and Consciousness I will try, in some measure, to put this right.

measure of elasticity between attention and memory has found a quantifying turn of mind, with an experimental file in reserve (cf. Elements, I, vi, 352 ff). The logic of the inquiry has compelled itself to find a new focus in the *degree* of attention required to bring about a satisfactory retention. There is a subtle, perhaps unconscious, shift away from the question, 'if we attend to X, will we recollect it?' towards the question, 'how closely must we attend to X in order to recall it more accurately?' The exercise of our retentive and recollective powers is seen to depend on a prior capacity to fix objects firmly in our minds. If the insight is essentially Bacon's, as Stewart modestly acknowledges, then its repetition requires only supplementary evidence and observation (ibid.). With the stress duly laid, Stewart induces a programme of investigation which culminates in the 'philosophical psychology' of Abercrombie, Taine, William James and Pillsbury, these being only representative of the many writers who accept the presupposition of degree. I have referred already to Taine's summation of the above principle, namely that "the image of an object or event is capable of revival, and of complete revival, in proportion to the degree of attention with which we have considered the object or event". It is still too early, however, to discount the influence of volition. For Stewart, as for Brown, the voluntary aspects of

attention are those which give reflection as a whole its personal quality and significance. Reflecting is attending to what has been for us and the latter, the 'has been' which 'still is', might be described as the autobiography of our concentration and discovery, our curiosity and desire. "It is to experience, and to our own reflections", observes Stewart, "that we are indebted for by far the most valuable part of our knowledge" (Elements, I, vi, 405). Personal reflection is thus the anvil of 'self-making' for what Bacon in another context called "the full man . . . the correct man . . . the ready man" (quoted by Stewart, ibid., 429): on its steadiness and strength the ultimate 'form' of the self depends.

Stewart, like Prévost, detects the structural dependency of memory on both attention and the association of ideas. Dependency in the case of the latter must not be confused, however, with reduction. The 'order' in which ideas appear and reappear is undoubtedly crucial to the accuracy and utility of memory. Hume had made this quite clear (Treatise, I, i, 3; iii, 5). But is the principle of association really adequate to guarantee the form of representation? Stewart thinks not. "The association of ideas", he explains,

"connects our various thoughts with each other, so as to present them to the mind in a certain order; but it presupposes the existence of these thoughts in the mind; or, in other words, it presupposes *a faculty of retaining the knowledge which we acquire*. It involves also *a power of*

recognizing, as former objects of attention, the thoughts that from time to time occur to us; a power which is not implied in that law of our nature which is called the association of ideas."

(Elements, I, vi, 354;
italics mine)

At what precise state the 'groupings' of association formulate themselves is not here at issue (for Brown, on the other hand, the matter was vital). But we can, at least, give priority to the acquisition and retention of the elemental ideas. There can be no association of ideas which have never taken root in us, which are not in fact 'ours'. Association is something which persons do in the solitariness of their own experience. Recognition shares the same fate: only *I* can recognize something to which *I* first paid attention; which *I* now gather once more before my mind; which *I* remember as 'that one'; and which *I* may or may not link with 'those next to it'. You and he, so it is implied, must accomplish your own feats of recognition. Stewart does not say, (and it is a point which Merleau-Ponty has found to be important)¹⁸ whether recognition

¹⁸"A preserved fragment of the lived-through past can be at the most no more than an occasion for thinking of the past, but it is not the past which is compelling recognition; *recognition*, when we try to derive it from any content whatever, *always precedes itself*. *Reproduction presupposes re-cognition*, and cannot be understood as such unless *I* have in the first place a sort of *direct contact with the past* in its own domain." M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, tr. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 413; italics mine.

presupposes recollection or *vice versa*, but he lays considerable power in the lap of retention, sets this firmly apart from recollection, and taking first one, then the other, begins to build an unusually careful analysis of memory. The significance of association is therefore diminished beside the awesome faculty of retention, whose own power-centre resides somewhere in our original capacity to attend.

Attending, in Stewart's view, involves a deliberate act whereby one item is selected for perusal from the manifold of representations. Again the factor of retention has an implied presence in this exercise of volition. However small or large a 'visible figure' may be we can, he argues, attend to only *one* of its points at any one time. Although it seems often to be the case that we perceive *in an instant* "every point in the outline of [an] object", analysis shows that the apparent simultaneity of points presenting themselves is in fact "the result of a number of different acts of attention". The true account of perception, therefore, must be based on an assumption of successive view-points. At the same time, "the perception of the figure of the object implies a knowledge of the relative situation of the different points with respect to each other". This "knowledge", whatever it is, has something to do with the way in which the "faculty of memory" *retains* the collection of

points as they are successively viewed or attended to (Elements, I, ii, 140-3). Stewart alludes to the same function of retention in an earlier illustration. "When two persons are speaking to us at once", he writes,

"we can attend to either of them at pleasure, without being much disturbed by the other. If we attempt to listen to both, we can understand neither. The fact seems to be, that when we attended constantly to one of the speakers, the words spoken by the other *make no impression on the memory, in consequence of our not attending to them*, and affect us as little as if they had not been uttered. This power, however, of the mind to attend to either speaker at pleasure, *supposes that it is, at one and the same time, conscious of the sensations which both produce.*"

(ibid., 135; italics mine)

The curious thing about his example is not so much that Stewart appears to make an 'about-face' in the middle of his case, but that he introduces the remarkable idea of a 'dual consciousness' without fully explaining its mechanics. Since he everywhere assumes that each act of attention is voluntary - however habitual, instinctive or involuntary some may seem (ibid., 127 and 143 ftn.), - we can only conclude that the act of attention which gives precedence to one speaker is also a deliberate exclusion of the other; in other words, that we can with one stroke *will* the 'presence' of one thing and the non-presence or 'absence' of another. Once more, a characteristic feature of retention comes into play: when we are "conscious of" two or more sensations, we are 'attending to' one *now* and 'holding' the others *just now* or *about to arrive*.

(Brown, who denies the possibility of a 'dual-consciousness', will have to insist on a similar trick of 'holding at bay' the second or remaining elements in any composite view.) What is implied here, of course, is a constant and reciprocal interaction between attention and memory.

The theory of the proportionate measure of attention over retention is enunciated without qualification in the chapter on Memory (Elements, I, vi, 352 ff) but with some reservation in the chapter on Attention (Elements, I, ii, 120-4). In the latter, Stewart cites the unanimous opinion of Locke, Reid and Helvétius in this matter, and even draws the "vulgar" into the general agreement (ibid., 122). He allows that if we are unable to recollect something to which we have seemingly not given due attention - by virtue of the rapidity of the perception or our state of indifference, - the failure of the one will commonly be ascribed to a lack of the other. A parishioner, for example, who has fallen asleep during the preacher's discourse, and is then abruptly awakened, will be "unable to recollect the last words spoken by the preacher, or even to recollect that he was speaking at all". Similarly, a clock may strike "in the same room with us, without our being able next moment to recollect whether we heard it or not" (Elements, I, ii, 120). Had the preacher's sermon been too exciting to miss or the striking of the hour too thunderous not to hear, then presumably our 'forced'

attention would have left its mark on memory. But we doze off in the middle of the former and are preoccupied during the latter. Perhaps there are levels of attention, however, which do not leave a memory-trace, yet by virtue of which we might be said to be "conscious" (ibid.) of what is happening around us.

Let us suppose that "the preacher were to make a sudden pause in his discourse". Stewart observes that "every person in the congregation who was asleep would instantly awake" (ibid.) It is true, of course, that a group of chattering 'busy-bodies' will often become aware (just how is not certain) of a hostile silence among the excluded persons nearby. It has also been recorded that some individuals appear to be attentive to their surroundings while they are immersed in sleep. An unusual example of this ability, drawn from contemporary research, will perhaps demonstrate Stewart's point more vividly:

"Friends of Norbert Wiener, the mathematical prodigy, used to say that he listened better in sleep than waking. When awake, he was too busy thinking to hear anyone else. . . . It was, in a way, a compliment to hear Wiener snoring, for it intimated that his mind was absorbing all that was spoken."¹⁹

Prévost, Brown himself and later Norman Malcolm all dispute Stewart's contention that we are in some way 'conscious'

¹⁹Gay Gaer Luce and Julius Segal, Sleep (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1967), pp. 225-6.

or 'mentally active' during sleep. Bergson is more sympathetic to Stewart's view (as indeed is modern research), but inserts some important conditions into it.²⁰ Yet even if one accepts with Stewart that "the powers of perception: are not entirely suspended during sleep (Elements, I, v, 292 ff), one wonders how it is that the dozing parishioner can be 'conscious' of the pause and at the same time be unable to recollect whatever preceded that moment of silence. He seems to be aware of the fact that the preacher halted in the midst of his sermon; perhaps he remembers a dull drone followed by a delicious quiet; he may even recall that it was the subject of the Holy Trinity and church finances which lulled him to sleep in the first place. Of the rest he remembers nothing. Are there, then, types of attention, such as 'vague' or 'unconscious' or 'effortless', which do *not* fall under the category of 'degree', which somehow fail to take up a position in memory, and upon which we are nevertheless able to act? Stewart does not

²⁰Bergson argues that although we may be "*indifferent*" to logical reasoning during sleep, we are not "*incapable*" of it. Similarly, we may engage in a piece of analysis, although "we cannot analyze ourselves in the dream itself". The "incoherence" which characterizes the sequences of thought in a dream results from the absence of any need to 'adjust' our memories to a sensation. That adjustment or "adaptation" is the mark of all *conscious effort* during our waking experience. Dreams, tr., Edwin E. Slosson (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914), pp. 48, 49, 52 and 56.

say: indeed, he does not seem to use his examples to their fullest advantage. What he clearly wants to say, however, is that there is more than simply a question of degree in the interaction of attention and memory. Both attention and memory require some "act or effort" of mind (Elements, I, ii, 123) in order to fix, detain and make exclusive a particular representation. "For my own part," he writes,

"I am inclined to suppose, (though I would by no means be understood to speak with confidence,) that it is essential to memory, that the perception or the idea that we would wish to remember, should remain in the mind for a certain space of time, and should be contemplated by it exclusively of every thing else; and that attention consists partly (perhaps entirely) in the effort of the mind, to detain the idea or the perception, and to exclude the other objects that solicit its notice."

(Ibid., 123-4)

It is perhaps unfortunate that Stewart did not assert his opinion with a bolder tongue; for he is surely on the track of something.

Attention and memory do possess rather startling similarities. Both entail a monopolization of certain items to the exclusion of others; both involve a high degree of concentration in order to achieve their respective ends; both reveal a background of personal motive, interest, passion and temperament (cf. Elements, I, vi, 353-4); and both require "a certain space of time" in which to fulfil themselves. Moreover, attention and memory fit logically

into each other's schemes. When we are attending to something, we naturally expect to keep it before us for the necessary length of time or to call it back should an interruption occur. Likewise, when we are trying to remember some event or to recount certain of its features, we expect to give our attention to this problem and not to some other. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any analysis of the two concepts which would not demonstrate their interdependency. Of course, if one tried to imagine what it would be like to attend to a single sensation (as opposed to a 'perception'), completely isolated from all temporal or contiguous spatial features; if, that is, one resurrected Condillac's statue of a single sense and no inherent capabilities, then perhaps one could bring about their disengagement. But what would be left out of the concept of attention? Condillac does imply that with its first 'smell-impression', the statue *attends*, and that its attention could be limited "to one mode of being" (Traité, I, ii, 5). But he is grappling initially with the problem of 'sense registration', of how the statue first receives, takes in, or absorbs a stimulus, and although attention does include the idea of 'noticing', this is only one of its many facets. Attending at such a primitive level of experience is really synonymous with 'smelling' or 'tasting' or 'hearing', and to that extent one might even say that the term is presumptuous or

premature. That Condillac himself realized this can be ascertained from what he says elsewhere about attention; for example that it is a vivid sensation which throws other sensations into the shade or that its "reference to certain perceptions increases so vividly that they seem to be the only things of which we are aware" (Essai, sec. ii, ch. 1). The implied 'compresence' of additional items 'behind' the subject of our attention, whether they be parts of the same object or different objects altogether, is the substance of eighteenth-century definitions of the term. The so-called 'shifts' or 'acts' of attention carry this implication within them: we *move* from item to item, *directing ourselves towards* first one, then another. Every move of this sort would be immediately nullified if there were no retention of the original items, if we could not 'go back'. It is because we do go back and *remember the way* that we can afford to and therefore can *choose to be attentive* to some particular. If eighteenth-century philosophers had announced that it is impossible to attend to one thing alone, they would not have abused ordinary language, but would have pointed instead to the immense complexity of experience, some aspects of which we may perchance regard and retain. (Brown, for example, begins with this enormity, not with rudimentary sensations.) Hence attention like memory presupposes much, denies it, focuses, and becomes lost again. Perhaps we ought to

have begun with an analysis of distraction and forgetfulness; for therein lies the logical path to a fuller appreciation of what it means to heed and to remember.

The picture as it appears to us in 'logical space' invites a host of perplexing questions. To begin with, can we say that attention is logically necessary and/or sufficient for memory? Does attention bear the same relationship to *various forms* of memory, to retention and habitual-memory as well as to recollection? If attention can be directed both *outside* and *inside* the mind, to things spatially situated and to ideas temporally bound, how much of its language applies to the terms of reference contained in memory? Is the thesis of proportionate measure falsified by a single instance of forgetting? Does 'affective memory' presuppose 'affective attention'? What relation does feeling have to the feasibility of both? Many of these questions arise naturally and persuasively during the course of one's investigations into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opinion. In a fit of discontent, one may be inclined to pursue them instead of the prevailing presuppositions. One wants to open logical doors where too few perhaps exist. The temptation, however, must be resisted; the frustration redirected. For these are not always the *right* questions through which to approach and unmask the conceptual underpinnings of the philosophy of this period.

The right questions begin, as it were, on the hind-side of accepted presuppositions. If one begins by assuming the primacy of sense-experience, the structure of conceptual development will tend to proceed from and return to this source. The notion of attention, for example, will be brought to bear on the manifold of impressions; the notion of memory on their 're-presentation' to the mind. Positing inherent or 'original' faculties in the mind, on the other hand, may be merely a convenient, and on Brown's view, unwarranted, means of providing ready-made constructs in which to 'house' our experiences. But as Reid ably demonstrated, one may say a great deal about memory if one simply accepts that people can and do, as a matter of course, remember things. The implication is clear: one can extend the area of perception beyond its natural limits. Perhaps Brown and the French 'sensationalists' took too little for granted; perhaps Reid and Stewart were offering a way out, into the wider reaches of philosophical analysis; perhaps this confidence in the resident 'powers' of the mind became a moat in its own eye. Possibilities such as these must set the tone of our inquiry. Posing these questions enables us to flush out some of the more valuable insights on both sides. There is probably much that could be gleaned from a strictly conceptual reappraisal of the terms 'memory' and 'attention'. But our search is rather for that 'picture' in which Brown's

concerns may find a home and at the same time reassert their validity. This is the only hope which a philosophical historian of ideas can reasonably indulge.

RESTORATION OF A PERSPECTIVE

If the foregoing assessments are valid, we would seem to be drawn strongly to the conclusion that the intrinsic relation between memory and attention weaves a tight net around what Brown calls in his Sketch "the field of mind" (Sketch, 22). The answer to the question, 'How do they co-operate?' becomes the centrifugal point toward which 'evolving' analyses of mind (ibid.) must flow. Assuming that the inquiries into Matter and Mind are indeed analogous (a supposition which Brown never doubts), we are compelled to inspect the latter under the joint aspects of space and time. The *attention* which we direct towards its "separating spaces" (Sketch, 14) will uncover "virtual" demarcations (Sketch, 20) among "unsuspected elements of thought and passion" (Sketch, 22). The rule under which both the methodology and the discovery remain "virtual only" is the very principle which guarantees the ultimate separation of Mind from Matter: the *actual* simplicity and indivisibility of the former combined with the *actual* complexity and divisibility of the latter. Attention in the sphere of consciousness must adapt, therefore, to rather different conditions. The *seeming* "complexity" or "comprehensiveness" (Sketch,

21-2) of mental states, which permits us to *feel* their interrelatedness, lends itself to abstraction of a type, but never betrays the real unity of mind. These unique characteristics of the mental field we will have to elaborate more fully later.

Viewed under the form of time, the field of mind reveals its composition as both successive and continuous. Brown treats of succession in his inquiry into causal relations and of continuity in his valuable contribution to the subject of personal or 'mental' identity. The full assault on time and memory which would logically have underscored these studies never seems to take place. Instead, memory is confined to an explanatory position under the category of 'simple suggestion', while the idea of time is held to *presuppose* our 'idea of motion' (Obs., 197) but to follow from our felt experience of priority and consequence (L. XLI, 109). The phenomenon of succession is thus accorded experiential and conceptual superiority over the apprehension of and investigation into time.¹ I shall argue that Brown undertook a somewhat misleading approach to memory and time in the light of

¹Brown's review of Charles Villers's *Philosophie de Kant*, in the *Edinburgh Review* (1803), reveals his early antipathy to the presupposition that time is a "necessary condition" or *form* of intuition "*peculiarly*" suited to our "internal sense". Again, he stresses the *fact* of succession in both the "changes without" and "those within". (pp. 260-9)

their very obvious importance for his theories of causality and identity.

It has been suggested that the functions of attention and memory are a co-operative force in the cognitive fields of Matter and Mind alike. The precise direction taken by that force in each sphere must therefore come under rigorous scrutiny. I have previously raised the possibility, perhaps even the spectre, of an entirely *experimental* line of inquiry. However extravagant the claim, the hopes of some scientists both in Brown's era and today have decidedly influenced research into this area. The question becomes a meaningful one in the context of Brown's philosophy since he not only begins but ends his work on a 'physiological' note. Without undue exaggeration let me say that it is the insistence of this note which keeps the historian of ideas on his toes. Indeed, it alone enables him to reclaim a proper perspective on Brown's thought.

The picture of attention and memory as an interwoven framework for our apprehension of Mind and Matter suggests a high degree of functional simplicity. There can be no doubt that Brown sought to furnish science with a "greater simplicity" (Sketch, Preface, xiii) than he had hitherto perceived in its observations and hypotheses. The fact that he set out to construct a 'physiology of the mind' on the structural analogy of the physiology of the body (Sketch, Intro., 2) signifies further a desire

on his part to pioneer the venture. He becomes as impatient with the work of Condillac and Reid (Sketch, 178-9) as he had been with the reductivist strategies of Darwin and Hartley. It is the scientist in him which intimates that with each stride towards simplification, we advance the *power* and *wealth* of the human intellect (cf. L. XLIII, 122). Claiming few mentors and acknowledging even fewer, he might yet have agreed with that other pillar of the French school of Ideologists, Cabanis:

"The methods of the human mind, are, if we may use the comparison, its levers and its balloons: by their assistance it may move with facility the most enormous masses, or elevate itself to the pure fountains of light. Let us therefore endeavour to improve these valuable instruments, to the utmost of our power."²

The improvements envisaged by Brown consisted of trimmings, alterations and reconstructions. Employing that same comparison, he too could foresee from the ramparts of mechanistic efficiency "the pure fountains of light". What Brown never saw and certainly never advocated was the next and final step in the development of 'mental science', namely its assimilation by and into the science of matter. One has only to turn slightly the face of Brown the scientist to discover Brown the poet and defender of a higher order of feelings.

²P. J. G. Cabanis, Sketch of the Revolutions of Medical Science, and Views relating to its Reform, tr. A. Henderson (London, 1806), p. 381.

We have to admit, then, that Brown may well have foreseen the logical possibilities for solutions of the neurophysiological type. Surrounded by proposals of this sort from the time of his early exposure to Darwin and Hartley, and acquainted with the swelling surge of biological and medical research, he could not fail to wonder at and perhaps savour such possibilities. Nevertheless he does not himself explore them. In fact, he never advances beyond a 'psychological' inquiry, in the limited sense attached to that word by the history of science. It must be remembered that a later psychologist, H. C. Warren, complained of just this shortcoming in Brown's theory of association. *It lacked physiological confirmation!*³ (The axe of William James fell repeatedly on this 'pre-scientific' quality in the earlier psychological treatises.) There is a striking illustration of Brown's reticence to embark on such a 'radical empiricism' in his refutation of the Darwinian hypothesis concerning memory. It accords most fully with the standards for 'common sense' philosophy laid down by Reid and upheld by Stewart. One can perhaps assert here that this attitude marks the last road-sign to conservatism in British empiricism. Thereafter, the two Mills, Spencer, Bain,

³A History of the Association Psychology from Hartley to Lewes, op. cit., pp. 35 and 118.

George Croom Robertson and W. K. Clifford all accept to some degree the utility of physiological evidence. The 'mental science' of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century philosophers evolves into a 'psychological' horse of a decidedly different colour. Perhaps for this very reason, Brown and his precursors have not fallen quite so heavily under the stringent contemporary indictment against the more recent forms of 'psychologism'. They can be read, if one likes, as respectable conceptual analysts, and straightway forgiven for their 'unfortunate' leanings towards a crude psychology. I should prefer to think of them, and of Brown in particular, as dedicated introspectionists beguiled by their own self-certainty but humble before their discoveries.

Repeatedly and in almost every context, therefore, Brown finds himself bedevilled by the threat of reductivism. Darwin, it will be recalled, had been busy exploring the alleged correlation between psychic and physiological phenomena. Yet instead of examining merely the logical weight and tenor of this correlation, Darwin seemed to find hope for a more radical conclusion, namely that organic and mental affections might share the same properties. In Brown's opinion, Darwin consistently oversteps the boundaries of correlation (where, for example, father and son stand in reciprocal relation to one another), with the result that the two classes of

phenomena are "confounded" or "identified". "The general error of Dr. Darwin's instances of analogy", he writes, "is that he has confounded the cause with its effect; either considering the muscular motion, instead of the motive affection, or the organic affection, instead of the idea; so that all the facts, adduced by him, may be admitted without furnishing any additional strength to his theory."

(Obs., 123)

Most annoying to Brown as a philosopher is Darwin's confused handling of the term "idea" (Obs., 109-13). (At this point I am obviously treading over old ground but, I hope, with more judicious step and towards new insights.) On the one hand, Darwin defines ideas in terms of the *fibrous motions* of our sense organs: when particular organs perish, so must the ideas appropriate to them (Obs., 108-9). On the other hand, he sometimes regards ideas as the "sentient" notions we have of external things: they are, in other words, *mental affections* produced by our 'acquaintance' through the sense organs with objects external to ourselves. (Obs., 112-3). The first view, as we have seen, would require us to explain something like *memory* as a "repetition of the original motions of the organs of sense". A man who loses the use of a limb will not thereby be unable to *remember*, to some extent at least, what it was or has been like to move or feel things with it. The second suggestion is more agreeable to Brown in so far as it places an *order of succession*, of antecedence and consequence, on the

perception and recollection of objects and events. Two operations, not one, support the system, each feeding into the other as the individual either perceives an object or *intends* a certain action against it, as for example desiring to recall part of a complex impression (Obs., 117 f). Darwin cannot adhere, however, to *both* of these standpoints: the first *rules out* correlation as a reciprocal interaction between two *different* types of entity; the second fosters a wider understanding of this same process. The former has its origins in the seventeenth century: with Robert Hooker's identification of memory with the functions of a proper sense organ or with Glanvill's attention to the mechanics of memory, given the prevalent Cartesian or Hobbesian conjectures regarding the actual *substance* of the brain and the nature of its *motions*.⁴ It certainly gains momentum in the hands of those 'materialists' or near-materialists, Hartley and Priestley. Brown has on his hands not a psychophysical parallelism, however ill-conceived, but a physiological reductivism.

If one does not accept the view that "recollection or imagination" is a repetition of "animal movements"

⁴See B. Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1953), pp. 179-81 and pp. 107-8.

how, asks Darwin, is it to be explained? (Obs., 124)

"You tell me", he asserts, "it consists of images or pictures of things. *Where is this extensive canvas hung up?* or where are the numerous receptacles in which those are deposited? or to what else in the animal system have they any similitude?" (ibid.; italics mine) The 'canvas' question is worthy of Hume when he proposes, then rejects, the analogy of the 'theatre of the mind'. Brown does not take the bait. Those who do speak of the ideas of memory as "separate existences, images, or pictures of things" (Locke and his followers for example) will no doubt be hard pressed to erect these items on a screen in front of the brain, and equally so to find an available "receptacle" in which to deposit them (Obs., 124). If one is convinced that there are such items and that they must have a depository other than the neural substance, then of course one will have to look for a 'canvas' and make a fool of oneself in the process. But, answers Brown, "the modern believers of phantasms, and species, form a small class" (ibid.), and so presumably we need not concern ourselves with their embarrassment. Furthermore, "the argument is of no force, when addressed to those, who believe our ideas to be affections of mind, and who need neither canvas, nor receptacles, to remember, or imagine" (ibid.). These affections, so the implication reads, do not fall under the range of the question. Whatever the inadequacies

of that question, I think Brown is here mistaken. In his Lectures and in the later Sketch, he will make it clear that there is no 'mental substance' over and above the 'states' in which we are said to exist at any moment. Consequently, a memory event is not drawn from a 'permanent repository' so constituted, nor would it be paraded as on a mental 'screen' in front of the brain. At this early stage, however, Brown had not given a satisfactory account of his position respecting mind, and he had certainly not advanced his "mental affections" into a more favourable light. What is to save them from the charge that they, like those "phantasms" or "pictures of things", are both unaccountable, unless as 'vibrations' (something which Brown will not concede), and superfluous? If Darwin's question were valid, which it is not in so far as it assumes that mind too must have a 'place', it would surely put the hooks in Brown's mental affections as well.

Some remedy to this imposition is nevertheless provided by a cleverly manoeuvred rebuttal. "The opinion attacked may be just", continues Brown,

"and the error lie, on the side of him, who demands identities, and resemblances, *where the nature of the subject denies them*. That alone can be explained, which is capable of resolution into simpler ideas; and he, who asks, what is meant by a particular quality of mind, may, with as much reason, ask, what is meant by a particular quality of matter: *yet it is chiefly, in the former case, that the spirit of scepticism arises*. . . . When the Newtonian is able to inform us, what he means, when he uses the term attraction, the opponents of Zoonomia will, perhaps, be able to find a less complex term, than affection

of mind. The sentient principle in man has its peculiar susceptibilities, as the matter, around us, has its peculiar attractions. The phenomena of both are *the result of regular laws, and, though we cannot explain, we can observe, and arrange.*"

(Obs., 125-6; italics mine)

Although portions of this reply might leave the materialist dissatisfied (he would want to claim, for example, that *his* type of data was at least 'observable' in a way in which the other clearly was not, even by introspection), Brown has quite forcefully put the onus on his opponents to make their case more convincing. He seems to be affirming here, as he will do on many occasions, that whatever a physiological reduction is, it is not the *simplest* "resolution" which can be found. A theory which abandons the operations of the mind to unsupported or contradictory evidence with regard to man's sensory and neural structure points in the opposite direction, towards complexity and irresolution. Brown shares with them, however, a desire to simplify the philosophies of both mind and matter. And therein, I believe, lies the secret of his *larger conception* of a *sceptical philosophy*: that should be cast in doubt which, in either sphere, serves to clutter the conceptual field. Too many conceptual parents tend to breed a saturated world-picture. In a word, the sceptic's concern is 'over-population'.

Reid would not have felt much affinity for such a notion. Yet he, like Brown, is sceptical of even the

most startling discoveries which "medical art" could foreseeably make (I.P., III, viii, 367). Far from discrediting improvements in that art or science, he wishes to bring them out into the open so that he may study the nature of the developments which might seem to follow from the 'proof' that "a certain constitution or state of the brain is necessary to memory" (ibid., 366). The facts, he agrees, are becoming increasingly evident. His reasons for diminishing their importance are stated succinctly and cogently. We are in no way enlightened about memory, he affirms,

"by being told that it is caused by a certain impression on the brain. For supposing, that impression on the brain were as necessary to memory as the drawing of the trigger is to the discharge of the musket, we are still as ignorant as we were how memory is produced; so that *if the cause of memory, assigned by this theory, did really exist, it does not in any degree account for memory.*"

(Ibid., 365; italics mine)

And again:

"if we knew as distinctly that state of the brain which causes memory, we should still be as ignorant as before how that state contributes to memory."

(Ibid., 367)

The question which Reid puts to physiologists and those impressed by their researches is quite simply, 'what in your mind constitutes an explanation for a phenomenon such as memory?' It is a shrewd question, and one calculated to redeem the view that memory, like other functions of the mind, cannot *easily* be accounted for either in physical

or in *any other* 'alien' terms.

Indeed, memory cannot be accounted for *at all* on these terms, if the 'explanation' in this case is meant to rest on additions and amendments to our knowledge of neural functionings. Medical science may inform us that it can now be shown that a certain part of the brain does R with x whenever PA; it may advise us to define memory as the set of "impressions made on the brain in perception: which "remain as long as there is any memory of the object" (I.P., III, vii, 364); it may suggest that, accepting this definition, we can assert that 'bR x PA' is the "cause of memory". And yet, Reid attests, unless this same science can show us *how* the neural state produces that 'effect' called *the remembrance of an object*, it tells us nothing (ibid.). The statement 'M remembers y because bR x PA' is as innocuous as the proposition "the drawing of the trigger *causes* the musket to discharge". The real test of an explanation, Reid seems to be saying, lies in the satisfactory way in which it relates one factor to another. Failing this, it leaves the problem unresolved. Let the neurologists 'preserve' by new means "that temperament of the brain which is favourable to memory" (ibid., 367); let the gunsmith insert an improved triggering-device into the musket: both the remembering and the firing will remain "unaccountable as before" (ibid., 365). With arguments of the above sort, Reid

too made a stand against the encroaching spectre of reductivism.

It was Brown's early contention that explanations are not to be sought for either in conjectural or in newly discovered items of experience. With a refinement commensurate with their maturity, Brown's Lectures illustrate the familiar misapprehension with case and point. At the same time, both hypotheses and theories come in for a hard look. As explanatory devices, Brown argues, they too have their short-comings, namely a proneness to error. His illustrations, therefore, must be seen to sound a quiet note of caution.

Suppose, Brown notes, that on discovering a new planet revolving between the orbits of two planets already on our charts, we were to assign to it a gravitational orbit modelled after those of the other two; doing so, we should be said to have constructed a "theory" regarding its movements. On the strength of this theory, moreover, we should feel entitled to make predictive claims. However "conjectural" the theory (and it must be that, in part, for it is founded on analogical extension), no one would deny us this right. But let us suppose that, given the same discovery, we were to fasten on to our "explanation" of the planet's movements a certain rider. Instead of modelling its orbit on those of previously known bodies, we might attribute its "centripetal tendency" to the

action on or against it of some "impulse of ether". Now the planet is said to move orbitally around the sun *because* the ether 'causes' it to behave in this manner. Unlike the "theory" above, this "hypothesis" does not attempt to link old and new phenomena by analogical lines of similarity, but rather by the intervention of "third" factors. The hypothesis thus rests on the future unearthing of these explanatory agents (L. VIII, 126-7).

Careful observation will, of course, eventually support or crush either the theory or the hypothesis, or even both. A hypothesis becomes law (S. Toulmin) or in the course of experimentation is supplanted by another and critical hypothesis (Bronowski). Brown does not carry the issue that far. What he does see is the greater "risk" inherent in the structure of the hypothesis. Some remarks on his uneasiness (his *inquiétude*) may thus be relevant at this stage. Their bearing on the problem of explanation will manifest itself in due course.

In the first place, Brown's uneasiness does not concern the legitimate function of the hypothesis in experimental situations. (We should bear in mind throughout the neurological focus of our inquiry, and hence that particular kind of experimental situation.) This function can perhaps be described as a 'reason-compelling' operation initially brought into play on the proposed field of experimentation. A kind of steering device, the

hypothesis offers both economy of effort and concentration of focus. Assuming, with Brown, that philosophy admits of the same sort of properties usually ascribed to science, we can affirm that a hypothesis is of use "not as superseding investigation, but as directing investigation to certain objects, - not as telling us, what we are to believe, but as pointing out to us what we are to endeavour to ascertain" (L. VIII, 120). To this concise delineation Brown adds the observation that philosophy realizes itself "only when the experiments are made *with a certain view*" (*ibid.*, italics mine). This characterization of the hypothesis, in Toulmin's words "as a guide to further experiments",⁵ seems both sound and innocent enough to find favour even among those who would subject *all* empirical statements to the onerous task of being 'hypothetical'; in other words, of being perpetual guides to incessant experimentation. (I have in mind, for example, A. J. Ayer in Language, Truth and Logic.⁶) In a sense, therefore, a hypothesis whether in science or in philosophy provides (or suggests) an answer to the question, 'why should we investigate these phenomena rather than

⁵S. Toulmin, The Philosophy of Science (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967), p. 70.

⁶Language, Truth and Logic (Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 132.

those?' And in so far as the answer is compelling, the hypothesis can be said to be a good or reasonable one. Clearly, Brown would want to reinforce any notion which emphasizes what he considers to be the more rational "art" of "inquiring assiduously . . . [into] what we are inquiring about" (cf. L. VI, 96 and L. VIII, 120). The "utility" of science as a whole applies also to its member-parts (L. VI, 97).

Brown's uneasiness, then, is a qualified one. He has no quarrel with the hypothesis which inserts purpose and direction into the scientific enterprise. The obvious implication from this assent, however, is that any hypothesis which supersedes its rightful function is a genuine hoax, a wolf in sheep's clothing as it were. Exposing the wolf does not discredit all sheep, but only those appearing to be what they are not. Brown introduces his detection into the concept by affirming:

"To know well, what *hypotheses* truly are in themselves, and what it is which they contribute to *the explanation of phenomena*, is . . . the surest of all preservatives against that too ready assent, which you might otherwise be disposed to give to them."

(L. VIII, 113-4; italics mine)

The phrase "too ready assent" indicates the nature of his misgivings.

As I intimated above, there are those who regard all empirical statements whatsoever as 'hypotheses'. This claim (a) assumes among other things, that since empirical

statements cannot be 'certain' and hence must be 'highly probable only', no matter of fact can be asserted which is not, by this sort of reductivism, 'merely' another hypothesis forming conditional grounds for yet another set of observations.⁷ The view here presumably is that of a science without rest. Brown could not, I believe, accept this position in full; it involves a conceptual misshaping of what is, on his terms, simply an instrument for steering science towards more productive ends. Nevertheless, he would be sympathetic towards the underlying tone of tentativeness which he too regards as characteristic of scientific procedure (cf. L. VIII, 125-6). His primary concern, however, is with concealed variations of this claim. One might argue, for example, that the class of empirical statements constitutes the sole membership in the class of hypotheses and hence that (b) all hypotheses are necessarily empirical statements. The truth of the converse (b) obviously depends on the status of (a), and this in turn on the conceptual texture of (a)'s terms. I have suggested that Brown, for one, would balk at the use of the word 'hypothesis' in that context. The reasoning behind his hesitation must now be elucidated.

⁷cf. Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 72-3. Toulmin, I think, is right in arguing that a scientific edifice built solely on hypotheses would necessarily crumble for want of agreed or "established" frameworks of supporting laws.

Brown is apparently distressed by the suggestion implicit in (a) that empirical and hypothetical statements operate in the same way, in other words, that they are both assertions about what *is* the case. Even if the force of the phrase 'what *is* the case' is diminished from certainty to high probability such that it reads simply, 'what is most likely to be the case', he is compelled to object. The scientific use of hypotheses, he will argue, entails the selection of certain data or combinations of same for the purpose of casting into explanatory or predictive form a particular phenomenon under observation (for example, the phenomenon 'bR x PA' cited above). At most on this view, one is merely stating what *might be taking place* given this or that 'hypothetical' perspective. In this sense, a hypothesis *affirms* nothing whatsoever about the world: to describe it as a 'matter of fact' statement is to misconstrue its function completely. As classes of statements, hypotheses and empirical statements are not, therefore, mutually inclusive. Claim (a) is rendered weak by conceptual misguidance and claim (b) by (a)'s folly. Concerning their explanatory roles, we might say that empirical statements provide the bases *within hypothetical frameworks* for predictions about the behaviour of specific phenomena. The root of Brown's quarrel with the above claims would seem to be that a hypothesis can never serve as the *basis* for explanation: it can at best

group observable data relationally within possible frameworks. Better still, it *is* a possible framework for such grouping, although by no means the only one.

Nevertheless, a claim revising (a) and (b) might hold some weight and be less objectionable to Brown. One can indeed argue that all hypotheses have properties similar to those found in empirical statements. And something like the following would be intended: (1) empirical statements are not certain precisely because one can always (at least) imagine a counter-possibility; (2) they can be tested any number of times, but they must always remain 'testable': for this reason, we say that even an apparently sound empirical statement is 'highly probable only'; (3) hypotheses are the sort of things which one is likewise *always testing*, although this condition does not preclude the fact that scientists use any number of them as 'established laws' while subjecting others to scrutiny;⁸ thus (4) like empirical statements hypotheses are (in N. R. Hanson's words) synthetic, contingent, verifiable and *a posteriori*;⁹ more strongly, (5) the ultimate aim of any new or significant

⁸Ibid., pp. 73-4.

⁹I refer here to Hanson's "Hypotheses Fingo", a paper read shortly before his death in 1967 at the University of Western Ontario.

experiment is always to "overthrow" or choose decisively "one or two . . . simple alternative hypotheses"¹⁰ currently favoured by scientists; and (6) the falsifiability of both empirical statements and hypotheses is thus ensured, but their identities remain intact. As so formulated, these modifications to claims (a) and (b) concede a property-similarity without sacrificing an essential independence of function. One thing a statement about 'matters of fact' cannot do is to prescribe *how* we should go about examining other data. It is, as it were, a mute accomplice.

The real danger of a "too ready assent" to hypotheses such as 'bRxPA' can now be unfolded. Unless a fundamental distinction is made between hypotheses and empirical statements, one is liable to confuse the two and to suppose of a certain hypothesis that it asserts *what is the case* about a particular phenomenon. When a hypothesis is thus used to make fanciful interpolations of 'facts' into the world (L. VIII, 123), and *is believed* as though it were a well-tested empirical proposition, the very course of science comes to a stand-still. The alleged facts under a false name freeze rather than release (as a proper hypothesis would) scientific investigation.

¹⁰ Bronowski, The Identity of Man, op. cit., p. 45.

(This is surely the reason why Brown's 'scepticism' is more broadly based than that of Darwin: it sets in motion a vigorous inquiry into the operations of both the physiological or neural and the mental 'spheres'.) Modern science has been a fight for survival against this devastating notion that if hypotheses suggest abc, then abc must *be* so. Although neither the first nor the last to do so, Brown takes up the cause of science with imaginative flair to combat 'mysterious powers' interjected by false hypothesis between cause and effect. He will not concede that there are 'connections' between such factors as 'neural states' and 'rememberings' unless *these*, and *not* something else, have been amply demonstrated to be the case. When the supposed hypothesis states, 'Let there be powers' or 'Let connections exist', none appears. And so, Brown wins both by default and by experiment.

Brown's conception of hypotheses does, of course, fall short of completeness. He does not, as later writers on this subject have done, foresee their role as 'standing principles' (supporting other hypotheses on trial) to be a fundamental one, second only to their 'steering function' in experimental research. To his credit as a 'scientist', however, he recognizes that each set of "new circumstances" constitutes both a tax and a limitation on the "certainty" of even the most established hypotheses-turned-law. Statements about 'matters of fact', particularly causal ones,

are a logical type susceptible to error and improvement. The insight essentially is Hume's; what Brown adds to it is simply the force and concern of an 'experimentalist'. As he asserts, there is a "practical conclusion" to be drawn from this:

"we should use hypotheses to suggest and direct inquiry, not to terminate or supersede it. . . . in theorizing . . . we should not form any general proposition, till after as wide an induction, as it is possible for us to make; and, in the subsequent application of it to particulars, should never content ourselves, in any new circumstances, with the mere probability, however high, which this application of it affords; while it is possible for us to verify, or disprove it, by actual experiment."

(L. VIII, 128)

The forming of hypotheses, we are told is an important aspect, but *only an aspect*, of scientific procedure. It cannot be allowed to monopolize the whole.

We must not be taken in, however, by the full import of this *philosophy of science*. Brown clearly regarded his observations and analyses as legitimate experiments in the 'science of mind'. Unlike Reid, he was not willing to fall back on the belief that memory, for example, is "an original faculty given us by the Author of our being, of which we can give no account, but that we are so made" (I.P., III, ii, 328). Memory as well as attention are complex phenomena which, under the scrutiny of a finer analysis, reveal the simple 'mechanics' of their structures. In both cases, we discover a "conception" drawn into the foreground of consciousness by a specific

and compelling "desire" (L. XLII, 125). Nowhere do we find a peculiar "Faculty of the mind" (Sketch, 169). To this extent, therefore, Brown's experimentation carries with it the conviction that *some* account of the operations of mind can be given. Although it does not rule out any particular type of explanation (Brown, we remember, was open to any logical possibility - see Appendix F), his methodology is clearly restricted to a certain class of phenomena, namely that which comes within the range and compass of introspection. Perhaps Brown could not be expected to undertake physiological investigations as well; as a philosopher of mind writing and teaching in the wake of Locke and Hume, Condillac and Destutt de Tracy, he would have his hands full. There were hypotheses to be weighed and tested, data to be examined *in his own mind*, redundancies to be eliminated. It was a task to which he gave the best of his energies and for which he was both praised and condemned. But sometimes the experimentation was overruled by his very reliance on the guiding principles of 'volition' and 'suggestibility'. These hypotheses occasionally became the sole content of his science. And good Christian that he was, he found himself obliged to lay some explanations in the lap of Providence. The designs of Creation were for him a wonder and an impasse. It is in these lights that one must evaluate the scope of Brown's philosophy of science.

There is an analogy traced by W. K. Clifford in his lecture entitled "Body and Mind" which it would be well to remember when one is trying to assess the 'scientific' tendencies of common sense philosophy. It provides an interesting framework within which to question the dedication of that philosophy's pursuit of truth.¹¹ "In many parts of Europe", notes Clifford,

"it is customary to leave a part of the field untilled for the Brownie to live in, because he cannot live in cultivated ground. And if you grant him this grace, he will do a great deal of your household work for you in the night while you sleep. In Scotland the piece of ground which is left wild for him to live in is called 'the good man's croft.' Now there are people who indulge a hope that the ploughshare of Science will leave a sort of good man's croft around the field of reasoned truth; and they promise that in that case a good deal of our civilizing work shall be done for us in the dark, by means we know nothing of. I do not share this hope. . . . It is idle to set bounds to the purifying and organizing work of Science. Without mercy and without resentment she ploughs up weed and briar; from her footsteps behind her grow up corn and healing flowers; and no corner is far enough to escape her furrow. Provided only that we take as our motto and our rule of action, Man speed the plough."¹²

Thus we come back full circle, through hopes indulged and discarded, to the very aspiration with which Brown had

¹¹G. Combe, op. cit., p. 47. Andrew Combe thought that Stewart, for one, preferred "truth and I in company" to "truth, whatever may become of me". I do not regard this condemnation seriously, but it illustrates a kind of scientific impatience with metaphysical hesitation on the one hand and extravagance on the other. That impatience had been rising in France and England, under various guises for the better part of a century.

¹²W. K. Clifford, "Body and Mind", in Lectures and Essays, II, 70.

always to contend, as it were, in mortal combat, the hope that was to lift 'mental science' out of its idle speculations and into the hot-bed of neuro-physiological inquiry.

I have introduced the figure of "Brownie" at the end of this Part as a symbol of the limitations under which one must work in discussing Brown's view of the *mechanisms* of memory and attention. One is stranded, so to speak, somewhere between scientific and logical space, between a Priestley and a Wittgenstein. I have given precedence to the scientific side in the belief that Brown began his researches closer to its boundaries and moved gradually, but never completely, away from it. In shattering Darwin's theory, he had to familiarize himself with its terrain. He did so as a philosopher upholding standards of logical consistency and precision. And yet the urge to explore the 'how?' as well as the 'what do you mean?' grew in him, compelling him to try his hand in the laboratory of mind. Mental phenomena became the 'particles' and 'motions' of his inquiry; relations between them became the foundations for 'laws of regularity'. It is now time to examine *how they work* both as separate and as correlative functions, under the 'seeing-eye' of that very Consciousness which they help to sustain.