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## North American Philosophical Publications

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Author(s): C. A. J. Coady

Source: *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Apr., 1973), pp. 149-155

Published by: [University of Illinois Press](#) on behalf of the [North American Philosophical Publications](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009487>

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## VIII. TESTIMONY AND OBSERVATION

C. A. J. COADY

IN answer to the question "Why do you believe that?" or "How do you know that?" it is proper to make such replies as "I saw it" or "It follows from this" or "It usually happens like that" or "Jones told me so." There may be more than these four kinds of reply possible (e.g., "It's a matter of insight," "I remember it," "I intuited it") and there may be more than one way of interpreting or taking any of them. Nonetheless there are *at least* these four kinds of reply possible and there are at least four standard ways of interpreting them which give rise to four *prima facie* categories of evidence: observation, deductive inference, inductive inference, and testimony. The first three have had a great deal of attention paid to them in philosophy but the fourth has been relatively neglected.<sup>1</sup> I hope to do something toward repairing that neglect; a neglect which certainly cannot have arisen from the insignificance of the role played by testimony in the forming of beliefs in the community since as Hume notes: "... there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, and even necessary to human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men and the reports of eye-witnesses and spectators."<sup>2</sup>

Hume is, indeed, one of the few philosophers I have read who has offered anything like a sustained account of testimony and if any view has a claim to the title of "the received view" it is his. In what follows I shall examine and criticize Hume's position in the hope of throwing light on more general issues concerning the nature and status of testimony. Hume's account of the matter is offered in his essay on Miracles which is Sect. 10 of *An Enquiry*

*Concerning Human Understanding*. Essentially his theory constitutes a reduction of testimony as a form of evidence or support to the status of a species (one might almost say, a mutation) of inductive inference. And, again, insofar as inductive inference is reduced by Hume to a species of observation and consequences attendant upon observations then in a like fashion testimony meets the same fate. So we find him saying immediately after the piece quoted above:

This species of reasoning, perhaps, one may deny to be founded on the relation of cause and effect. I shall not dispute about a word. It will be sufficient to observe that our assurance in any argument of this kind is derived from no other principle than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. It being a general maxim, that no objects have any discoverable connexion together, and that all the inferences, which we can draw from one to another, are founded merely on our experience of their constant and regular conjunction; it is evident that we ought not to make an exception to this maxim in favour of human testimony, whose connexion with any event seems, in itself, as little necessary as any other. (P. 111.)

And elsewhere in the same essay he says:

The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any *connexion*, which we perceive *a priori*, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them." (P. 113.)

This is the view that I want to contest and, as it is convenient to have a label, I shall call it the Reductionist Thesis and shall employ the abbrevi-

<sup>1</sup> A notable non-neglector is Professor H. H. Price who has discussed the issue in his recent book, *Belief* (London and New York, 1969). His chapter on this ("The Evidence of Testimony") has a quite different orientation to my discussion although he shows himself to be well aware of some of those defects in the traditional approach to which I shall be directing attention. Sydney Shoemaker also touches upon some of the issues discussed here in ch. 6 of his book *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, 1963). Although Shoemaker is not primarily concerned with testimony he does, as I do, reject the idea that the validity of testimony could be established by observation. His arguments, however, are very different from mine and reflect his basic concern with certain problems of self-knowledge and memory. They also reflect certain Wittgensteinian assumptions about memory, language, and philosophy which I do not wish either to discuss or employ in what follows.

<sup>2</sup> Sect. 88, David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford, 1957). All quotations hereafter from this work are taken from L. A. Selby-Bigge's Second Edition of the *Enquiries* published by Clarendon Press, Oxford. Bracketed page references in my text are to that edition.

ation R.T. to refer to it. My criticism begins by calling attention to a fatal ambiguity in the use of terms like "experience" and "observation" in the Humean statement of R.T. We are told by Hume that we only trust in testimony because experience has shown it to be reliable but where experience means individual observation and the expectations it gives rise to, this seems plainly false and, on the other hand, where it means common experience (i.e., the reliance upon the observations of others) it is surely question-begging. To take the second horn of the dilemma first—let us call it R.T.<sup>2</sup>—we find Hume speaking of "*our* observation of the veracity of human testimony" and "*our* experience of their constant and regular conjunction." And it is clear enough that Hume often means to refer by such phrases to the common experience of mankind and not to the mere solitary observations of David Hume. Our reliance upon testimony as an institution, so to speak, is supposed to be based on the same kind of footing as our reliance upon laws of nature (Hume thinks of this as an important premiss in his critique of miracles) and he speaks of the "firm and unalterable experience" which has established these laws. It is an important part of his argument that a miracle must be a violation of the laws of nature and so he says:

It is no miracle that a man, seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden: because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because that has *never* been observed in any age or country. There must therefore be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. (P. 115.)

We may ignore, for our purposes here, the validity of this highly debatable account of a law of nature and the blatant question-begging of his "*never* been observed in any age or country" and yet gather from this extract the need Hume has to mean by "experience," "observation," and the like, the common experience of mankind. Clearly his argument does not turn on the fact, for instance, that *he* has "frequently observed" the sudden death of a man "seemingly in good health"—it is quite likely that Hume (like most of us) never had occasion to observe personally anything of the kind. And the point is surely clinched by his reference to "uniform experience" and his use of the phrase "observed in any age or country."

Evidently then, R.T., as actually argued by

Hume, is involved in vicious circularity since the experience upon which our reliance upon testimony as a form of evidence is supposed to rest is itself reliant upon testimony which cannot itself be reduced in the same way. The idea of taking seriously someone else's observations, someone else's experience, already requires us to take their testimony (in this case, reports of what they observe) equally seriously. It is ludicrous to talk of their observations being the major part of our justification in taking their reports seriously when we have to take their reports seriously in order to know what their observations are.

Hume's conflation of personal and communal observation can be further illustrated by a passage from the *Treatise of Human Nature* (Bk. I, Pt. IV, Sect. II). Discussing our reasons for believing in the continued, independent existence of material things, he says:

I receive a letter, which, upon opening it, I perceive by the handwriting and subscription to have come from a friend, who says he is two hundred leagues distant. It is evident I can never account for this phenomenon, conformable to my experience in other instances, without spreading out in my mind the whole sea and continent between us, and supposing the effects and continued existence of posts and ferries, according to my memory and observation. (P. 196, Selby-Bigge edition.)

Here we have Hume using "my" observation when he is clearly not entitled to do so since there is probably no single person who has personally observed the complete path of even *one* letter from the moment it leaves the sender's hand to the moment it reaches its destination. Hume might have observed postmen, posts, ferries, etc., but his beliefs about what they do (his belief in the postal system) is dependent upon a complicated web of testimony, a highlight among which would no doubt be what he was told by his teachers or parents. And yet, "my memory and observation." How easy it is to appropriate at a very fundamental level what is known by report and what is known by personal observation. Similarly, that babies are born of women in a certain way is known to all of us and it is a fact of observation but very few of us have ever observed it for ourselves.

So much for the second part of the dilemma but what of the first part—let us call it R.T.<sup>1</sup> Surely we can, on Hume's behalf, retract his incautious commitment to common experience and state the R.T. in terms of personal observations alone. My claim

was that so stated R.T.<sup>1</sup> is plainly false but this has yet to be shown. R.T.<sup>1</sup> would run something like this:

We rely upon testimony as a species of evidence *because* each of us observes for himself a constant and regular conjunction between what people report and the way the world is. More particularly, we each observe for ourselves a constant conjunction between kinds of report and kinds of situation so that we have good inductive grounds for expecting this conjunction to continue in the future.

My justification for bringing in the idea of a kind of report correlating with a kind of situation is Hume himself:

And as the evidence, derived from witnesses and human testimony, is founded on past experience, so it varies with the experience, and is regarded either as a *proof* or a *probability* according as the conjunction between any particular kind of report and any kind of object has been found to be constant or variable. (P. 112.)

Now I characterized this sort of position as "plainly false" because it seems absurd to suggest that, individually, we have done anything like the amount of fieldwork that R.T.<sup>1</sup> requires. As mentioned earlier, most of us have never seen a baby born nor have we examined the circulation of the blood nor the actual geography of the world nor any fair sample of the laws of the land nor have we made the observations that lie behind our knowledge that the lights in the sky are heavenly bodies immensely distant nor a vast number of other observations that R.T.<sup>1</sup> would seem to require. Some people have of course made them *for us* but we are precluded from taking any solace from this fact under the present interpretation of R.T. So it was this general situation that made me speak of R.T.<sup>1</sup> as plainly false.

But the matter is perhaps more complex than such a characterization would indicate as can be seen by considering a possible rejoinder by the defenders of R.T.<sup>1</sup>. This rejoinder might run as follows: "You are ignoring the very important provision, made by Hume, that the conjunction in individual experience is between kinds of report and kinds of object. This cuts down the amount of observing that has to be done and makes the project a manageable one for an individual." I think I may reasonably plead "not guilty" to this accusation inasmuch as I intended the list above (of conjunctions never checked personally by most of us) to be more than a recital of particular conjunc-

tions that R.T.<sup>1</sup> requires us to have personally checked. The list was supposed to be typical in the sense that it indicated *areas* in which we rightly accept testimony without ever having engaged in the sort of checking of reports against personal observation that R.T.<sup>1</sup> demands.

But quite apart from this, there seem to me to be serious difficulties in the very idea of finding constant conjunctions between (in Hume's words) "any particular kind of report and any kind of object." Hume wants these conjunctions to be something like the kinds of conjunctions he thinks are required to establish causal laws and even laws of nature. In such matters the decisive constant conjunctions are between one kind of object and another kind of object. But whatever we think about the idea of a kind of object, the notion of a kind of report surely requires some explanation in this context. Unfortunately Hume does nothing to provide such an explanation and since the matter is also of interest in its own right I shall risk a digression to consider some possible interpretations and their implications before turning to a different, and perhaps more decisive, difficulty for the type of approach represented by R.T.<sup>1</sup>.

It seems to me that "kind of report" may be meant to refer either to the kind of speaker who gives the report or to the kind of content the report contains. If it is the former that is intended (and some of Hume's remarks *seem* to indicate this) then presumably the kind of speaker will not be determined by such considerations as color of skin or nationality or hair-style or height, rather, the relevant kind will have something to do with authority or expertise or credentials to say. So the R.T.<sup>1</sup> would go something like: We rely upon testimony because we have each personally observed a correlation between expert (or authoritative) reports and the kinds of situations reported in a large number of cases.

But the major difficulty for this interpretation is that a man's being an expert or an authority on some matter cannot be a matter of mere inspection in the way that his being white or tall is. That some man is an expert on, say, geography or South East Asian politics, is either known on the testimony of others (by far the most usual case) or it has to be established by observing some high correlation between his reports and the relevant situations in the world. If the former then we are no further advanced upon the R.T. program of justification since the same problem of establishing expertise must arise again and again. But if the latter, then

the notion of an authority or an expert no longer provides us with any specification of a *kind of report*. That is to say, we cannot use the idea of a *kind of report* as equivalent to *report of a kind of speaker* and then proceed to validate testimony along the lines of R.T.<sup>1</sup> because the kind of correlation situation *the existence of which we would supposedly be investigating* would have to be known by us to exist already before we could set up the terms of the investigation.<sup>3</sup>

This indicates that the business of establishing constant conjunctions between kinds of report and kinds of situation must begin with the interpretation of "kinds of report" as "reports of kinds of situation." And certainly this seems to be a natural way of interpreting Hume's intentions at this point. An initial problem for this interpretation concerns the degree of generality that should attach to the content of a report before it qualifies as a kind of report. That is to say, some sort of decision would presumably be required as to whether or not the report "There is a sick lion in Taronga Park Zoo" belonged to the kind medical report or geographical report or empirical report or existence report. Perhaps it could be said to belong to all of them or to some and not to others but whatever was said it would be of considerable importance to the establishing of conjunctions, since a decision here is a decision about the actual identity of the conjunctions and hence, in consequence, about the degree of correlation likely to be established. For instance, if the report were treated as belonging to the kind "existence report" then it might be that Jones had personally established quite a large number of conjunctions between existence reports and the relevant existence situations without this being any real reason for accepting the report in question. (Compare with: "There is a Martian in my study" which is equally well supported by Jones's personal experience of existence reports.) On the other hand, if it were treated as a medical report then Jones may have had very little personal experience of correlations between medical reports and medical facts yet this would hardly be a real reason for not accepting the report. In addition, Jones would, on Hume's hypothesis, now have a strong reason for accepting the report if he classifies it one way and no reason for accepting it if he classifies it another way. Since either classification is logically permissible then it seems

to be purely a matter of whim whether Jones has or has not good reason for accepting the report. Clearly some sort of non-arbitrary restriction on the scope of "report of a kind of situation" is required to make this notion of any real value in the elaboration of R.T.<sup>1</sup>. Here, however, I shall pursue no further the interpretation of "kind of report" and the difficulties involved in specifying clearly the sort of correlations required by R.T.<sup>1</sup> because, on the perhaps dubious assumption that the difficulties are soluble, I want to raise what seems to me to be a more fundamental problem.

This difficulty consists in the fact that the whole enterprise of R.T.<sup>1</sup> in its present form requires that we understand what testimony is independently of knowing that it is, in general, a reliable form of evidence about the way the world is. This is, of course, the point of Hume's saying:

The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any *connexion*, which we perceive *a priori*, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them. (P. 113.)

It is a clear implication from this that we might have discovered (though in fact we did not) that there was no conformity at all between testimony and reality. Hume's position requires the possibility that we clearly isolate the reports that people make about the world for comparison by personal observation with the actual state of the world and find a high, low, or no correlation between them. But it is by no means clear that we can understand this suggestion. To take the most extreme discovery: imagine a world in which an extensive survey yields no correlation between reports and (individually observed) facts. In such a colossally topsyturvy world what evidence would there possibly be for the existence of reports at all? Imagine a community of Martians who are in the mess that R.T.<sup>1</sup> allows as a possibility. Let us suppose for the moment that they have a language which we can translate (there are difficulties in this supposition as we shall see shortly) with names for distinguishable things in their environment and suitable predicative equipment. We find, however, to our astonishment, that whenever they construct sentences addressed to each other in the absence (from their vicinity) of the things designated by the names but when they are, as we should think, in a position to

<sup>3</sup> It may appear that part of this difficulty could be met by recourse to the qualification "report of a so-called expert" but this is mere appearance since we require some assurance that we are checking the reports of those who are not merely self-styled experts but widely acknowledged as such and this sort of assurance could only be had by reliance upon testimony.

*report* then they seem to say what we (more synoptically placed) can observe to be false. But in such a situation there would be no reason to believe that they even had the practice of reporting. There would be no behavior or setting for what we know as reporting. There would, for instance, be no reliance upon the utterances of others; just this curious fantasy practice rather like the fantasy games of children ("Mummy, there's a burglar in the house") but generalized to the stage where we can discern no point in the activity at all, even a parasitic point. The supposition that reports could be divorced from reality in this way is like the supposition that orders might never be obeyed. If there were Martians who uttered certain sounds in a tone of voice like the tone we use in ordering we might initially conjecture that they were issuing orders in making these sounds but this conjecture would just be refuted if it were found that these sounds never had any effect that might be described as obedience upon any audience.

But actually the situation with reporting and testifying is even worse than this because the supposed Martian community seem to be in trouble even about the content of the utterances that are alleged to be non-correlated reports. The question of the meaning or content of what they say in their alleged reports is of great importance because the task of looking for a correlation or conjunction of the Humean type is dependent upon knowing what state of affairs is supposed to correlate with the utterance. The principle of correlation has to be given by the meaning of the utterances because, after all, *any* utterance is correlated with or conjoined to *any* situation according to *some* principle of matching. So, even if we allow, for the sake of argument, that we can understand what it is for the Martians to engage in reporting, we cannot accept the coherence of the no-correlation story unless we can understand what Martian reports actually say. But it is precisely here that serious difficulties arise and to see how they arise we must look more closely at the supposed Martian situation.

Although I have not tried to define testimony (and there are problems facing any such attempt) it should be clear that, on any plausible definition, a very high proportion of the statements made by a community over a sample period will have to be testimony statements. These utterances will con-

trast with such speech episodes as soliloquies, musings, and conjectures. In the Martian community a common vocabulary is employed across different speech acts so that, as with us, the same form of words may be used for either conjecture or testimony (e.g., "He pushed her in") although there may also be speech-act indicators available of an Austinian or Searlean form ("I testify that . . .," "I conjecture that . . ."). Suppose then that we encounter a Martian who uses the utterance "Kar do gnos u grin" in the presence of a tree in a garden. Perhaps he waves a languid hand at the tree as he does so. We speculate that this utterance means, can be translated as, "There is a tree in the garden" and, in particular, that "gnos" means "tree."<sup>4</sup> We then find, however, that the Martian frequently uses "gnos" in remarks in situations not involving the presence of a tree in his observational vicinity. Some few of these remarks we assess as mere conjectures (and I shall ignore the problems raised by the question of how this assessment is made) but the majority we decide to be testimony. So we find the Martian saying things of the form: "Kar do gnos u grin," "Kar do gnos u bilt," "Kar do gnos u tonk" and we guess that these mean "There is a tree in the garden," "There is a tree in the study," "There is a tree in the field," or whatever. But then we find that there never is a tree in the garden or in the study or in the field and that in fact this Martian never uses "gnos" to make a true statement when he is talking (non-conjecturely) to others about, as it seems, absent trees. Furthermore, *no* Martian ever uses "gnos" to make a true report about absent trees though they make, as we surmise, constant attempts to do so. Furthermore, no Martian ever contradicts or corrects another Martian about absent trees on the basis of his own observation or the "testimony" of others *since* by hypothesis no testimony ever matches the facts. Surely in this sort of set-up we would have to conclude that "gnos" did not mean "tree" or that it did not mean it unambiguously or possibly that the Martians have a device for negation which we have not yet uncovered (so that "Kar do gnos u grin" really means "There isn't a tree in the garden") or perhaps that the Martians are totally incomprehensible to us. Indeed this last conclusion would be considerably fortified by the fact that the linguistic chaos described above is generated on behalf of not just one sound "gnos" that the Martians utter but

<sup>4</sup> There is perhaps a problem in working out what he is up to and hence a puzzle as to how we are even entitled to speculate that his utterance means *this* but suppose that there is enough about his behavior to permit us to conclude that he is soliloquizing in the fashion of one who is struck by the existence of that particular tree in that particular garden.

by every sound which is supposed to be a word and upon the reference of which the truth or falsity of an alleged report could turn!

It might be complained at this point that I have not described the Martian community in sufficient detail and I readily concede that my account of their circumstances is somewhat sketchy. Possibly an attempt could be made to fill out such details as whether their non-veridical testimony has the form of a massive mistake or a massive deception but any such attempt would, I believe, only add support to my conclusion that their supposed situation is eventually unintelligible to us. I am content if enough has been said of their plight to raise serious doubts about the task of identifying the contents of Martian-type reports and hence of establishing Humean correlations in such a world. The general point here is that although making true reports with words is not the same thing as using the words correctly, nonetheless the ability to make true reports with words *is* connected with using the words correctly and this ability is something that can only be exhibited (even to the persons themselves) in the consistent making of true reports.

There is a further point to be made about the connection of testimony with meaning. If we take it that teaching someone the meaning of words involves the giving of reports and testimony then the present form of R.T.<sup>1</sup> is in even hotter water than before since the suggestion that no reports in fact conform to reality involves the claim that our imagined Martians never report to the Martian children the actual use of their words. Here the idea that the Martians have a public language gets no grip at all.<sup>5</sup> I do not intend exploring this difficulty any further, however, since I am not clear whether Hume would regard such remarks as "‘Cat’ means one of these" or "‘Cat’ is the word for a four-legged etc." as pieces of testimony. I think it quite likely that he would insofar as he would probably regard them as reports upon the empirical fact that such terms are used in a certain way in a certain community. I do not want to prejudge the question of whether they are such reports but if they are or if the proponent of R.T. believes that they are then he has no way at all of setting up the possibility upon which his theory rests.

Let us summarize our progress to date. From

Hume’s account of testimony I extracted a reductionist thesis which had two forms. I argued that the second form, R.T.<sup>2</sup>, which justified testimony in terms of common experience was circular and that the first form, R.T.<sup>1</sup>, which justified testimony in terms of individual observation was simply false since our reliance upon testimony rightly goes beyond anything that could be justified by personal observations. I then considered the rejoinder that R.T.<sup>1</sup> might be more plausible if great weight were put upon the observation of constant conjunction between kinds of report and kinds of object and I argued that much was unclear about what was to count as a kind of report, and hence what was to count as a correlation, for the purposes of R.T.<sup>1</sup>. In any case R.T.<sup>1</sup> surely requires that any such investigation into conjunctions of reports with states of affairs might conclude that there were no such correlations between the two. The supposition that such a situation obtained was pursued for the purpose of *reductio ad absurdum* and I argued that in such a situation, (a) there could be no such things as reports, (b) even if there were reports, there could be no way of establishing Humean correlations or non-correlations since there could be no way of determining the contents of the alleged reports in order to correlate them, and (c) the idea of a public language seems undermined.

Am I then saying, in opposition to Hume, that there *is* an *a priori* connection between testimony and reality? An answer to this question would have to rely on a comprehensive theory of knowledge which could determine the conditions under which an *a priori* connection holds between some *x* and reality and hence not only whether there is such a connection between testimony and reality but also whether such a connection holds, say, between perception and reality. I cannot provide such a theory here but I do not understand the idea that testimony could exist in a community and yet it be possible to discover empirically that it had no "connection with reality." Hence, I suspect that the problem of justifying testimony is a pseudo-problem and that the evidence of testimony constitutes a fundamental category of evidence which is not reducible to, or justifiable in terms of, such other basic categories as observation or deductive inference. This opinion I have not proved but if my argument so far is correct then there is no sense to

<sup>5</sup> The problem arises dramatically in the teaching situation but it might be objected that it is a merely contingent fact that languages are acquired by teaching. I am not altogether clear about the import here of the phrase "a merely contingent fact" but in any event essentially the same difficulty arises in the correction situation. It is surely unimaginable that a community could operate a common language without the resources for correcting the inevitable divergences from correct use.

the idea of justifying testimony by observation, at least where this involves anything like a search for Humean correlations.<sup>6</sup>

Now, of course, none of this sloganizing means that there is no such thing as mistaken or lying testimony and it is, I think, the fact that there are conditions and circumstances under which we disregard the reports of witnesses which Hume sees as providing support for R.T. independently of his methodological doctrine that there can be no necessary connection between any one object (or kind of object) and any other object (or kind of object).

Were not the memory tenacious to a certain degree, had not men commonly an inclination to truth and a principle of probity; were they not sensible to shame, when detected in a falsehood: Were not these, I say, discovered by *experience* to be qualities, inherent in human nature, we should never repose the least confidence in human testimony. A man delirious, or noted for falsehood and villany, has no manner of authority with us. (P. 112.)

Hume's argument is not fully explicit here but he seems to be claiming that since we sometimes discover by observation and experience that some testimony is *unreliable* (i.e., "A man delirious or noted for falsehood or villany has no manner of authority with us") then we must discover the general *reliability* of testimony by the same method. But this surely has only to be stated to be seen to be invalid for the fact that observation can sometimes uncover false testimony does nothing toward showing that the general reliability of testimony depends upon observation in the way R.T. requires.

Furthermore, the fact that observation will some-

times lead us to reject some piece of testimony needs to be set against two other facts, namely—

(a) That other testimony sometimes leads us to reject some piece of testimony without personal observation entering into the matter. Consider, for instance, Hume's *very* example of the man noted for delirium or falsehood or villainy.

(b) That testimony sometimes leads us to reject some piece of observation. There are many different sorts of cases here. In philosophical discussions about perception one is apt to hear quite a lot about people who "see" a table in front of them in optimum observational conditions but become convinced that there is no table there because everyone around them says there isn't. Less fancifully, this case springs from those in which the testimony of others assures us that we are or are not hallucinated. Furthermore, there are often situations where we accept correction of our ordinary mis-observations from the reports of others:—"Look at that herd of cows," "They're not cows they're rock formations." Or we observe a scuffle between three men and the upshot is that one of them is stabbed. There were four of us observing it and I hold that the man stabbed himself but the others maintain stoutly that one of the other two, namely Smith, delivered the blow. I capitulate. Surely this could be the reasonable thing to do in some circumstances. Indeed, it would seem equally as valid, on Hume's line of argument, to claim that since testimony sometimes leads us to abandon an observation then we rely upon observation in general only because we have established its reliability on the basis of testimony. But I think Hume would hardly be happy with *this* employment of his mode of argument.

University of Melbourne

Received May 4, 1972

<sup>6</sup> I have not of course proved that our reliance on testimony may not be "justified" in some other manner. Russell, for one, has attempted (in *Human Knowledge Its Scope and Limits* [New York, 1948]) to justify testimony by recourse to a principle of analogy and Price (*op. cit.*) by recourse to a methodological rule. I hope it is clear from what has been said in this paper, however, that such attempts face very serious difficulties, some of which are simple extensions of the difficulties faced by Hume.