

## **J.P. Wright, A Defense of the Skeptical Realist Interpretation of Hume on Human Understanding**

There have been attacks on the interpretation of Hume's philosophy of the understanding which I have called 'sceptical realism'—particularly in recent articles by Peter Millican. In this paper I defend this interpretation, by discussing Hume's claims to show the limits of our understanding of reality. Millican has argued what commentators call his "copy principle" precludes his belief that objects independent of our perceptions can possess causal powers. I argue that this interpretation fails to take into account Hume's many references to the imperfection or inadequacy of our ideas, and his statement that his philosophy gives us "a notion of the imperfections and narrow limits of human understanding." I argue that Hume holds that we believe in unknown causal powers, in spite of the fact that we can form no clear and distinct idea of them.