

An Inquiry into the Human Mind

Thomas Reid

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a short passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between square brackets in normal-sized type.

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Chapter 7: Conclusion

Reflections on the opinions of philosophers on this subject

There are two ways in which men can form their notions and opinions about the mind, and about its powers and operations. The •first is the only way that leads to truth, but it is narrow and rough, and few have entered on it. The •second is broad and smooth, and has been much travelled—not only by the vulgar but even by philosophers. It is sufficient for everyday life and is suitable for the purposes of the poet and orator, but in philosophical investigations of the mind it leads to error and delusion.

We may call the •first of these ways *the way of reflection*. When the mind is at work we are conscious of its workings; it is in our power to attend to them and reflect on them until they become familiar objects of thought. This is our only way of forming sound and accurate notions of those mental operations. But this attention and reflection is so hard for us, surrounded as we are by external objects that constantly claim our attention, that it has been very little practised, even by philosophers. Many times in the course of this *Inquiry* I have had reason to remark on how little attention has been given to the most familiar operations of the senses.

The •second, and the most common, way in which men form their opinions about the mind and its operations may be called *the way of analogy*. There is nothing in the course of nature that is so special that we can't find some resemblance, or at least some analogy, between it and other things with which we are acquainted. The mind naturally delights in hunting after such analogies, and it attends to them

with pleasure. From them poetry and wit derive a great part of their charms, and eloquence gets a good deal of its persuasive force from them. Besides the *pleasure* we receive from analogies, they are of very considerable *use*, both in •helping us to *think* about things that we can't easily get hold of without that handle, and in •leading us to probable conjectures about the nature and qualities of things that we haven't the means to investigate more directly. When I consider that the planet Jupiter is like the earth in this:

it rotates around its own axis, revolves around the sun, and is lit up by several secondary planets as the earth is lit up the moon,

I am inclined to conjecture from analogy that, as these features of the earth fit it to be the habitation of various orders of animals, they also make the planet Jupiter fit to contain animals; and having no more direct and conclusive argument to settle the matter, I accept the conclusion of this analogical reasoning, with a degree of assent proportioned to its strength. When I observe that the potato plant very much resembles the solanum in its flower and fruit, and am informed that the solanum is poisonous, I am inclined from analogy to have some suspicion of the potato; but in this case I have access to more direct and certain evidence, and therefore ought not to trust to analogy, which would lead me into an error.

•Arguments from analogy are always easily available, and crop up spontaneously in a fruitful imagination; but •arguments that are more direct and more conclusive often require painful attention and concentration; which is why mankind in general have been strongly inclined to trust to •the former. Look carefully at the systems of the ancient

philosophers, either concerning the material world or concerning the mind, and you'll find them to be built solely on the foundation of analogy. Francis Bacon first described the strict and severe method of *induction*; since his time it has been applied with great success in some parts of natural philosophy and very little in anything else. There is in fact no subject in which mankind are so strongly inclined to trust to the analogical way of thinking and reasoning as they are in what concerns the mind and its workings; because forming clear and distinct notions of those workings in the direct and proper way, and reasoning about them, requires a habit of *attentive reflection* of which few people are capable, and of which *no-one* is capable without much trouble and hard work.

Every man is apt to form his notions of things that are unfamiliar or hard to grasp from their analogy with things that are more familiar. Thus, if a sailor. . . were to start theorizing about the powers of the mind, he would no doubt. . . find in the mind sails, masts, rudder, and compass!

Sensible objects of one kind or another occupy and engross the rest of mankind as much as ship-related things occupy the sailor. For much of our lives we can think of nothing but the objects of sense; and it is hard, even after we come to years of reflection, to attend to things of a different kind in such a way as to form clear and distinct notions of them. So the condition of mankind provides good reason to expect •that their language and their common notions relating to the mind and its operations will be analogical, and derived from the objects of sense; and •that these analogies will be apt to deceive philosophers as well as on the vulgar, leading them to *materialize* the mind and its faculties. And experience abundantly confirms the truth of this expectation.

The names given to the soul in almost all languages sufficiently testify to how generally men of all nations at all

times have conceived the soul or generator of thoughts in man to be some subtle *matter*, like breath or wind. We have words that are proper [= 'literally and strictly correct'], and not analogical, to express the various ways in which we perceive external objects by the senses—words such as 'feeling', 'sight' and 'taste'—but we are often obliged to use these words analogically, to express other powers of the mind that are of a very different nature, ·for instance when we talk about '*seeing* that there is something wrong with his argument'. And for the powers that involve some degree of reflection we generally have only analogical names. The objects of thought are said to be

- in* the mind, ·though the mind is not spatial·,
- weighed, ·though mental items have no weight·,
- apprehended—·from Latin *apprehendere* = 'seize'·,
- comprehended—·from *comprehendere* = 'seize'·,
- conceived—·from *concipere* = 'contain' or 'grasp'·
- imagined—·from *imago* = 'picture' or 'image'·,
- retained—·from *retinere* = 'hold back'·,
- ruminated—·from *ruminare* = 'chew the cud'·.

The notions that the ancient philosophers had regarding the nature of the soul don't appear to have been much more refined than those of the vulgar, or to have been formed in any other way. I shall distinguish philosophical positions regarding the soul into the 'old and the 'new'. •The old is now almost extinct: it lasted until the time of Descartes, who gave it a fatal blow from which it has been slowly dying ever since. Descartes is the father of •the new philosophy of the soul, but it has been gradually improving since his time, on principles laid down by him. The old philosophy seems to have been purely analogical; the new is derived more from reflection, but still with a very considerable mixture of the old analogical notions.

Because the objects of sense consist of *matter* and *form*, the ancient philosophers thought that everything must belong to one of these categories or to be made up of both. Thus, some thought that the soul is a particular kind of subtle [= 'very finely divided'] *matter*, separable from our gross [= 'lumpy'] bodies; others thought that it is only a particular *form* of the body, and inseparable from it. For it seems that some of the ancients, like some of the moderns, thought that a certain structure or organization ·or form· of the body is all that is necessary to make it capable of sensing and thinking. These philosophers thought that the different powers of the mind belong to different parts of the body—e.g. the heart, the brain, the liver, the stomach, the blood.

Those who thought that the soul is a subtle matter separable from the body argued about which of the 'four elements' it belongs to, whether to earth, water, air, or fire. Each of these except earth had its particular advocates. But some thought that it involves all the elements: something in its make-up must be similar to everything we perceive (they argued), and we perceive earth by the earthly part of the soul, water by its watery part, and fire by its fiery part. Some philosophers wanted to know not just what kind of matter the soul is made of but also what its *shape* is; and they decided that it is spherical, so as to be more fit for motion. Among the ancient philosophers the most spiritual and sublime notion concerning the nature of the soul was that of the Platonists, I think. They held that the soul is made of the same •heavenly and •incorruptible matter that the fixed stars were made of, and therefore has a natural tendency to ·fly upwards to· rejoin its proper element. I can't work out which of these classes of philosophers Aristotle belonged to. He defines the soul to be the first *entelekheia* ·of a natural body that has potential life. Forgive me for not translating the Greek word—I don't know what it means!

[In Aristotle's use: the essential nature or informing principle of a living thing; the soul'—*New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.]

The ancient philosophers' notions of the *operations* of the mind, particularly with regard to perceptions and ideas, seem also to have been formed by the same kind of analogy.

Of the philosophers whose writings we have, Plato was the first to introduce the word 'idea' into philosophy, but his doctrine of ideas was somewhat peculiar. He agreed with the other ancient philosophers that all things consist of matter and form; and that

the *matter* of which all things are made exists from eternity, without form;

but he also believed that

there are eternal *forms* of all possible things, and these exist without matter;

and to these eternal and immaterial forms he gave the name 'ideas', maintaining that they are the only objects of true knowledge. It doesn't matter much to us whether he borrowed these notions from Parmenides or whether they came from his own creative imagination. The later Platonists seem to have improved on them: they conceived those ideas or eternal forms of things to exist not of themselves but in the mind of God, and to be the models and patterns according to which all things were made. . . .

Malebranche's views are close to these Platonic notions. He seems to have been more aware than anyone else of the difficulties that come with the common hypothesis concerning ideas, namely that *ideas of all objects of thought are in the human mind*. To avoid those difficulties, Malebranche contends that •the ideas that are the immediate objects of human thought are •the ideas of things in the mind of God; because God is intimately present to every human mind, he can reveal *his* ideas to *it* as far as he pleases.

Apart from the Platonists and Malebranche, every philosopher that I know of has thought that there are ideas or images of every object of thought in the human •mind, or at least in some part of the •brain where the mind is supposed to have its residence.

Aristotle had no great liking for the word 'idea', and seldom or never uses it except when refuting Plato's notions about ideas. He thought that matter can exist without form, but that forms can't exist without matter—i.e. that for a form to exist there must be something that *has* it. But at the same time he taught •that there can be no sensing, imagining or thinking without forms, phantasms or species in the mind; and •that things that can be sensed are perceived by 'sensible species', while things that can be thought are perceived by 'intelligible species'. His followers went into more detail. They held that those sensible and intelligible species are •emitted by the objects, and •make their impressions on the passive intellect; and that the active intellect perceives those impressions. This seems to have been the common opinion while the Aristotelian philosophy retained its authority.

The Epicurean doctrine, as explained by Lucretius, though widely different from the Aristotelian one in many things, is almost the same in this. He affirms that slender films or ghosts, *tenuia rerum simulacra* [= 'fine, delicate copies of things'] go on being emitted from all things and flying about; and that these, being extremely subtle, easily penetrate our gross bodies, strike on the mind, and thus cause thought and imagination.

After the Aristotelian system had reigned for more than a thousand years in the colleges of Europe, almost without a rival, it *sank* when it ran up against the system of Descartes. The clarity of his writings and notions, contrasted with the obscurity of Aristotle and his commentators, created a strong prejudice in favour of his new philosophy. The characteristic

of Plato's genius was •sublimity, that of Aristotle's •subtlety; but Descartes far excelled both in •clarity, and he bequeathed this spirit to his successors. The theory about the mind and its workings that is now generally accepted gets from Descartes not only its •spirit but its •basic principles; and even after all the improvements made by Malebranche, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, it can still be called 'the Cartesian system'. So I shall make some remarks about its spirit and tendency in general, and about its doctrine of ideas in particular. There will be five of these; they will bring us to the end of this book.

1. The method that Descartes pursued naturally led him to attend more to the operations of the mind by accurate reflection, and to trust less to analogical reasoning on this subject, than any philosopher had done before him. Intending to build a system on a new foundation, he began with a resolve to admit nothing that wasn't absolutely certain and evident. He supposed that his senses, his memory, his reason and every other faculty to which we trust in common life might be deceptive; and he resolved to disbelieve everything, until he was compelled by irresistible everything to assent •to something.

What appeared to him first of all to be certain and evident was •*That he thought, that he doubted, that he deliberated*. In short, he held that the workings of his own mind, of which he was conscious, must be real and not illusory; and that even if all his other faculties were to deceive him, his consciousness could not. So he looked on •this as the first of all truths. This was the first firm ground on which he set his foot after being tossed around in the ocean of scepticism; and he resolved to build all knowledge on it without looking for any more first principles.

This would involve him in starting with what he knew by consciousness and rigorously deducing from that every other

truth, and particularly the existence of the objects of sense; so he was naturally led to attend to the ·mental· operations of which he was conscious, without ·analogically· borrowing his notions of them from external things.

It wasn't analogical thinking but attentive reflection that led Descartes to this conclusion:

Thought, volition, memory and the other attributes of the mind are altogether *unlike* extension, shape, and all the attributes of body; so we have no reason to regard •thinking substances as having any resemblance to •extended substances; and as the attributes of the thinking substance are things of which we are conscious, we can have a more certain and immediate knowledge of them by reflection than we can have of external objects by our senses.

As far as I know, Descartes was the first to make these observations; and they are more important and more illuminating than everything that had previously been said on this subject. They ought to make us suspicious of—and nervous about accepting—*any* notion concerning the mind and its operations that is drawn by analogy from sensible objects, and to make us rely only on accurate reflection as the source of all real knowledge on this subject.

2. I observe that just as the Aristotelian system tends to *materialize the mind* and its operations, so the Cartesian system tends to *spiritualize body* and its qualities. The two systems share a single error which leads •through analogy to the first of these extremes and •through reflection to the second of them. The error I mean is the view that we can't know anything about body or its qualities except by having sensations that *resemble* those qualities. The two systems agreed in this, but according to their different methods of reasoning they drew very different conclusions from it. The Aristotelian drew his notions of sensation from the qualities

of body, whereas the Cartesian drew his notions of the qualities of body from his sensations.

The Aristotelian, taking it for granted that bodies and their qualities really do exist and are such as we commonly take them to be, inferred from them the nature of his sensations, and reasoned in this manner:

Our sensations are the impressions that sensible objects make on the mind, and can be compared to the impression of a seal on wax; the impression is the likeness or form of the seal without the matter of it; similarly, every sensation is the likeness or form of some sensible quality of the object.

This is the reasoning of Aristotle, and it has an obvious tendency to *materialize the mind* and its sensations.

The Cartesian, on the other hand, thinks that the existence of the body or of any of its qualities is not to be taken as a first principle, and that we oughtn't to admit anything about it except what can by valid reasoning be deduced from our sensations. And he knows that by reflection we can form clear and distinct notions of our sensations without borrowing our notions of them by analogy from the objects of the senses. So the Cartesians, beginning by attending to their sensations, first discovered that the sensations corresponding to secondary qualities can't resemble any quality of body. From this Descartes and Locke inferred that sound, taste, smell, colour, heat and cold, which the vulgar took to be qualities of body, were not qualities of body but mere sensations of the mind. Afterwards the ingenious Berkeley paid closer attention to the nature of sensation in general, and discovered and demonstrated that no sensation whatever could possibly resemble any quality of an unthinking being such as body is supposed to be; from which he inferred, quite validly, that there is the same reason to hold that extension, shape, and all the primary qualities

are mere sensations as there is to hold that the secondary qualities are mere sensations. Thus, by valid reasoning from the Cartesian principles matter was stripped of all its qualities; the new system . . . converted all the qualities of matter into sensations, thus spiritualizing body, as the old system had materialized spirit.

The way to avoid both these extremes is to admit •the existence of what we see and feel as a first principle, as well as •the existence of things of which we are conscious; and (with the Aristotelians) to take our notions of the qualities of body from the testimony of our senses, and (with the Cartesians) take our notions of our sensations from the testimony of consciousness.

3. Modern scepticism is the natural offspring of the new system; and although the system didn't give birth to this monster until the year 1739 when Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* was published, it can be said to have carried it in its womb from the beginning.

The old system accepted all the principles of common sense as first principles, without requiring any proof of them; and therefore, though its reasoning was commonly vague, analogical and dark, it was built on a broad foundation and had no tendency to scepticism. I don't find any Aristotelian thinking he ought to prove the existence of a material world; but every writer on the Cartesian system tried to do this, until Berkeley clearly demonstrated the futility of their arguments, from which he concluded that there is no such thing as a material world and that the belief in it ought to be rejected as a vulgar error.

The Cartesian system accepts only one of the principles of common sense as a starting-point, and claims to deduce all the rest from it by strict argumentation. The accepted starting-point is the thesis that *our thoughts, our sensations and everything of which we are conscious has a real exis-*

tence; and everything else must be made evident by the light of reason. Reason must erect the whole structure of knowledge on the foundation of this single principle of consciousness.

There is a disposition in human nature to bring things down to as few principles as possible; and having very few principles certainly adds to the beauty of a system *if* the principles can take the weight that is placed on them. The mathematicians are entitled to glory in having raised so noble and magnificent a system of science on the foundation of a few axioms and definitions. But this •love of simplicity, of basing everything on a few principles, has produced many a false system, and there never was any system in which •it appears so remarkably as that of Descartes. His whole system concerning matter and spirit is built on one axiom, expressed in one word, *Cogito* [= 'I think']. On the foundation of conscious thought, with ideas for his materials, he builds his system of the human understanding and tries to account for all its phenomena; and having (he thought) proved from his consciousness the existence •of matter and •of a certain quantity of motion originally conferred on it, he builds his system of the material world and tries to account for all *its* phenomena.

These principles concerning the material system have been found to be inadequate. It has become clear that besides •matter and motion we must also admit •gravitation, •cohesion and •corpuscular attraction, •magnetism, and other •centripetal and •centrifugal forces by which the particles of matter attract and repel each other. Newton discovered this, demonstrating that these forces don't come down to matter and motion; and he was led by analogy and the love of simplicity to conjecture—not dogmatically, but with his characteristic modesty and caution—that all the phenomena of the material world depend on •attracting and

•repelling forces in the particles of matter. But I venture to say that this conjecture fell short of the mark. For even in the inorganic kingdom the powers by which salts, crystals, spars and many other bodies come together into regular forms can never be accounted for by forces of attraction and repulsion in the particles of matter. And in the plant and animal kingdoms there are strong indications of powers of a different nature from all the powers of inorganic bodies. So we see that although in the structure of the material world there is certainly all the beautiful simplicity consistent with the purposes for which it was made, it isn't as simple as the •great Descartes said it is; indeed, it isn't as simple as the •greater Newton modestly conjectured it to be. Both were misled by analogy, and the love of simplicity. Descartes had had a great deal to do with extension, shape, and motion; Newton had enlarged his views to take in attracting and repelling forces; and both formed their notions of the unknown parts of nature from those with which they were acquainted— . . . thus engaging in analogical thinking.

But to come to Descartes's system concerning the human understanding: as I have already noted, it was built on consciousness as its sole foundation and with ideas as its materials; and all Descartes's followers have built on the same foundation and with the same materials. They acknowledge that nature has given us various •simple ideas. These are analogous to the •matter of Descartes's physical system. They also acknowledge a •natural power by which ideas are compounded, disjoined, associated, compared. This is analogous to the •original quantity of motion in Descartes's physical system. From these starting-points they try to explain the phenomena of the human understanding, just as in the physical system the phenomena of nature were to be explained by matter and motion. It must indeed be acknowledged, that there is great simplicity in this system

as well as in the other. They are alike to an extent that might be expected in children of the same father; one of them has been found to be the child of Descartes rather than of nature, so there is reason to think that Descartes fathered the other one as well.

It is obvious that the natural outcome of this system is scepticism with regard to everything except the existence of our ideas and of the necessary relations amongst them that appear when we compare them: because from

- ideas are the only objects of thought, and
- ideas have no existence except when we are conscious of them,

it necessarily follows that

- no object of our thought can have a continued and permanent existence.

We have been accustomed to regarding body and mind, cause and effect, time and space, as existing independently of our thought; but they are all turned out of existence by this short dilemma:

- Either these things are ideas of sensation or reflection, or they are not;
- if they *are*, they can't exist except when we are conscious of them;
- if they *are not*, they are words without any meaning.

Neither Descartes nor Locke perceived this consequence of their system concerning ideas. Bishop Berkeley was the first who discovered it. And what followed on this discovery? Why, •with regard to the material world and with regard to space and time he accepts the conclusion that these things are mere ideas, and have no existence except in our minds; but •with regard to the existence of spirits or minds he does not accept that conclusion—and if he had done so he would have been an absolute sceptic. But how does he evade this conclusion with regard to the existence of spirits?

The expedient that the good bishop uses on this occasion is very remarkable, and shows his great dislike for scepticism. He maintains •that we have no ideas of spirits, and •that we can think and speak and reason about them and their attributes without having any ideas of them. If this is so, my lord bishop, what is to prevent us from thinking and reasoning about bodies and their qualities without having ideas of them? The bishop either didn't think of this question or didn't think fit to give any answer to it. However, I would point out that in order to avoid scepticism Berkeley openly jumps away from the Cartesian system, without giving any reason why he does so in this instance and in no other. This indeed is the only case of a deviation from Cartesian principles that I have met with in Descartes's successors; and it seems to have been only a sudden lurch caused by a terror of scepticism, for in everything else Berkeley's system is founded on Cartesian principles.

Thus we see, that Descartes and Locke take the road that leads to scepticism, without knowing the end of it; but they stop short for lack of light to take them further. Berkeley, frightened at the appearance of the dreadful abyss of scepticism, abruptly turns aside and avoids it. But Hume is more daring and intrepid: without turning aside to the right hand or to the left, like Virgil's Alecto, he shoots directly into the gulf. [Reid then quotes three Latin lines by Virgil.]

4. The new system gives an extremely lame and imperfect account of the part of the furniture of the human understanding that is the gift of nature rather than being acquired by our own reasoning faculty.

The natural furniture of the human understanding is of two kinds:

- the •notions or simple apprehensions that we have of things, and
- the •judgments or beliefs that we have concerning them.

The new system puts all our notions into two classes: •ideas of sensation, which are taken to be copies of our sensations that are retained in the memory or imagination; •ideas of reflection, which are taken to be copies of the workings of our minds of which we are conscious, similarly retained in the memory or imagination. We are told that these two classes include all the materials about which human beings do or can think. As to our judgment of things, or the beliefs that we have concerning them, the new system allows no part of them to be the gift of nature, but regards them all as acquired by reason through comparing our ideas and perceiving their 'agreements' or 'disagreements'. I regard this account as extremely imperfect, both in what it says about our notions and in its treatment of our judgments or beliefs. I shall briefly point out some of its main defects.

The division of our notions into ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection is contrary to all rules of logic, because the second member of the division includes the first. We can't form clear and sound notions of our sensations in any way except by reflection.

Sensation is an operation of the mind of which we are conscious; and we get the notion of sensation by reflecting on what we are conscious of.

Similarly,

doubting and believing are operations of the mind of which we are conscious, and we get the notion of *them* by reflecting on what we are conscious of.

So the ideas of sensation *are* ideas of reflection, as much as the ideas of doubting or believing, or any other ideas whatsoever.

Apart from its logical inaccuracy, this division of our notions or ideas is extremely incomplete. For, since sensation is as much an operation of the mind as any of the other things of which we form our notions by reflection, when

we are told 'All our notions are either ideas of sensation or ideas of reflection', what this means in plain English is: 'Human beings don't and can't think of anything except the operations of their own minds.' Nothing can be more contrary to truth, or more contrary to the experience of mankind. I know that Locke, while he maintained this doctrine, believed that our notions of body and of its qualities, and of motion and of space, are ideas of sensation. But why did he believe this? It was because he believed those notions to be nothing but images [= 'likenesses'] of our sensations. Well, then, if in fact the notions of body and its qualities, of motion and of space are *not* likenesses of our sensations, won't it follow that those notions are not ideas of sensation? It certainly will.

No doctrine in the new system leads more directly to scepticism than this. And Hume knew very well how to use it for that purpose; for if you maintain that there is any such existing thing as body or mind, time or place, cause or effect, he immediately catches you between the horns of this dilemma: your notions of these things are either ideas of sensation or ideas of reflection; if of sensation, from what sensation are they copied? if of reflection, from what operations of the mind are they copied?

It is indeed to be wished that those who have *written* much about sensation and the other operations of the mind had also carefully *thought and reflected much* on those operations! But isn't it very strange that they won't allow it to be possible for mankind to think of anything else?

This system's account of our judgment and beliefs about things is as far from the truth as its account of our notions or simple apprehensions. It represents our senses as having no role except to provide the mind with notions or simple apprehensions of things; and it says that our judgment and belief about those things are acquired by relating our

notions to one another and perceiving their agreements or disagreements.

I have shown, on the contrary, that every operation of the senses *includes* judgment or belief as well as simple apprehension. Thus, when I feel the pain of gout in my toe, I have not only a •notion of pain but a •belief in its existence and a •belief in something wrong in my toe that is causing it. And this belief isn't produced by inter-relating ideas and perceiving their agreements and disagreements; it is included in the very nature of the sensation. When I perceive a tree in front of me, my faculty of seeing gives me not only a •notion or simple apprehension of the tree, but a •belief in its existence, its shape, its distance and its size; and this judgment or belief is not acquired by comparing ideas—it is included in the very nature of the perception. I have already called attention to several original forces for belief in the course of this *Inquiry*; and when other faculties of the mind are examined we shall find others that haven't come up in the examination of the five senses. Such original and natural judgments are therefore a part of the provision nature has made for the human understanding. Just as much as our notions or simple apprehensions, they are put into our minds by God. They serve to direct us in the everyday affairs of life, where our reasoning faculty would leave us in the dark. They are a part of our constitution, and all the discoveries of our reason are based on them. They make up what is called 'the common sense of mankind'; and what is plainly contrary to any of them is what we call 'absurd'. Their strength is 'good sense', which is often found in people who are not highly intelligent. A remarkable deviation from them, arising from a disorder in the person's constitution, is what we call 'lunacy', as when a man believes that he is made of glass. When a man allows himself to be reasoned out of the principles of common sense by metaphysical arguments, we may call this

‘metaphysical lunacy’, which differs from the other sort of lunacy in being intermittent rather than continuous: it is apt to seize the patient in solitary and speculative moments; but when he comes into the company of others common sense recovers its authority. A clear listing and explanation of the principles of common sense is one of the chief things that logic should provide. I have considered only the ones that came up in the examination of the five senses.

5. Although the new system professes to set out on the route of reflection, not that of analogy, it has retained some of the old analogical notions concerning the workings of the mind, particularly this one:

Things that don’t now exist in the mind itself can only be perceived, remembered or imagined by means of ideas or likenesses of them in the mind, which are the immediate objects of perception, memory and imagination.

This doctrine seems evidently to be borrowed from the old ·Aristotelian· system, which taught that external things make impressions on the mind like the impressions of a seal on wax; that it is by means of those impressions that we perceive, remember or imagine them; and that those impressions must resemble the things from which they are taken. When we form our notions of the operations of the mind by analogy, this way of conceiving them seems to be very natural, and offers itself to our thoughts. Everything that is ·tactually· felt must make some impression on the body, and so we are apt to think that everything that is understood must make some impression on the mind.

This analogical sort of reasoning seems to be the source of the opinion—so universally accepted among philosophers—that there are ideas or images of things in the mind. I have pointed out that Berkeley at one point deserts this principle of the new system by affirming that we have no ideas of

spirits, and that we can think of them immediately, without ideas. But I don’t know whether anyone has followed him in this. The modern philosophers also somewhat disagree amongst themselves regarding the ideas or images by which (they say) we perceive, remember or imagine sensible things. They all agree about the *existence* of such images, but they differ about *where* they are: some say they are in a particular part of the •brain where the soul is thought to reside, while others place them in the •mind itself. Descartes held the first of these opinions, and Newton seems to have favoured it also. . . . But Locke seems to place the ideas of sensible things in the mind, and it is obvious that Berkeley and Hume were of the same opinion. Hume makes a very curious application of this doctrine, by trying to prove from it that the mind is either an extended and divisible substance or not a substance at all, because the ideas of extension can’t be in a subject that is indivisible and unextended.

In this as in most things, Hume’s reasoning is admittedly clear and strong. For whether ‘the idea of extension’ is

only another name for extension itself,

as Berkeley and Hume assert, or

an image and resemblance of extension,

as Locke thought—either way, any man of common sense will agree that the idea of extension cannot be *in* an unextended and indivisible subject. But while I agree with Hume in his reasoning, I would make a different application of it. He takes it for granted that there are ideas of extension in the mind, from which he infers that if the mind is a substance at all it must be an extended and divisible one. I on the other hand take it for granted on the testimony of •common sense that my mind is a substance, i.e. a permanent subject of thought; and my •reason convinces me that it is an unextended and indivisible substance; and from this I infer that there can’t be anything in it that resembles extension. If this reasoning

had occurred to Berkeley, it would probably have led him to accept that we can think and reason not only about *spirits* but also about *bodies* without having ideas of them in the mind.

I had intended to examine more fully and in more detail this doctrine that *there are ideas or images of things in the mind*; and also another doctrine that is based on it, namely that *judgment or belief is nothing but a perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas*. But all through this work I have shown that the operations of the mind that I have examined do not favour either of these doctrines, and in many things contradict them; so I have thought it right to drop this part of my plan. If there is any need for it, it can be done better after inquiring into some other powers of the human understanding.

Although I have examined only the five senses, and the forces in the human mind that •are active in them or •have come to our notice in the course of this examination, I shan't push on further with this inquiry until I have thought some more. The powers of

memory,
 imagination,
 taste,
 reasoning,
 moral perception,
 the will,
 the passions,

the affections, and
 all the active powers of the soul
 present a vast and boundless field of philosophical inquiry, which I am far from thinking myself able to survey with accuracy. Many able authors, ancient and modern, have made excursions into this vast territory and have communicated useful observations; but there is reason to believe that those who have claimed to give us a map of the whole territory have satisfied themselves with a very inaccurate and incomplete survey of it. If Galileo had attempted a complete system of natural philosophy, he would probably have done little service to mankind; but by confining himself to what he could understand, he laid the foundation for a system of knowledge that is coming into existence gradually, and that does honour to the human understanding. Newton, building on this foundation and in the same way confining his inquiries to the law of gravitation and the properties of light, performed wonders. If he had attempted a great deal more he would have done a great deal less, and perhaps nothing at all. I have wanted to follow these great examples—though with shorter strides, alas! and with less force—so I have attempted an inquiry into just one little corner of the human mind. It seems to be the corner that is most exposed to vulgar observation and is most easily comprehended; but if I have described it accurately, you must admit that the accounts previously given of it were very lame and wide of the truth.