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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Paul C. Boling entitled "Hume and Reid On Personal Identity." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Philosophy.

Richard E. Aquila
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Sheldon M. Cohen

Kathleen Emmett

R. Lanier Anderson

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

HUME AND REID ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

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Paul C. Boling

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ABSTRACT

Problems of personal identity have intrigued psychologists and philosophers for many years. Certain philosophers, for example, Samuel Clarke, propounded a substance view of the self, i.e., the self is some kind of immaterial substance which underlies all of a person's actions and thoughts, and one is immediately aware of this self. Thomas Reid is an example of this view, as we will see in the following.

Other philosophers, on the other hand, take a nonsubstantial view of the self. One of these was David Hume. For Hume the self is not an immaterial substance; in fact, it is not a substance at all. Rather, it is a bundle of perceptions which are connected together by certain relations.

The purpose of this dissertation is to compare and contrast the views of Hume and Reid on the topic of personal identity. First we will examine Hume's view of identity in general, and we will suggest that if Hume had had an intentional object theory of perception, his view would have made more sense. In the second and third chapters, we will focus on Hume's theory of personal identity. We conclude that his theory needs a concept of a psychophysical "substance" in order to explain the notion of self-awareness; even so,

however, his theory is unable to deal with the term 'I' as an essential indexical, which it seems to be in our language. In chapter four we examine Reid's theory of personal identity. His view is that the self is a monad of which everyone is always immediately and perfectly aware, although Reid cannot explain sufficiently why the self is unique in this regard. The lack of any empirical evidence for such a self is, of course, a major problem. In chapter five, Reid interacts with Hume, and we find out that Reid, even though he may have somewhat successfully attacked Hume's ideal theory and, thereby Hume's epistemology, he does not refute Hume's theory of personal identity. In fact, he does not even deal with certain critical points in Hume's theory.

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of personal identity has a long and distinguished history in modern philosophy. One view on this topic which has had great influence historically is the dualism of men like Samuel Clarke and Joseph Butler. These philosophers think of a person in terms of two different substances, an immaterial substance (soul, self) and a material substance (body). In the immaterial substance resides a person's power to move himself to action, and this immaterial substance is simple and endures uninterruptedly through the life of a person. Each person is immediately and perfectly aware of this identity at all times. These philosophers hold that these propositions can best account for certain beliefs each person has about himself, e.g., I undergo change and yet I persist through time. Another belief we all have is that thoughts do not think; thinkers think; similarly, actions require agents who act, and feelings require feelers. These beliefs, the dualists think, are part of the necessary common sense beliefs of all mankind. Among these dualistic philosophers was Thomas Reid, whose views on personal identity will form part of the following dissertation.

The view of the self as immaterial substance is not the only influential theory of personal identity in modern

philosophy. There are other theories that deny that the self is a substance at all, and certainly not an immaterial substance. One such view, which we will be discussing, is the bundle theory of David Hume. According to Hume, the self is not substantial; rather it is a bundle or collection of mental entities called perceptions. These perceptions are constantly changing and coming into and going out of existence. So the bundle-self does not persist unchanging throughout the course of one's life, it is not simple, and our idea of the identity of the self is not perfect.

Clearly, Reid and Hume hold very different views on the nature of the self and personal identity. They do, however, agree on certain things, e.g., on the importance of grounding our beliefs in personal identity in the constitution of human nature. The conclusions they draw, of course, from their appeals to human nature will be quite different. Hume will end up with an acceptance of a certain amount of skepticism in his theory, whereas Reid will reject skepticism totally and opt for a system based on what he considers universally held common-sense beliefs.

In the following chapters we will first examine Hume's views on the general subject of identity (Chapter 1), and then we will examine more particularly his theory of personal identity using the modern Fregean notion of the sense-

reference distinction (Chapters 2 and 3). Following this we will discuss Reid's view of identity and personal identity (Chapter 4), and finally we will examine how Reid attempts to refute Hume's theory and see how Hume might respond to Reid's arguments (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER I

HUME'S NOTION OF IDENTITY

For Hume personal identity was a subtopic under the general topic of identity. So we must begin with a discussion of his views on identity in general.

According to Hume, the idea of identity is an idea between unity and number. He says, "Here then is an idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; . . . this idea we call that of identity."[1] The phrase "identical with" stands for a relation and holds between two terms at least. Where there is only one term there is unity, not identity. Where there are many terms there is number or multiplicity, not identity. Identity must be in something that is neither of them. How is this possible?

It is possible only by considering the idea of time or duration. Hume's principle of individuation is "nothing but the invariableness and uninterruptedness of an object, thro' a suppos'd variation of time, ..."[2] Suppose we have a mass of matter, "of which the parts are contiguous and

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[1]David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 201.

[2]Ibid.

connected, . . . ; 'tis plain we must attribute a perfect identity to this mass [through a period of time], provided all the parts continue uninterruptedly and invariably the same. . . ."[3] Immediately, we are faced with a problem. Hume seems to be talking in a circle here. He seems to presuppose that the mass is one thing (the same thing) before and after the period of time. Otherwise, how could he say that it (this mass) remains invariably the same before and after? Thus, Hume seems to use the idea of something being "the same" as part of his attempt to define what it is for that thing to be the same.

Perhaps, to avoid the appearance of circularity, we may simply assume that we are talking about a given perception. Perhaps what Hume is doing is this: he is not beginning with the idea of a certain physical mass, and then defining its (perfect [apparently the only kind he recognizes as genuine]) identity in terms of its being invariably the same (qualitatively indistinguishable) before and after a certain point. That, again, seems to presuppose an idea of numerical identity from the start, the idea of what it is for a=b, for some a and b. Perhaps Hume is beginning with a given perception of a certain sort, a perception that contains no change in it. That, at least, does not seem to presuppose the

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[3]Ibid., 255.

notion of anything being numerically identical before and after a certain point: no "identity sign" seems to be required for the judgment. The idea seems rather to be a purely negative one. Not: This (mass at t1) = that (mass at t2). Rather simply: This contains no (qualitative) change (thus, demonstratively referring to the whole "this" with a single term, rather than having to use two terms in two separate references--to "this" and to "that," which then need to be "identified" with one another). Then perhaps Hume is trying to use this, purely negative idea, to define the "perfect identity" of a mass. Not by saying: This (mass at t1) = that (mass at t2), and this and that are qualitatively indistinguishable. Rather: This contains no change, and it is a mass.

This would allow Hume to define "perfect identity," without having to presuppose some more basic notion of identity, which he seems unwilling to do. But of course it requires saying something that sounds very odd: This (perception) is a physical mass. This may seem absurd. But Hume does not seem to think that the idea of perfect identity is absurd, although he does seem to think that it rarely (if ever) in fact corresponds with reality. But perhaps the suggestion is not as absurd as it sounds.

We need to go back to the original foundations of Hume's philosophy, into his general theory of perception. Hume says that all perceptions are of two kinds: impressions and ideas.[4] The difference between impressions and ideas lies in the degree of force or liveliness with which they enter the mind. Impressions enter with the most force, while ideas are ". . . faint images of these in thinking and reasoning, . . ."[5] Included in our impressions are all of our sensations, passions, and emotions. Simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; simple ideas are derived from simple impressions, which they "exactly represent."[6] Ideas follow impressions; impressions cause ideas; ideas do not cause impressions.[7]

For Hume perceptions cover all mental activity; he says:

> . . . nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas, and . . . external objects become known to us only by those perceptions they occasion. To hate, to love, to think, to feel, to see; all this is nothing but to perceive.[8]

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[4]Ibid., 1

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., 4.

[7]Ibid., 5.

[8]Ibid., 67.

External objects are, apparently, items that can be referred to; on the other hand, it seems that perceptions are our only subject matter, our only objects.

Is it in fact Hume's view that the only objects we can refer to are perceptions? Unfortunately, this question is very difficult to answer. Hume clearly believes that ordinary people have a naively realistic view of the things they perceive; i.e., they think they directly perceive physical objects which have an independent and continued existence. He says:

> 'Tis certain, that almost all mankind, and even philosophers themselves, for the greatest part of their lives, take their perceptions to be their only objects, and suppose, that the very being, which is intimately present to the mind, is the real body or material existence.[9]

So Hume's explanation has to accommodate this naive realism of ordinary people.

Hume also thinks that the ordinary person's naive realism is not logically contradictory:

> The same continu'd and uninterrupted Being may, therefore, be sometimes present to the mind, and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the Being itself. An interrupted appearance to the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence. The supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction.[10]

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[9]Ibid., 206.

[10]Ibid., 207-208.

Naive realism is false, Hume thinks, but it is not absurd; it is a "fallacy:"[11]

> "Twill first be proper to observe a few of those experiments, which convince us, that our perceptions are not possest of any independent existence. When we press one eye with a finger, we immediately perceive all the objects to become double, and one half of them to be remov'd from their common and natural position. But as we do not attribute a continu'd existence to both these perceptions, and as they are both of the same nature, we clearly perceive, that all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits. This opinion is confirm'd by the seeming encrease and diminution of objects, according to their distance; by the apparent alternations in their figure; by the changes in their colour and other qualities from our sickness and distempers; and by an infinite number of other experiments of the same kind; from all which we learn, that our sensible perceptions are not possest of any distinct or independent existence.[12]

Note here an important point which makes the interpretation of Hume very difficult, i.e., he uses the term 'perception' in the sense of a mental entity, and a mental activity, but he also uses it to refer to external (or at least apparently external) objects of perception, as in the above quotation. So we must try to make clear what usage of the term we are discussing. At this point, we are using 'perception' to refer to external material objects of perception (or, at least, to something that Hume himself seems to take as such objects).

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[11]Ibid., 210.

[12]Ibid., 210-11.

And for the ordinary person, to say perceptions have independent existence means that the existence and qualities of such external objects are independent of their being perceived, including independence of the bodily states of the perceiver. Thus, it is assumed that there is something "external" that we directly perceive, something with certain qualities like color and shape, and it is this something that the ordinary person takes to be a physical object like a chair. And Hume concedes that, while this is false, there is nothing absurd in it.

But what sort of entity is it in fact that the ordinary man regards, falsely, as independent of perception? One suggestion is that it is simply a reified mental state after all. Is that Hume's view? If so, is it not absurd to suppose that such things might be tables or chairs? For Hume, ". . . all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits.[13] This makes them seem like mental states.[14] However, almost on the next page Hume says that ". . . no beings are ever present to

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[13]Ibid., 211.

[14]Cf. Ibid., 210; Hume tries to defend his claim by using some experiments (e.g., pressing one eye with a finger). These experiments, however, only show that what perceptions <u>are</u> <u>had</u> depend on the state of the one who has them. They show nothing with regard to the thesis that perceptions exist which <u>are</u> <u>not</u> <u>had</u>.

the mind but perceptions."[15] In some sense perceptions must themselves be the objects of ordinary perception. This suggests that the very things we perceive are reified mental entities. Note the following:

> . . . philosophy informs us, that every thing, which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind;[16]

Hume seems to slide from perceptions as mental entities to reified perceptions viewed as objects. In this regard, Bricke says:

> The theory allows, indeed insists on, the ascription to reified impressions of properties normally ascribed to physical objects, such as colour, taste, shape and size. And it holds that the sensory experience of a physical object is a matter not of direct access to that object but of access to some reified impression that represents and resembles it.[17]

But Hume seems to need a third alternative. He needs to formulate a distinction between perceptual states, reified or not, and their purely intentional objects: what they are perceptions of. We can call the latter "perceptions" also, but not be guilty of reifying anything in doing so. On this suggestion, in addition to the perceptual state itself, in

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[15]Ibid., 212.

[16]Ibid., 193.

[17]John Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 63. See also Roderick M. Chisholm, "On the Observability of the Self," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 30, No. 1 (1969): 7-21.

which there is no ". . . exercise of the thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions thro' the organs of sensation,"[18] Hume also needs a perceptual object, which is also a purely mental entity, but not in the same sense that the perceptual state itself is. Such an intentional object would have no independent reality, apart from the perception of it. That is why we may also call it a perception. So, for example, a color, as the object of a color perception, can be regarded as a purely intentional object, totally apart from the question of whether or not it is physically real apart from the perception.

As an intentional object, a perceived color can be called an "it" and can be the subject of discussion about its intensity, hue, tone, etc. Similarly, a pain can be discussed as a purely intentional object of a pain perception and be considered an "object" in its own right.[19] The same might be said, finally, for Hume's "mass of matter" which he considers as unchanging and perfectly identical. Perhaps we need to consider this mass a purely intentional object--at least, as some particular perception that one may regard as a mass. As

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[18]Ibid., 73.

[19]Cf. Laird Addis, "Pains and Other Secondary Mental Entities," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 47, no. 1, (1986): 59-73.

such, we might then focus our attention on it and, in some particular case, observe no change in it over a period of time. In this way, if Hume would have entertained the notion of purely intentional objects, maybe his view of perceptions and identity would have made more sense.

In any event, let us further consider Hume's own analysis of the problem of external objects. Even though we can observe a relation of ". . . cause and effect between different perceptions, [we] can never observe it between perceptions and [external] objects."[20] Thus, we cannot conclude anything about the existence of external objects from the existence or qualities of our perceptions. Hume says that it is not ". . . possible for us to reason justly and regularly from causes and effects, and at the same time believe the continu'd existence of matter."[21] Thus, belief in external physical objects distinct from perceptions, is unjustified. Here, of course, by "external objects" Hume means things "external" to perceptual states in something more than the sense that their intentional objects would be.

To further prove this conclusion Hume tries to show that properties (other than independence and continuance) by which we designate physical objects are actually properties only of

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[20]Ibid., 212.

[21]Ibid., 266.

perceptions themselves. In other words, only perceptions have color, shape, size, etc. But, here we run again into the problem mentioned earlier, i.e., Hume runs together two notions when he discusses perceptions. He does not always clearly distinguish between properties of perceptions viewed as intentional objects and properties of perceptions as (reified) mental states. Thus, instead of talking about secondary qualities as properties of the former, Hume tends to say that these qualities are merely internal mental existences:

> Many of the impressions of colour, sound, etc. are confest to be nothing but internal existences, and to arise from causes, which no ways resemble them. These impressions are in appearance nothing different from the other impressions of colour, sound, etc. We conclude, therefore, that they are, all of them, deriv'd from a like origin.[22]

The same is true of primary qualities, since no one can form any idea of primary qualities without ". . . having recourse to the secondary and sensible qualities."[23] Primary qualities, then, are also properties only of "perceptions":

> If colours, sounds, tastes, and smells be merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive is possest of a real, continu'd, and independent existence; not even motion, extension and solidity, which are the primary qualities chiefly insisted on.[24]

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[22]Ibid., 227.

[23]Ibid., 230.

[24]Ibid., 228.

Thus, it seems, there are no physical objects that are independent of our perceptual states and that continue to exist even when they are not perceived.[25] (Or is perhaps Hume only meaning to conclude that there are no such objects among our perceptions?--which is not as trivial as it sounds, when perceptions are taken for something more than reified mental states.)

On the other hand, Hume certainly believed in the existence of bodies and external objects. He says, ". . . 'tis in vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings."[26] It is his view that sensations are caused by the action of physical objects:

> We may observe, that 'tis universally allow'd by philosophers, and is besides pretty obvious of itself, that nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas, and that external objects become known to us only by those perceptions they occasion.[27]

Here again, external objects are meant to be external to perceptions themselves, and not simply what perceptions (as

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[25]Panayot Butchvarov thinks that for Hume perceptions are all there is, so that ". . . the class of existents and the class of perceptions must be identical." P. Butchvarov, "The Self and Perceptions: A Study in Humean Philosophy," Philosophical Quarterly 9, no. 35 (1959): 105.

[26]Hume, Treatise, 187.

[27]Ibid., 67; cf. 191-93; 210-11, 216.

objects) might themselves (falsely, but without absurdity) be taken to be. Hume's famous account of belief in bodies in terms of constancy and coherence is an account of the latter, not the former sort of belief.

There seems to be a fundamental fact about the perceptual and cognitive structures of the mind, especially the imagination, that lead us to see the world in terms of ordinary bodies. The series of impressions that cause us to believe in the continued, independent existence of an object exhibit one or the other of two distinct features that Hume calls "constancy" and "coherence." There is a certain ". . . uniformity of recurrence, . . ."[28] in our experience. Hume says:

> These mountains, and houses, and trees, which lie at present under my eye, have always appear'd to me in the same order; and when I lost sight of them by shutting my eyes or turning my head, I soon after find them return upon me without the least alteration. My bed and table, my books and pater, present themselves in the same uniform manner, and change not upon account of any interruption in my seeing or perceiving them. This is the case with all the impressions, whose objects are suppos'd to have an external existence; and is the case with no other impressions, whether gentle or violent, voluntary or involuntary.[29]

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[28]Barry Stroud, Hume, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 99.

[29]Hume, Treatise, 194-95.

The constancy of our experience, however, has many exceptions. Bodies (or apparent bodies) undergo all kinds of changes in their positions and qualities, but even in these changes they retain a certain coherence and ". . . have a regular dependence on each other; which is the foundation of a kind of reasoning from causation, and produces the opinion of their continu'd existence."[30] Hume goes on to say:

> When I return to my chamber after an hour's absence, I find not my fire in the same situation, in which I left it: But then I am accustom'd in other instances to see a like alteration produc'd in a like time, whether I am present or absent, near or remote. This coherence, therefore, in their changes is one of the characteristics of external objects, as well as their constancy.[31]

So because of the constancy and coherence of our impressions, we can conclude that objects exist even when they are not perceived:

> . . . on no occasion is it necessary to suppose, that they [passions] have existed and operated, when they were not perceiv'd, in order to preserve the same dependance and connexion, of which we have had experience. The case is not the same with relation to external objects. Those require a continu'd existence, or otherwise lose, in a great measure, the regularity of their operation.[32]

Note again here how Hume moves from perceptions as mental entities (in this case, passions) to physical objects as if

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[30]Ibid., 195.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., 195-96.

they were the same kind of entities. In other words, he is appealing to certain features of our perceptual (mental) experience in order to explain our convictions about the external world of physical objects. Hume needs to distinguish "my perception(s)" from "what I perceive," but he does not do this. He describes constancy and coherence in terms of objects like trees, books, and papers, which return to his perception after an interruption in time. But as Stroud points out,

> . . . strictly speaking what he is calling "constancy" and "coherence" must be directly observable features of series of impressions themselves, not of the objects we suppose to exist unperceived. We do not simply "find" that certain enduring objects return to us in our experience--that would be to "find" the continued and distinct existence of objects within our experience itself. Rather, it is on the basis of some features we do find in our experience that we then come to believe in such objects. Those observable features are what Hume misleadingly calls "constancy" and "coherence," but according to the explanation he gives, true constancy and coherence of objects is something we impose on our experience in virtue of believing in an enduring objective world.[33]

We need to examine Hume's notion of constancy more closely. He admits that the idea of coherence plays only a minor role:

> But 'tis evident, that whenever we infer the continu'd existence of the objects of sense from their coherence, and the frequency of their union, 'tis in order to bestow on the objects a greater

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[33]Stroud, Hume, 100.

> regularity than what is observ'd in our mere perceptions.
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> . . . . . .
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> Objects have a certain coherence even as they appear to our senses; but this coherence is much greater and more uniform, if we suppose the objects to have a continu'd existence; and as the mind is once in the train of observing an uniformity among objects, it naturally continues, till it renders the uniformity as complete as possible. The simple supposition of their continu'd existence suffices for this purpose, and gives us a notion of a much greater regularity among objects, than what they have when we look no farther than our senses. But whatever force we may ascribe to this principle, I am afraid 'tis too weak to support alone so vast an edifice, as is that of the continu'd existence of all external bodies; and that we must join the constancy of their appearance to the coherence, in order to give a satisfactory account of that opinion.[34]

The constancy of perceptions is what chiefly accounts for our acquiring the belief in the continued and distinct existence of objects. Hume gives a brief summary of his system, which I want to quote in full:

> When we have been accustom'd to observe a constancy in certain impressions, and have found, that the perception of the sun or ocean, for instance, returns upon us after an absence or annihilation with like parts and in a like order, as at its first appearance, we are not apt to regard these interrupted perceptions as different, (which they really are) but on the contrary consider them as individually the same, upon account of their resemblance. But as this interruption of their existence is contrary to their perfect identity, and makes us regard the first impression as annihilated, and the second as newly created, we find ourselves somewhat at a loss, and are involv'd in a kind of contradiction. In order to free ourselves from this difficulty, we disguise, as much as possible, the

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[34]Hume, Treatise, 198-99.

> interruption, or rather remove it entirely, by supposing that these interrupted perceptions are connected by a real existence, of which we are insensible. This supposition, or idea of continu'd existence, acquires a force and vivacity from the memory of these broken impressions, and from that propensity, which they give us, to suppose them the same; and . . . the very essence of belief consists in the force and vivacity of the conception.[35]

So, we believe in the continued and distinct existence of bodies. Hume says that even the skeptic ". . . must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, . . ."[36] Even though the skeptical arguments cannot totally be refuted, the nature of things is such that their conclusion cannot be believed. Thus, as we have seen, we cannot believe that there are no physical objects; in ordinary life, the plain man's beliefs are unavoidable.

So we are back to the unchanging mass of matter to which Hume wants to ascribe perfect identity. In such a case, Hume says, ". . . 'tis evident we suppose the change [whatever change there might be] to lie only in the time, ..."[37] Time implies succession[38] but there is no succession in an unchanging mass of matter. So when we apply the notion of time to such a mass, ". . . 'tis only by a fiction of the

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[35]Ibid., 199.

[36]Ibid., 187.

[37]Ibid., 203.

[38]Ibid., 200. Cf. p. 56.

imagination, by which the unchangeable object is suppos'd to participate of the changes of the co-existent objects, and in particular of that of our perceptions."[39] I presume that by changes in "co-existent objects" here Hume has in mind succession that might be taking place in the vicinity of the unchanging mass. For example, consider a stone which is unchanged for five minutes. Even though the stone itself is unchanged and exhibits perfect identity, around it there can be a lot of changes. For example, grass might sway in the breeze, a bug might walk by, a fire might burn down a building nearby, etc. Similarly, our mental perceptual states are constantly changing, so an unchanging external mass of matter might seem to participate in these changes, as well as in changes in co-existent objects. This fiction, which is almost universal, is the means by which an unchanging object, which we might study for a period of time and which remains unchanged, can give us the idea of identity.

This fiction is a kind of confusion to which the word identity gives expression; i.e., it is the notion of something which is at the same time multiple and unitary, a conception of the one object as existing at many points of time. Hume says:

> Here then is an idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is

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[39]Ibid., 200-01.

> either of them, according to the view, in which we take it: And this idea we call that of identity.[40]

If we attend to the multiplicity of the points of time we have the idea of number; if we attend to the object itself in which there is no variation or interruption, we have the idea of unity. In between unity and number is identity.

Perfect identity, if we go by Hume's example of the unchanging mass of matter, seems to be defined by these two conditions, spatiotemporal continuity ("uninterruptedness") and qualitative constancy ("invariableness"). In one respect, invariableness is not absolutely necessary, because Hume admits that motion or change of place can occur either in the whole or in the parts of a mass, (provided these changes are very small in proportion to the whole,) and yet it can still retain its perfect identify.[41] In what follows I generally ignore this qualification.

Identity for Hume is a relation which holds between two terms, but understanding the nature of this relation is difficult. One of the axioms of the identity relation in first-order logic is (x)x=x, where both occurrences of "x" refer to exactly the same thing. In Hume's view, this axiom is not even a well-formed formula, let alone a useful

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[40]Ibid., 201.

[41]Ibid., 255.

statement of identity. Note what he says:

> . . . the view of any one object is not sufficient to convey the idea of identity. For in that proposition, an object is the same with itself, if the idea express'd by the word, object, were no ways distinguish'd from that meant by itself; we really shou'd mean nothing, nor wou'd the proposition contain a predicate and a subject, which however are imply'd in this affirmation."[42]

In the statement, ". . . is identical with (the same with) . . . ," if we fill in the blanks the same way, the result is for Hume only unity, not identity. He says, "One single object conveys the idea of unity, not that of identity."[43] If however, we fill in the blanks differently, the result is for Hume a falsehood; it becomes a statement of number rather than identity.

Is Hume right? Consider the following: what if we put ". . . is identical with . . ." between a pair of expressions which have different meanings but refer to the same thing? What we end up with is a true identity statement which avoids both unity and number (falsehood). For example, we might say something like "The President of the United States is (identical with) the man who is married to Barbara Bush." I am referring here, of course, to Frege's suggestion that a pair of terms can have different senses but the same

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[42]Ibid., 200.

[43]Ibid.

reference. This, however, is not a notion that Hume suggests. In fact, he seems plainly to dismiss it, with his rather strange notion of identity.

Is it possible to steer a course between unity and number, as Hume wants to do, and still maintain a reasonable notion of identity? Hume thinks it is, if we think of identity statements as serial statements. He says:

> We cannot, in any propriety of speech, say, that an object is the same with itself, unless we mean, that the object existent at one time is the same with itself existent at another. By this means we make a difference, betwixt the idea meant by the word, object and that meant by itself, without going the length of number, and at the same time without restraining ourselves to a strict and absolute unity.[44]

So it seems that for Hume the statement "x is identical with y" can be true only if x is an entity existent at time t_1, and y is an entity existent at time t_2.

A serial identity statement involves what Bennett calls "things-at-a-time;"[45] i.e., things viewed as if they have stages. Now can one stage be another stage? The statement, "The car I drove today is the one I washed yesterday," does not identify one stage of the car with another stage. The

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[44]Ibid., 201. Notice again the threat of circularity here if what Hume says, i.e., ". . . the object existent at one time is the same with itself existent at another," is used as a way of defining identity.

[45]J. Bennett, Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 337.

first five words of the statement do not refer to a car-stage nor do the last five words. They refer to an enduring object, the car. We can express the above sentence in terms of car-stages, but not in the form "The F car-stage is identical with the G car-stage." We need to use the form "The F car-stage has the relation R to the G car-stage," where R is the relation of being so linked as to constitute stages of a single car.[46] So serial identity statements do not assert identities between stages of a thing even though they are about stages of a thing.[47]

Does Hume think that some serial identity statements are actually true, and if so, does he or does he not think of them as actually identifying earlier with later items? According to the last quotation cited, Hume seems to define perfect identity in a serial way. However, just before this

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[46]Ibid.

[47]Borowski argues that the common sense view of identity through time (diachronic identity) is as follows: a-at-t, and b-at-t_2 are one and the same thing if and only if there is some persistent thing of which they are both stages. The precise relationship between stages depends on what the thing is. For example, the relationship between two parts of a song which are parts of the same melody is different from the relationship between two stages of growth of the same acorn. In general, diachronic identity is conceptually relative; it is always identity under a concept. See E. J. Borowski, "Identity and Personal Identity." Mind, 85 (*1076): 481-502. See also Terence Penelhum, "Hume on Personal Identity," in Hume ed. V. C. Chappell (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 213-39.

quotation, Hume gives an account of his paradigm identity statement, and this account seems to define identity in terms of an unchanging mass of matter:

> . . . a single object, plac'd before us, and survey'd for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation, is able to give us a notion of identity. For when we consider any two points of this time, we may place them in different lights: We may either survey them at the very same instant; in which case they give us the idea of number both by themselves and by the object; which must be multiply'd, in order to be conceiv'd at once, as existent in these two different points of time: Or on the other hand, we may trace the succession of time by a like succession of ideas, and conceiving first one moment, along with the object then existent, imagine afterwards a change in the time without any variation or interruption in the object; in which case it give us the idea of unity. Here then is an idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it: And this idea we call that of identity.[48]

The difficulty with an unchanging mass is that (at least to the extent that it is also a perception) there do not seem to be in it any earlier or later stages on Hume's view, so it is difficult to see how it makes sense to talk about serial identity in relation to it at all. In addition, serial identity statements could not be true of external objects at all for Hume, except to whatever extent this or that enduring perception might be said to be an external object. So there

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[48]Ibid., 201.

is confusion with regard to Hume's definition of identity in terms of serial identity.

And what about the point about unchangingness? Why assume that perfect identity, assuming it is in fact possible at all, requires absolute unchangingness? That seems rather arbitrary. In fact Hume's demand might suggest that he does not really think any identity statements are strictly true after all.[49] After all, why, if any at all are true, insist on favoring only the case of absolute unchangingness? On the other hand, perhaps his view is not that identity statements require for their truth the obtaining of an absolute unchangingness in an object. Perhaps we should take our clue from Hume's focus on the mind's propensities, in the making of identity judgments. We might, accordingly, suppose the claim to be that identity statements express no more than a propensity or tendency to regard the case at hand as a case of absolute unchangingness. In this case, it is not so much a question of what identity statements assert. When we take

[49]One exception to this might be algebra and arithmetic, ". . . in which we can carry on a chain of reasoning to any degree of intricacy, and yet preserve a perfect exactness and certainty. We are possest of a precise standard, by which we can judge of the equality and proportion of numbers; and according as they correspond or not to that standard, we determine their relations, without any possibility of error. When two numbers are so combin'd, as that the one has always an unite answering to every unite of the other, we pronounce them equal; . . . ." (Treatise, p. 71)

the latter approach, it is difficult to see what they could possibly assert, on Hume's view, and have any of them turn out to be true (since they seem to "identify" what are really two different temporal "stages"), or at least why Hume is not arbitrary in regard to the obtaining of absolute unchangingness. But we might instead consider what such judgments express. Perhaps it is Hume's view that they all, though strictly false, express a certain tendency of the mind, namely, to suppose the absolute unchangingness of some series. As a mere propensity or tendency, this of course is compatible with the presence of a rather evident change in the object in question.

On this approach, we would not be favoring the case of absolute unchangingness because it alone is the case of "true" identity. Rather, we would simply be explicating what is involved in identity judgments, none of which is strictly speaking true. Compatibly with this, we would of course have an explanation as to why the case of absolute unchangingness is favored. We have already seen how even in the case of an unchanging mass of matter, e.g., a rock, Hume thinks there is change in the surrounding environment of the mass and in the passage of time. And we have also noted a qualification in the condition of unchangingness anyway. So that even in this case perfect identity is a fiction or a confusion. Hence,

perhaps for Hume we are not dealing with factual judgments here at all but with subjective propensities in the observer.[50]

The problem with this proposal, however, is that it seems only to apply to cases of uninterrupted perceptions, because only in such cases, it seems, would we have a propensity to judge that this mass of matter is not changing at all. But what about a situation where there is interrupted perception? What is Hume's notion of constancy in such a case? An uninterrupted series of impressions of the sun might look like this: (a) AAAAAAAAAAA. If now I close my eyes in the middle of the experience, it would look like this: (b) AAAABBBBBAAAAA. Situation (b) is what Hume is considering when he talks about constancy. He says that in such a situation, we suppose that the two A-impressions on either side of the Bs are "individually the same"[51] even though there is an obvious interval between them which is filled with different impressions. This interruption ". . . is contrary to their identity, and [since it] makes us regard the first impression as annihilated, and the second as newly created,

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[50]This might be compared to the case of emotivism in ethics, in which ethical judgments are not objective but are merely subjective feelings of the speaker in an ethical situation.

[51]Ibid., 199.

we find ourselves somewhat at a loss, and are involv'd in a kind of contradiction."[52] So what do we do? Hume says we confuse situation (b) with situation (a), where there is no interruption. An interrupted series of exactly similar impressions places the mind in almost the same disposition as an uninterrupted series of exactly similar impressions, especially if the interruption is short. And it is a basic fact about the mind that

> . . . whatever ideas place the mind in the same disposition or in similar ones, are very apt to be confounded. The mind readily passes from one to the other, and perceives not the change without a strict attention, of which, generally speaking, 'tis wholly incapable.[53]

This is just what happens here.

Confusing (b) with (a), however, does not lead us merely to believe that the two situations are not different. It also leads us to judge that the two As on each side of interruption in (b) are "individually the same." But that is just the question: What <u>is</u> it to do such a thing? And why should such a judgment be any further from the truth than the judging of some perceptually invariable object that <u>it</u> (?) is the same before and after a duration of time?

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[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid., 203.

But perhaps we can put the point without speaking about identity at all between something before and after. Perhaps we form an image or perception which contains an A at the beginning, a gap, and then the "new" A. And we have the propensity to judge that this object is absolutely unchanging, in spite of the definite gap within it. The same thing would be true in the case of physical objects which we perceive. For example, if we perceive a desk and then turn to look at the window then turn back to the desk, we could analyze this sequence as follows: we have an image or perception, a perception, which contains an A at the beginning (desk), a gap or blank, and then a "new" A (desk again); and we have a propensity to judge that this object is absolutely unchanging, even though it in fact has change in it. In Hume's word, we confuse (b) above with (a). Perhaps, according to him, that is simply what it is to take the later A to be "identical" with the earlier one.

What I am suggesting here is that we might view Hume's appeal to unchangingness of perceptions as a way of substituting a different kind of judgment for what originally may look like a judgment of identity. Instead of saying a=b (which, as we have seen, may on Hume's view be impossible, at least if we are considering a=b as a statement of numerical identity), we simply say that a (which we may also call b) has

no change in it (or at most whatever minimal sort of change is permitted by judgments of "strict identity"), or at least, we express our propensity to believe this.

Hume himself emphasizes, again, that the passage of the mind along an interrupted series of impressions is not exactly the same as its passage along an uninterrupted series. It only seems to be. So we are mistaken in our propensity to think that the two kinds of series have exactly the same effects on us. But the mistake is easily made because the two kinds of effects are very similar. Hume says:

> . . . a succession of related objects places the mind in this disposition, and is consider'd with the same smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination, as attends the view of the same invariable object. The very nature and essence of relation is to connect our ideas with each other, and upon the appearance of one, to facilitate the transition to its correlative. The passage betwixt related ideas is, therefore, so smooth and easy, that it produces little alteration on the mind, and seems like the continuation of the same action; and as the continuation of the same action is an effect of the continu'd view of the same object, 'tis for this reason we attribute sameness to every succession of related objects. The thought slides along the succession with equal facility, as if it consider'd only one object; and therefore confounds the succession with the identity.
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> . . . . . .
>
> An easy transition or passage of the imagination, along the ideas of . . . different and interrupted perceptions, is almost the same disposition of mind with that in which we consider one constant and uninterrupted perception. 'Tis therefore very natural for us to mistake the one for the other.[54]

[54]Ibid., 204.

So we tend to "judge" that not only are the resembling, but different, perceptions the same, but the resembling, but different, acts of the mind in the two cases are of the same kind. On a suggestion that I propose we at least need to take seriously, in both cases, our (mistaken) tendency to attribute the unchangingness in question simply <u>is</u> the judgment that there is identity in those cases. However, we cannot do this without some perplexity because we cannot totally ignore the interruption.

How do we get out of this confusion? Hume says we suppose and believe that between the interrupted perceptions there are other unexperienced perceptions which fill up the gap and join the two interrupted ones together. Between the two resembling impressions there is an intervening series of unsensed sensibilia resembling both, so that the whole forms one unbroken series of particulars. Note Hume's own words:

> Now there being there an opposition betwixt the notion of the identity of resembling perceptions, and the interruption of their appearance, the mind must be uneasy in that situation, and will naturally seek relief from the uneasiness. Since the uneasiness arises from the opposition of two contrary principles, it must look for relief by sacrificing the one to the other. But as the smooth passage of our thought along our resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, we can never without reluctance yield up that opinion. We must therefore, turn to the other side, and suppose that our perceptions are no longer interrupted, but preserve a continu'd as well as an invariable existence, and are by that means entirely the same. But here the interruptions in the

> appearance of these perceptions are so long and frequent, that 'tis impossible to overlook them;
> . . . . . .
> An interrupted appearance to the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence. The supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction. We may easily indulge our inclination to that supposition. When the exact resemblance of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, we may remove the seeming interruption by feigning a continu'd being, which may fill those intervals, and preserve a perfect and entire identity to our perceptions.
> . . . . . .
> we . . . not only <u>feign</u> but <u>believe</u> this continu'd existence, . . .[55]

Memory plays an important role in this process of dealing with interrupted perceptions. Our memory presents us with a large number of perceptions which closely resemble one another and are separated by varying lengths of time and various kinds of interruptions. The resemblance shared by these perceptions gives us a tendency to think they are the same, even though they are interrupted. The resemblance also causes us to

> . . . connect them by a continu'd existence, in order to justify this identity, and avoid the contradiction, in which the interrupted appearance of these perceptions seems necessarily to involve us. Here then we have a propensity to feign the continu'd existence of all sensible objects; and as this propensity arises from some lively impressions of the memory, it bestows a vivacity on that fiction; or in other words, makes us believe the continu'd existence of the body.[56]

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[55]Ibid., 206-08.

[56]Ibid., 208-09.

The work done in connecting resembling but interrupted perceptions is done by the imagination. Perceptions which are interrupted or in any way changed are not actually identical after the interruption or change. Hume says

> . . . 'tis a false opinion that any of our objects, or perceptions, are identically the same after interruption; and consequently the opinion of their identity can never arise from reason, but must arise from the imagination. The imagination is seduc'd into such an opinion only by means of the resemblance of certain perceptions; since we find they are only our resembling perceptions, which we have propension to suppose the same. This propension to bestow an identity on our resembling perceptions, produces the fiction of a continu'd existence; since that fiction, as well as the identity, is really false, as is acknowledg'd by all philosophers, and has no other effect than to remedy the interruption of our perceptions, which is the only circumstance that is contrary to their identity.[57]

Here the same apparent arbitrariness and implausibility we encountered earlier resurface. Is Hume saying that where there is no interruption at all and where there is absolute unchangingness, there <u>really</u> <u>is</u> actual identity? What about a color that gets brighter or a pain that gets more intense? Is there no actual identity in such cases? And what about the point made earlier that absolute unchangingness is not even necessary for "perfect"identity? So how can identity be defined in terms of absolute unchangingness? And even if it is, do we ever actually make identity judgments by asserting

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[57]Ibid. 209.

absolute unchangingness? Or is something else going on? As I indicated earlier, maybe we need to speak about what identity judgments express, not what they assert, because maybe they actually assert nothing at all. Hume does say in the above quotation that opinions about identity arise in the imagination, not the reason. So maybe he is hinting at the fact that what he is trying to get at is a description of a psychological propensity, e.g., a tendency to ascribe absolute unchangingness to interrupted or changing perceptions, even though such unchangingness hardly ever exists.

In any event, we may finally move from here to Hume's interpretation and critique of the notion of substance. In the above quotation Hume says we imagine a continued existence to fill in the gap or interruptions in our perceptions. This continued existence is ". . . something unknown and invisible, which it [the imagination] supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a substance, or original and first matter."[58] We end up supposing that all bodies have a ". . . substance and a substantial form."[59]

One unavoidable consequence of this notion of substance is the notion of accidents; we conclude that things like

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[58]Ibid., 220.

[59]Ibid., 222.

colors, tastes, sounds, and other properties of bodies are existences which cannot exist apart from a ". . . subject of inhesion to sustain and support them."[60] We are victims here of the same habit which causes us to infer a connection between cause and effect, only here we infer a ". . . dependence of every quality on the unknown substance."[61] Hume thinks such philosophy is a fiction and is entirely unreasonable. He says

> Every quality being a distinct thing from another, may be conceiv'd to exist apart, and may exist apart, not only from every other quality, but from that unintelligible chimera of a substance.[62]

For Hume, then, we have no notion of substance beyond that of a collection of particular qualities. He asks

> . . . whether the idea of substance be deriv'd from the impressions of sensation or reflexion? If it be convey'd to us by our senses, I ask, which of them; and after what manner? If it be perceiv'd by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste; and so of the other senses. But I believe none will assert, that substance is either a colour, or a sound, or a taste. The idea of substance must therefore be deriv'd from an impression of reflexion, if it really exist. But the impressions of reflexion resolve themselves into our passions and emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities,

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[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

> nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it.[63]

This notion will be very important when we look at Hume's concept of personal identity and the self.

Central to his notion of personal identity is the mind, and Hume denies that we have any idea of a simple unchanging substance of our minds. The reason for this is that we have no impression of a simple substance of our minds. As we have just seen, according to Hume, we have no impression or idea of a simple unchanging substance a all. He says, "As every idea is deriv'd from a precedent impression, had we any idea of the substance of our minds, we must also have an impression of it; which is very difficult, if not impossible, to be conceiv'd."[64]

One common definition of substance which Hume rejects is that a substance is "something which may exist by itself."[65] Hume says such a definition might be given for everything that can be conceived. According to him,

> Whatever is clearly conceiv'd may exist; and whatever is clearly conceiv'd, after any manner, may exist after the same manner. . . . every thing which is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination. This is another principle. My conclusion from both is, that since all our perceptions are different from each other, and from

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[63]Ibid., 15-16.

[64]Ibid., 232-33.

[65]Ibid., 233.

> every thing else in the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may be consider'd as separately existent, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything else to support their existence.[66]

So, according to such a definition, perceptions can even be considered substances.

Hume concludes that we can have no satisfactory notion of a simple unchanging substance and no notion of inhesion:

> We have no perfect idea of any thing but of a perception. A substance is entirely different from a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of a substance. Inhesion in something is suppos'd to be requisite to support the existence of our perceptions. Nothing appears requisite to support the existence of a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of inhesion. What possibility then of answering that question, Whether perceptions inhere in a material or immaterial substance, when we do not so much as understand the meaning of the question?[67]

The inconceivability of the notion of a simple substance plays a central role in Hume's discussion of the nature of the self and personal identity, and to this discussion we now turn.

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid., 234.

CHAPTER II

SUBSTANCES AND BUNDLES

In this chapter I want to discuss Hume's rejection of a substantial view of the self in favor of his own bundle theory.

He begins his discussion of personal identity by denying the idea of a self as a substrate, which would be some entity that continues the same through the whole course of our life, and which underlies all of our perceptions and connects them together, and thereby provides a meaning for the word 'I' as used on particular occasions. We can have no idea of such a thing because we have no impression or experience of such a thing within ourselves, and ideas are derived from impressions, according to Hume's theory of mind. He says:

> . . . self or person is not only one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is suppos'd to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea.[68]

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[68]Hume, Treatise, 251-52.

He goes on to say that

> . . . when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception.[69]

Any theory of personal identity has to wrestle with the problem of unity and diversity. A person might say, "I am angry and worried" or "I was angry, but now I am worried." A single person can have several properties either at the same time or at different times. The multiplicity of properties in no way invalidates the claim that the same individual can have them. The substrate theory makes a definite distinction between all the properties a thing has and something else, the substrate, which is what has the properties. The self, viewed as distinct from its perceptions, would be such a substrate.

Properties supposedly inhere in such a substrate. Several properties can inhere at the same time in the same substrate or over a period of time or at different times while the substrate continues without varying. Such "inherence" supposedly explains what it is for something to "have" these properties. For example, Chisholm says our idea of a peach is the idea of something that has a particular taste, color, size, and consistency, or rather, more accurately, our idea

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[69]Ibid., 252.

of a peach is an idea of an ". . . individual x such that x is sweet and x is round and x is fuzzy."[70] The object of our idea is not a set of qualities, sweetness, roundness, etc., but a concrete thing that is sweet and round, etc. Also, we need to make it clear that there is something else which is essential to the idea of a peach, i.e., the thing that is round is the same thing as the thing that is sweet, and it is also the same thing as the thing that is fuzzy.

Hume seems to deny that there is any underlying x that is what has all one's perceptions, and is thus what the word 'I' refers to, and he is generally taken to be denying this. However, we shall later consider the suggestion that Hume is not meaning to deny this at all. Perhaps he only means to deny that there is any underlying x in which these perceptions inhere, and also that we have any immediate awareness of such an x. If we have no immediate awareness of it, can it still be relevant to the meaning of the word 'I' on Hume's view? We have to remember that Hume has no clear theory of meaning as opposed to reference--nor, presumably, do those supposed opponents of his who posit a self in the first place. Perhaps Hume can even concede that some underlying x is after all what "has" one's perceptions, and is thus what the word 'I' refers

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[70]Roderick M. Chisholm, "On the Observability of the Self," Philosophical and Phenomenological Research 30, no. 1 (1969): 8.

to, but his point is that (what we, post-Fregeans, would call) the sense of the word, by means of which it succeeds in referring, does not stem from any awareness we have of such an entity. Could Hume suppose, for example, that the reference is given by means of some definite description? In any case, Hume is considering at this point a substrate theory that involves the notion of inherence and that apparently identifies (or at least fails to distinguish) the question of meaning with the question of reference for the word 'I.'

Hume's argument against such a substrate theory arises from his theory of ideas. He says that the idea of a substance cannot be derived from either an impression of sensation or an impression of reflection, so that we have ". . . no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, . . ."[71] Hume's conclusion is derived from: (a) his empiricist premise about the origin of ideas, i.e., they can only originate from impressions; (b) a premise that only certain kinds of things are encountered in experience, and (c) these kinds of things are not substrates. Impressions of sensation only include qualities of bodies like color and taste. Impressions of reflection ". . . resolve themselves into our passions and

[71]Hume, Treatise, 16.

emotions; none of which can possibly represent a substance."[76] Thus, our impressions can only give us (alleged) modifications of (supposed) substrates, not substrates themselves. Plus, there is the problem that if any impression is to give us the idea of a substrate-self, ". . . that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is suppos'd to exist after that manner."[77] However, Hume clearly states that he thinks that

> . . . there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea.[78]

Why does Hume assume that a substrate-self has to be unchanging? The answer to this question is not clear, especially since he admits that things can change and yet retain their identity, at least as ordinarily understood, as long as the changes are small and in proportion to the whole. Whether or not certain things can change a little bit or a lot and still retain their identity depends on the things themselves. For example, a river changes regularly and yet Hume admits that it is possible to talk today about that river

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[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid., 251.

[78]Ibid., 251-52.

as the same river that was there yesterday.[79] Similarly, the self I am surely has changed during my lifetime and yet I am the same self I was when I was a small child, am I not?

Perhaps Hume's assumption that any substrate-self would be unchanging reflects the assumption that it is being introduced in the first place to account for (what we would call) the sense and not simply to be the reference of the word 'I' when it is used on particular occasions. It seems unreasonable to suppose that the reference of the word 'I' must be unchanging, and in fact this might even seem to contradict the assumption that it is what "has" one's perceptions in the first place. But it might seem obvious that, however much the reference might change in the course of time, there must be a simple sense that remains constant and makes that reference possible. Of course, Hume does not seem to be clear about this, but it may be that we can be charitable in interpreting him. In doing so, we might suppose that he is taking his opponents, who believe in a substrate-self, to be requiring such an entity to function as both the sense and the reference of the word 'I.' If, in continuing to be charitable to Hume, we later suggest that he himself might be willing to concede the need for an underlying x that has one's perceptions (but not in which they inhere) after

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[79]Ibid., 258.

all, that would require him to be distinguishing between the two functions of the word 'I' or at least not to be conflating them in the way that his current opponents are. Admittedly, that may require more charity than many people would regard as warranted by the text.

It seems that Hume is thinking about a substrate-self as what some philosophers today call a bare particular. Bare particulars are called "bare" because they possess no properties in themselves at all. Allaire says, "Bare particulars are . . . the entities <u>in</u> things accounting for the numerical difference <u>of</u> things."[80] They are the underlying substrata which support the qualities things have and they remain unchanging even though the things' qualities may vary over time. They are also essentially unknowable.[81] Such a notion is unacceptable to Hume because of his empirical demand that ideas come only from impressions and we can have no impression of an unknowable substrate. He says

> As every idea is deriv'd from a precedent impression, had we any idea of the substance of our minds, we must also have an impression of it; which

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[80]Edwin B. Allaire, "Another Look at Bare Particulars," in <u>Universals and Particulars</u> ed. Michael J. Loux (University of Notre Dame Press, 1976): 299.

[81]Locke's view of substance or substrate was similar to this. He says ". . . the substance is supposed always <u>something besides</u> the extension, figure, solidity, motion, thinking, or other observable ideas, though we know not what it is." John Locke, <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>, ed. A. C. Fraser (Oxford University Press): II, XXIII, 3.

> is very difficult, if not impossible, to be conceiv'd. For how can an impression represent a substance, otherwise than by resembling it? And how can an impression resemble a substance, since, according to this philosophy, it is not a substance, and has none of the peculiar qualities or characteristics of a substance?[82]

Such a bare particular-substrate seems unintelligible, and it does not explain very much anyhow, because the individuality of a bare particular-type of substrate must itself be accepted without further explanation. It might be hypothesized that Hume was so opposed to such a notion as an unknowable bare particular-substrate that he landed upon the only other alternative view of the self, i.e., of the reference of the word 'I,' he could come up with, given his philosophy of mind, and that was his bundle theory of the self. In that case, we just have no idea of physical or mental substrates or any substance at all which underlies our perceptions (whether by inherence or otherwise, for example, causally). Rather, we are a bundle of perceptions which are related in various ways.

But, again, even if we do not suppose that the substrate-self of his opponents at this point must be a bare particular in this sense, Hume might still have an objection to the notion in question. If he is assuming that the substrate-self is introduced in order to serve as the sense of the term 'I' and not only to be its reference, then he might have

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[82]Hume, Treatise, 232-33.

considered it reasonable to assume that (whether or not it is bare) it must be unchanging and his objection would then be reasonable, that he finds no such unchanging item among the objects of his awareness.

Whether or not it requires a bare particular, it surely seems that our idea and our experience of ourselves is not the idea only of particular perceptions.[83] It seems to be the idea of <u>that which</u> loves or hates or feels cold or warm; it is the idea of an ". . . x such that x loves or x hates and such that x feels cold and x feels warm, and so forth."[84] A substance-self theorist would certainly claim this.

Hume, however, argues that within himself he only discovers perceptions, never himself:

> . . . when I enter most intimately into what I call <u>myself</u>, I always stumble on some particular

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[83]Passmore says, "The fundamental problem, ..., is what it is which confuses succession with identity; and, equally, what it is which comes to recognize that succession <u>has been</u> confused with identity. . . . .
. . . . . .
if all that happens is that a series of very similar (or causally linked) perceptions succeed one another, there is no possible way in which this series of itself could generate the fiction of personal identity. Nor, the fiction once generated, could this series ever reveal its fictional character. Both the original fiction and the discovery that it is a fiction are possible only if there is something which is at first misled by, and then, after reconsideration, can discover that it was misled by, a series of similar perceptions. . . . John Passmore, <u>Hume's Intentions</u> (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 82-83.

[84]Roderick Chisholm, "On the Observability of the Self," 9.

> perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. . . . [another philosopher] may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu'd, which he calls himself; tho' I am certain there is no such principle in me.[85]

Hume is using negative evidence here. He says that with respect to a certain proposition he has certain evidence for saying he has no evidence for that proposition. But when he cites the evidence he has for saying that he has no evidence for the proposition, he presupposes, after all, that he does have evidence for the proposition. Hume says he only observes perceptions within himself, never himself. However, it looks like the self that he professes to be unable to find is the one he finds to be stumbling onto different perceptions. How can he say he does not find himself, if he is right in saying he finds himself to be stumbling on certain things and not to be stumbling on certain other things?

The difficulty needs to be made clear. Hume may be supposed to be appealing to evidence here to show that he is nothing but perceptions, and when he tells us what this evidence is he implies not only

> (i) that there is, as he puts it in his example, heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, but also (ii) that there is someone who finds heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, and moreover (iii) that the one who finds heat or cold, is the

[85]Hume, Treatise, 252.

> same as the one who finds love or hatred and the same as the one who finds light or shade, and finally (iv) that this one does not in fact stumble upon anything but perceptions.[86]

Now we must ask whether (iv) can be consistent with (ii) and (iii)? If Hume finds what he says he finds, i.e., not only perceptions but also that he finds them, and, therefore, there is someone who finds them, how can his premises be used to establish the conclusion that he is, and indeed never observes anything but perceptions?

We need to clarify two separate issues here, one of which is not necessarily relevant to the other: (1) Hume's supposed inconsistency, and (2) the findability of a self among perceptions. We will return to (2) shortly. With regard to (1), the substrate theorist might claim that Hume is being inconsistent in claiming that he found nothing but perceptions and then denying that there is a "he" to be found within himself. Perhaps this is not fair to Hume. He does not need to say, one might reply, "I stumble on heat or cold;" maybe he could say, "heat or cold is found" or "nothing but perceptions are found in this bundle."[87] (Of course, this

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[86]Chisholm, "Observability," 10.

[87]Pike suggests that Hume gives a specific analysis of "in" in "in the mind," i.e., the "in" in question is the "in" of membership ("I am in that club"). So the visual perception of a tree can be considered a present member of a particular collection of perceptions. See Nelson Pike, "Hume's Bundle Theory of the Self: A Limited Defense," American Philosophical Quarterly 4, no. 2 (1967): 159-65. In other

formulation presupposes a bundling principle which rules out perceptions other than one's own from being in this bundle. We will discuss Hume's bundling principle later.) Perhaps Hume could report the data in this selfless way and thus does not need to presuppose an x which finds things. But could Hume have done this?

It is one thing to say empirically that "I find only perceptions," but another thing to say nonempirically that "nothing but perceptions are found." This latter goes beyond what the data warrant. How can I know what other people may find or what God may find? How can I be sure that there is no unseen self? Hume would not be justified in confidently saying, "nothing but perceptions are found," and he makes no such subjectless report. He says, presumably referring to himself, that he found nothing but perceptions.[88] It is

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words, perhaps the mind does not do anything. Rather, it includes perceptions.

[88]Shoemaker argues that Hume's lack of introspective awareness of a self within himself has to do with his view of the nature of perception as relational. See Sydney Shoemaker, "Introspection and the Self," in Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Studies in the Philosophy of Mind, ed. Peter French, Theodore Uehling, Jr., and Howard Wettstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 101-120. Hume says, "To hate, to love, to think, to feel, to see; all this is nothing but to perceive." (Treatise, 67) What is suggested here is that all mental states are relational, so that Hume took it for granted that if there were a mental subject (self), its mental properties would all have to be relational properties. Now given that mental states are the only states of which we can be introspectively aware, and given that on Hume's conception, all mental states of selves

essential to Hume's argument that he report not only what he finds, but what he does not find. However, the two types of report are different.

The fact that a person finds a certain proposition p to be true warrants a subjectless report that p is true; finding that p is true entails that p is true. But the fact that a person fails to find a proposition q to be true does not warrant any subjectless report about q; one's failure to find that q is true entails nothing about the truth of q. I can only say that I do not find that q is true, and this is not a subjectless report. Hume found not merely particular perceptions but also the fact that he found those perceptions as well as the fact that he failed to find other things. These are findings with respect to himself.

Now can a person be aware of himself as experiencing without thereby being aware of himself? Chisholm and other substance-self philosophers would say "no." Interpret the statement "I am aware of a blue appearance" as telling us how

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would be relational rather than intrinsic, it would follow that a self could not have any intrinsic states at all that could be accessible to introspective awareness. But it makes no sense to talk about being aware of something, by a certain kind of perception, if the thing has no intrinsic properties at all that it could be perceived as having by that kind of perception. Thus, Shoemaker thinks Hume does have a conception of what a mental subject would have to be, i.e., something whose mental states are all relational, which implies that such a thing could not be introspectively perceived.

a subject is sensing or in what way he is sensing, i.e., "I am sensing bluely" or "I am sensing rectangularly." On this view, appearances are modifications of a person who experiences them, as are thoughts, in a sense that Hume could not possibly concede. In other words, sentences in which we seem to predicate properties of appearances could be paraphrased into other sentences in which we predicate properties only of the self who senses those appearances. If this is correct, appearances are not entities in their own right; they are accidents of other things, i.e., selves.

Of course Hume rejects Chisholm's view. But notice another point. Let us return to issue (2) above, i.e., the findability of a self among perceptions. Even if Chisholm were right, the argument regarding (1) above is not necessarily relevant to (2) at all. We might argue that it is perfectly consistent to hold that one is immediately and necessarily aware that one is in a certain mental state, in being aware of that state, without being immediately aware of the one who is in question (in any further perceptual sense) in the first place. (Indeed, perhaps one might even be aware that one is in a certain mental state without being directly aware of that state.) So one might be aware that some subject is affected in certain ways without being immediately aware of that subject itself. On this view, immediate awareness

might just mean knowledge directly caused by the fact in question. So that in Hume's case, he might be saying that he is aware that he is perceiving in various ways, he has direct knowledge of this in his experience, and that is all (apart from the perception itself) he is aware of.[89] Whether or not there is a findable self (substrate-self) in his bundle of perceptions would be another question entirely. And Hume would be saying that if there is a substrate-self he simply cannot find it by introspection. All he is aware of are particular perceptions.

However, it does not seem plausible to defend Hume in quite this way. For it does seem clearly to be Hume's view that it is perfectly possible for a perception to occur that is not anybody's perception. He says

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[89]Deitsch also challenges Chisholm when he claims that Hume's premises cannot be used to establish the conclusion that he (Hume) never observes anything but perceptions. Deitsch says Hume never claimed to find or observe himself finding or observing perceptions. Deitsch thinks Chisholm was misled by the expression "find that." He assimilates all uses of this expression to observation and, thus, mistakenly concludes that Hume's finding that he observes perceptions means Hume's observing that he observes perceptions. However, there are other ways one can find that something is the case without observing that it is the case. Such is the situation with Hume here. The sense of "find that" that Hume has in mind is to "become aware" or to "realize that" he observes perceptions. He does not observe himself observing perceptions, so he is not contradicting himself in his premises. See Martin Deitsch, "The Observability of the Self," Philosophical Studies 26 (1974): 69-71. The problem still remains, however, because we must still account for the "he" in "he realizes that" he observes perceptions.

> . . . every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be consider'd as separately existent; it evidently follows, that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being.[90]

Therefore, it is not at all clear why Hume should concede that it is necessarily true that every perception that I am immediately aware of should be such that I am aware that it is mine (whether or not I am also aware of the 'I' in question).

In any case, it is not clear that we need to suppose that Hume's aim in the above passage is to provide reason for concluding that he is nothing but perceptions. His claim that he finds no abiding self may constitute an objection against his opponents without assuming that, if his opponents are (in effect) conflating the question of sense and reference. (Of course, Hume himself may be doing that for them, because of his own confusion.) Hume's point might then be only that, if one conflates the two, then the referent of the word 'I' must be (at least when Hume uses it) nothing but perceptions. (Of course, even if it really is nothing but perceptions, another possible defense of Hume could simply be that it is the bundle that does the finding, so there is at least no inconsistency.)

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[90]Hume, Treatise, 207.

In the Appendix to the Treatise Hume says, "These [particular perceptions like love, pain, sensation] . . . must be the same with self; since the one cannot survive the other."[91] This may seem to make it clear that Hume himself is concluding that the referent of the word 'I' is nothing but perceptions. But we may consider the possibility of saying that while the self is nothing but perceptions, the referent of the word 'I' is not. Perhaps the former might be not the referent of 'I' but the sense of the expression when it is used on particular occasions. In any case, this passage from the Appendix may seem to contain an obviously fallacious line of reasoning. Thus Bricke asks if, for example, even Hume would say that a mind and a body must be the same if the former could not survive the latter? Or is the shadow of a man identical with the man?[92] Even if neither could survive the other, the substrate-self theorist could certainly insist that selves and their perceptions, while mutually dependent, are not necessarily identical.

Hume offers another argument against the substrate theory. Recall that, according to Hume, the substrate theory's solution to the problem of self-identity is that

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[91]Hume, Treatise, 635.

[92]John Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1080): 65.

there is a single, unvarying substrate which endures through time and has several experiences at different points of time, without changing itself. Now Hume insists that there are periods of time in life when there are no experiences at all, e.g., when a person is sleeping soundly.[93] If this is true, it would mean for the substrate theory that there are periods in the course of one's existence when one's substrate-self has no experiences at all.

The difficulty now Hume thinks for the substrate theorist is to show how the substrate-self can exist without experiences. Does it make sense to say it exists at a certain time but it has at that time no properties? What properties can it possess at a time when by hypothesis, according to Hume, it has no thoughts, feelings or sensations? The answer, Hume thinks, cannot be dispositional properties because these require non-dispositional properties also.[94] Purely relational properties are the same way. Therefore, there are no properties left, Hume thinks, to characterize a non-experiencing substrate-self. Thus, it makes no sense to him to say a non-experiencing substrate-self exists. He says,

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[93]Hume, Treatise, 252. I wonder what entitles Hume to such a supposition as this?

[94]Ibid., 161; the example Hume gives here is power.

". . . during sound sleep . . . I may truly be said not to exist.[95] The same is true of death.[96]

Again, Hume seems to be aiming at the conclusion that, if the referent of the word 'I' is something other than perceptions themselves, it must be a bare particular. As we have seen, a bare particular does not answer all of the questions, even if it is an intelligible notion, which is debatable. However, does a substrate self have to be a bare particular? Is that the only alternative to Hume's bundle view? The answer to this question is clearly "no." We can reject the view that there is a bare substrate, but we do not have to accept the bundle of perceptions view regarding the referent of the word 'I.' Perhaps we can simply retain our familiar conception of a "qualified particular"; [97] that is, that there is no such thing as a non-possessed (bare) quality, just as there is no such thing as a bare particular. An "observed quality-instance"[98] is always a quality of something, and it must belong to that thing which has it and

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[95]Ibid., 252.

[96]Ibid.

[97]D. C. Long, "Particulars and Their Qualities," in Universals and Particulars, ed. Michael J. Loux (University of Notre Dame Press, 1976): 324. Cf. Panayst Butchvarov, Being Qua Being (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979): 226-38.

[98]Ibid.

no other, and the "substrate" of perceptions is just such a thing. Perhaps such a theory as this can be offered as a possible alternative to Hume's theory. But what really is Hume's theory? Is it really the case that Hume is even offering a theory of his own as to the referent of the word 'I'?

As an alternative to the substrate view of the self, Hume proposes a bundle theory:

> . . . [men] are nothing, but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement . . . . The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.[99]

The mind is only a bundle of perceptions. Hume says, "They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; . . . "[100] Indeed, he seems to say, not simply the "mind," but men are nothing but perceptions. The former claim is one thing, the latter seems quite another (unless, now, Hume himself is perhaps conflating sense and reference--meaning to say only that it is bundles of perceptions that constitute the senses by which 'I' is able to refer to men, but not that the latter are themselves bundles of perceptions).

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[99]Ibid., 252-53.

[100]Ibid., 253.

The question that Hume takes to be central is this: "What then gives us so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possest of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro' the whole course of our lives?"[101] Without necessarily taking it for granted that Hume asks this question as part of an attempt to argue that we really <u>are</u> nothing but perceptions (as opposed, for example, to asking it as part of a purely negative campaign against certain specific opponents), the answer to this question for him lies partly in the analogy personal identity has with that of the identity of plants and animals and partly in the analogy between personal identity and a commonwealth. The identity of plants and animals consists in their parts having a common end and being dependent upon and connected with each other:

> . . . [in this case] the several parts have a reference to some general purpose, but also a mutual dependance on, and connexion with each other. The effect of so strong a relation is, that tho' every one must allow, that in a very few years both vegetables and animals endure a <u>total</u> change, yet we still attribute identity to them, while their form, size, and substance are entirely alter'd.[102]

In a second analogy, the mind (or "soul") is like a commonwealth or state. Hume says in this regard:

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[101]Ibid.

[102]Ibid., 257.

> . . . I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation.[103]

Of course, we need to ask: who would suppose that the members of a bundle of perceptions are united by identity, and that there is some "invariable and uninterrupted existence" in that bundle? The very fact that Hume asks his question, and then offers these sorts of answers, certainly suggest that he is defending the view that we are such bundles. Since we also take ourselves to have some kind of enduring identity, it would then be natural to ask what could lead us, rightly or wrongly, to ascribe identity to such a thing. But there may be another way of reading Hume. Perhaps his argument is mainly ad hominem, against a specific sort of opponent, namely, against the opponent who holds that there must indeed be something invariably present to perceptions, at least whenever one is having perceptions at all. Against such an opponent, Hume--who holds that nothing is invariably and identically present in that sense--might then reasonably

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[103]Ibid., 261.

ask, "What leads them to ascribe identity, when there is in fact only a diverse set of perceptions? Hume could have a point in asking this question, and perhaps even in answering it along the lines that he does, even if he is not really committed (or does not need to be, even if he is unclear about it) to the view that we really are, i.e., the referents of the word 'I' really are, just bundles of perceptions.

In any case, there are only two possible ways in which the perceptions of the mind can be so connected as to make us suppose they are united by identity: (a) there is ". . . something that really binds our several perceptions together, . . .:"[104] or (b) something ". . . only associates their ideas in the imagination."[105] The first possibility, (a), Hume rejects because ". . . the understanding never observes any real connection [i.e., any necessary connection] among objects, and . . . even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examin'd, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas."[106] That is, identity does not ". . . really [belong] to these different perceptions, and [unite] them together; [it] is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the

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[104]Ibid., 259.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid., 259-60.

imagination, when we reflect upon them."[107] The second possibility above, (b), tells us that perceptions are associated by the ". . . uniting principles in the ideal world, . . . ;"[108] these principles are three in number, resemblance, causation, and contiguity. Hume says the relation of contiguity plays no role in personal identity, although he does not say why this is the case,[109] and this is particularly puzzling because of the importance of contiguity in the relation of cause and effect, which he claims does play an essential role in identity in general:

> . . . whatever objects are consider'd as causes and effects, are contiguous; and that nothing can operate in a time or place, which is ever so little remov'd from those of its existence. Tho' distant objects may sometimes seem productive of each other, they are commonly found upon examination to be link'd by a chain of causes, which are contiguous among themselves, and to the distant objects; and when in any particular instance we cannot discover this connexion, we presume it to exist. We may therefore consider the relation of CONTIGUITY as essential to that of causation;[110]

The distinction between (a) and (b) above must be kept clear in our whole discussion. Perhaps it would be helpful at this point to make a few general comments about Hume's view

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[107]Ibid., 260.

[108]Ibid., 260.

[109]Ibid.

[110]Ibid., 75.

of cause and effect, because the causal relation plays an important role in his view of personal identity. One definition he gives of "cause" is as follows: "A CAUSE is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it [through constant conjunction], that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other."[111] The thing that "determines the mind" is not reason but custom; "Custom . . . determines the imagination to make a transition from the idea of one object to that of its usual attendant . . . ."[112] We do not ever experience any direct connection between a cause and an effect; we can only know about the relation between a cause and its effect by experiencing their constant conjunction.[113] But the constant conjunction of two events is tantamount to saying for Hume that one causes the other. Whether or not there is any necessary connection between the two is an open question.

Another point about causation that will be important later on is that for Hume perceptions may have physical causes. Psychophysical causality is a logical possibility:

> We need only reflect on what has been prov'd at large, that we are never sensible of any connexion

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[111]Ibid., 170.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid., 247.

> betwixt causes and effects, and that 'tis only by our experience of their constant conjunction, we can arrive at any knowledge of this relation. Now as all objects, which are not contrary, are susceptible of a constant conjunction, and as no real objects are contrary; I have inferr'd from these principles that to consider the matter a priori, any thing may produce any thing, and that we shall never discover a reason, why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however, great, or however little the resemblance may be betwixt them.[114]

Psychological and physical events can be constantly conjoined:

> . . . 'tis possible we may . . . perceive a constant conjunction of thought and motion; you reason too hastily, when from the mere consideration of the ideas, you conclude that 'tis impossible motion can ever produce thought, or a different position of parts give rise to a different passion or reflexion.[115]

Matter can certainly act on the mind. Hume says, "Anything may produce anything. Creation, annihilation, motion, reason, volition; all these may arise from one another, or from any other object we can imagine."[116]

In fact, perceptions actually do have physical causes; we find ". . . by experience, that [thought and motion] are constantly united; . . ." and, thus, we ". . . may certainly conclude, that motion . . . actually is, the cause of thought

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[114]Ibid.

[115]Ibid., 247-48.

[116]Ibid., 173.

and perception."[117] There is a physical and physiological basis for the ". . . regularities captured by his [Hume's] psychological laws of the association of ideas."[118] And since these laws explain for Hume the occurrence of most ideas, it follows that most ideas have physical causes.

For Hume the mind is a collection of causally related perceptions (whether or not he really means to say we are). However, as we saw earlier, there are periods of time, he thinks, when the mind is unconscious and has no perceptions. Also, as we have seen, a cause and its effect are temporally contiguous; if a particular cause and its effect are not temporally contiguous, they must, if they are causally connected, be linked by a continuous series of contiguous causes and effects. If we put all of these points together, we can see that Hume seems to need to admit physical and/or

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[117]Ibid., 248. Clearly, for Hume all impressions of sensation have physical causes: "Original impressions or impressions of sensation are such as without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs." (p. 275) All sensations have both bodily and physiological causes: ". . . all our perceptions [sensations] are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits . . ." (p. 211). Sensations may not have psychological causes, but they do have physical and physiological causes. That this is the case can be seen from Hume's statement that ". . . as these depend upon natural and physical causes, the examination of them wou'd lead me too far from my present subject, into the sciences of anatomy and natural philosophy" (pp. 275-76).

[118]John Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind, 29.

physiological causal links between perceptions occurring before and after a gap in consciousness. This admission is especially necessary because for Hume there is no substantial self distinct from its perceptions in which those perceptions inhere, so the only possible linking events seem to be psychological and physiological ones. This, we should note, would at least allow for the possibility of holding that what the word 'I' refers to is the underlying causal source of such linkages among diverse, and even temporally gapped, perceptions, although it could not of course be underlying in the sense that they inhere in it. (The bundle thereby generated might then not be what the word 'I' refers to, but somehow constitute the sense ascribed with that word.)

However, our earlier distinction needs to be kept clear, i.e., we do not actually experience any direct causal links between perceptions; our imagination is led to the idea of a causal relation by the constant conjunction of perceptions. So we have two separate issues here: (1) what is it that ties bundles of perceptions together into discrete bundles or what at least gives us the fictitious idea that bundles of perceptions are unified, and (2) does any particular bundle, even with the "unity" connecting relations may provide, have <u>real</u> identity? There is also a third major issue: (3) even if it does not have real identity, what does this have to do

with the referent of the word 'I'? In connection with this last question we shall need to ask, for example, how even given a particular bundle, I would know whether or not that bundle is me, rather than someone else? Indeed, what could it mean to say it is me, rather than someone else?

So, first of all, what about the connecting relations between perceptions? It seems that in order for each one of my perceptions to be both the effect of some and the cause of others of my perceptions, each perception has to belong to a class of perceptions the members of which have been constantly conjoined with members of those classes of perceptions to which its immediate predecessor and its immediate successor belong. Stroud[119] suggests that we consider a piece of experience, ABCDEFGHIJKL. On the causal approach to identity of the self, this experience would have to be such that, e.g., H is caused by G (or by every perception up to and including G). On Hume's theory of causality, this in turn implies that there is constant conjunction between perceptions like G and perceptions like H. Only if there is such conjunction do we come to think of the two as causally connected, but our experience in fact exhibits no such regularities. It is not true that for every sort of experience, we get experience of

[119]Barry Stroud, Hume (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977): 126.

that sort only when we have just had experience of a certain other sort or that experiences of a first sort are always followed by experiences of another sort. Our experience does not exhibit such uniformities.

But Hume might say that there is no reason to think that one perception must be the whole cause of another in order for them to have the needed causal relation. A bundle of perceptions need not involve direct or immediate causal relations between each perception and every other, or between each perception and its immediate successor, as long as there is a web of interrelations that eventually extends to them all. All ideas and all impressions of reflection are ultimately causally dependent on prior impressions of sensation, and since these ideas and impressions of reflection interact causally in numerous ways, this produces an indirect causal relation among impressions of sensation as well.

As we saw in Chaper One, according to Hume's philosophy of mind, every simple idea is caused by an impression (except for such things as the famous "shade of blue"). These causal connections are vertical, from impression up to the idea, and then to other ideas and impressions. What Hume needs in his bundle, according to one line of criticism, is a causal chain running horizontally along the series of perceptions we get from moment to moment, so my assertion that this is one tree

would be explained by the claim that various tree perceptions exhibit relations of causation and resemblance. But this horizontal causal chain does not seem to exist in the case of the self. There is no way in which the perception of a coffee cup I see before me now can be said to be the effect of the perception of my pen which immediately preceded it. The pen impression does not belong to the class of perceptions each of which has been followed by a member of the class of perceptions to which the coffee cup impression belongs. Impressions of sensation just do not exhibit such regularity. New experiences flood into consciousness independently of what has just been going on there.[120]

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[120]Stroud offers another kind of counterexample, independent of Hume's particular view of causality, against the attempt to individuate mind/bundles in terms of causality (Hume, 125). Assume that there are long-standing regularities among perceptions, so that whenever one of an A-sort appeared, one of a B-sort appeared, and whenever a B, then a C, etc. This would imply, according to Hume, that a causal chain holds between particular perceptions, a, b, c, etc., belonging to these kinds. Suppose also that this causal chain holds even though a occurred in my mind, b occurred in your mind, c in someone else's, etc. In other words, perceptions in this case are thought of as linked causally but not only within the history of one person, i.e., there is trans-personal causation of perceptions, so that constant conjunctions hold between various types of perceptions regardless of which mind the perceptions belong to.

So such a bundle consists of one of my perceptions, one of its effects, which is one of your perceptions, one of its effects, which is someone else's, etc. Wolff gives an example of this: imagine two men, ". . . A and B, who exhibit the following curious relationship: every time A smells bacon frying, B, wherever he may be, finds himself thinking of eggs. If A sees a fire, B imagines heat. In short, the contents of B's mind are, as a matter of discoverable fact, causally

One way around the difficulty might be to allow for a kind of causality over a greater temporal distance than Hume strictly allows. For example, there might be a constant relation or conjunction between certain perceptions, but only after a number of intervening experiences. Hume might be supposing that, this being the case, upon the occurrence of the later one, an idea of the earlier one (its "cause") then occurs in the bundle. The occurrence would then link the later stages both causally (if we allow for such distant causes) and by resemblance with the earlier stage. But even if we remain with Hume's own view that cause and effect must be contiguous, so long as the associated idea (of the earlier but non-contiguous perception) is produced, this might generate a sufficient number of resemblances, linking successive states of the bundle, so that in subsequently forming an idea of a whole stretch of the bundle, the mind will have a propensity to ascribe identity to it. Since it is that propensity that Hume is trying to account for, the presence of resemblance should be the relevant factor.

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associated with those of A's." In such a case as this, we might even suppose psychic influence of A on B and vice versa, but we would not suppose A and B were one mind in two bodies. Against such a suggestion is the fact that A does not think of eggs when he smells bacon, and B does not think of bacon when the idea of eggs enters his mind. In other words, the associated ideas are not all in the same mind. See Robert Paul Wolff, Kant's Theory of Mental Activity (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), 108.

The appeal to causality may seem independently important for Hume if we suppose him not only to be trying to account for a certain propensity, namely to ascribe unity or identity to a bundle, but to account for some real unity (if not identity) in it. But we must remember that, as we saw above, experienced causal connections are not real connections between cause and effect. So we do not experience any real necessary connection between the perceptions in a bundle. (Of course, this still leaves open the question of whether or not there actually is a necessary causal connection between perceptions.) Perceptions for Hume are, after all, distinct, independent existences; each one ". . . is a distinct existence, and is different, and distinguishable, and separable from every other perception, either contemporary or successive."[121] Nevertheless, we ". . . suppose the whole train of perceptions to be united by identity, . . . ;" now is this identity ". . . something that really binds our several perceptions together, or [is it something that] only associates their ideas in the imagination."[122] Because of his

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[121]Hume, Treatise, 259.

[122]Ibid. This problem arises again in Hume's Appendix to the Treatise where he says he has two principles which he cannot hold consistently at the same time, i.e.. ". . . that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences" (p. 636).

view of causality and necessary connection, Hume opts for the view that we do not observe a real bond among perceptions; we ". . . only feel one among the ideas we form of them."[123] So that

> . . . identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; but is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them.[124]

The means of the union of ideas in the imagination are three relations which Hume calls the ". . . uniting principles in the ideal world, ..."[125] These three relations are resemblance, contiguity, and causation; upon these relations identity depends. The essence of these relations consists in their producing a smooth transition of ideas, so that ". . . our notions of personal identity, proceed entirely from the smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought along a train of connected ideas, ..."[126] How is this "uninterrupted progress of thought" produced? Hume's answer, again, is by means of resemblance and causation (he rejects contiguity here because it ". . . has little or no influence in the present

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[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid., 260.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Ibid.

case").[127] Remember that causation as Hume is using it here has to do with constant conjunction of similar perceptions, which, as we pointed out earlier, is tantamount to speaking of one perception as being the cause of another.

Resemblance and causation are principles of association for Hume. What does he mean by association? Association seems to be just a matter of what in fact follows what in a bundle of perceptions or what is likely to follow what. If resembling perceptions are constantly conjoined, they can be said to be causally related, and the imagination tends to attribute identity to them. Some commentators have attributed a kind of Newtonian gravitational view of the mind to Hume.[128] On this view, just as gravitation is exerted between units of matter, so association is "exerted" between units of thought (ideas) in the bundle of perceptions (mind). Somehow, ideas just attract each other and lead to each other by means of resemblance and causation. Some things Hume says may seem to support such a view; e.g., he says

> These are therefore the principles of union or cohesion [i.e., resemblance and causation] among

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[127]Ibid.

[128]See Tom Beauchamp, "Self-Inconsistency or Mere Self-Perplexity?" Hume Studies 5 (1979): 37-44; J.I. Biro, "Hume's Difficulties With The Self," Hume Studies 5(1979): 45-54; J. McIntyre, "Is Hume's Self Consistent?" in McGill Hume Studies, ed. David F. Norton (San Diego: Austin Hill Press, 1979): 79-
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> our simple ideas, and in the imagination supply the place of that inseparable connexion, by which they are united in our memory. Here is a kind of ATTRACTION, which in the mental world will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the natural, ...[129]

Is such a slide into a gravitational model necessary for Hume? I do not think so. The gravitational model implies the presence of some additional force or exertion beyond the mere constant conjunction and relation between perceptions. But no such extra exertion is necessary. Constant conjunction of resembling perceptions, along with the imagination, is all Hume needs to unify bundles.

But the phrase, "along with the imagination," brings up another problem. Hume says

> . . . the qualities, from which this association arises, and by which the mind is after this manner convey'd from one idea to another, are three, viz. RESEMBLANCE, CONTIGUITY in time or place, and CAUSE and EFFECT. . . .[130]

Maybe the principle of association is something more; maybe it is a mental synthesizing ability of some sort which can link perceptions which resemble each other.[131] On this view,

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[129]Hume, Treatise, 12-13.

[130]Ibid., 11.

[131]Some commentators refer to this as a Hutchesonian or Kantian model of the mind. See, e.g., Norman Kemp Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume (London: MacMillan & Co., 1949): 73-76, 254-56; Stephen Nathanson, "Hume's Second Thoughts on the Self," Hume Studies 2 (1976): 36-46.

the principle of association holds between a mind and its perceptions, so that there is a propensity for the mind, due to certain dispositions perhaps, when confronted with one member of a set of resembling perceptions, to have a thought of other members of that set.

Note in the above two quotations that Hume says that association occurs "in the imagination" or "in memory"; he also says that certain qualities cause the mind to be "convey'd from one idea to another." Perhaps certain principles are properties of the mind rather than of perceptions. For example, in another place, Hume says the following:

> . . . I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are permanent, irresistible, and universal; such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes: And the principles, which are changeable, weak, and irregular; . . . The former are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin.[132]

These principles of association involving resemblance and causation then, are the foundation of all thought, not merely features of thoughts themselves.[133] So does the mind have

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[132]Ibid., 225.

[133]Patten points out that whether or not we think of the principle of association as referring to mental propensities, the fact remains that Hume considers the principle of association as a first principle, and he acknowledges that it cannot be explained. He says, "Its effects are every where conspicuous; but as to its causes, they are mostly unknown,

properties which are in addition to the properties of perceptions alone? No; such special properties of mind are not necessary if we remember what the mind is for Hume, i.e., merely a bundle of perceptions interrelated by means of resemblance and causation. So to say, "in the mind," is to say "in the bundle of perceptions unified by resemblance and causation." Perceptions are present in the mind (bundle) and are causally related to each other. However, one interesting counterproposal here is that there may be some kind of additional non-dispositional properties which have a physiological basis, even if they are not "in the mind." This latter is a proposal by John Bricke.[134] The non-dispositional properties he has in mind are mental states in the sense that they, even though they are physiologically based, have certain ". . . psychological effects in appropriate circumstances, ..."[135] These effects can be observed even though their underlying physiological states may be unexplainable; the physiological states may be ". . . springs and principles,

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and must be resolv'd into original qualities of human nature, which I pretend not to explain." See S.C. Patten, "Hume's Bundles, Self-Consciousness and Kant" Hume Studies 2 (1976): 59-75.

[134]J. Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind, 56-58.

[135]Ibid., 57.

which are hid."[136] This proposal of Bricke's is a preparation for his views that the self (or at least the referent of the word 'I,' should one decide to distinguish that from the self) needs to be viewed as a psychophysical entity, and he thinks Hume might be able to accept such a view of the self. We will address this issue again shortly.

Hume's view of the mind, then, is that it is a bundle of perceptions which are internally related and unified by resemblance and causality.[137] Here arises the second of the three problems we mentioned earlier; this is a problem of real identity in a bundle of perceptions. We must remember that causation is a product of the constant conjunction of

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[136]Hume, Treatise, 132.

[137]One interesting proposal on the unity of bundles of perceptions is McIntyre's overlap theory. The mind is a complex collection of perceptions at any one time. Every new impression experience adds to the collection and destroys the bundle to which it is added. The destruction of the collection does not happen by the total destruction of its parts but by any change in them. However, if certain past perceptions persist in existence, the influence of perceptions from whole collections that no longer exist is not mysterious. I am influenced by those past collections of perceptions, some of whose constituent perceptions continue to be constituents of me as a present momentary bundle. The nonidentity of the collection of perceptions from moment to moment masks the underlying persistence of individual perceptions through time. Perceptions that persist through various collections can influence any collections in which they occur. See J.L. McIntyre, "Further Remarks on the Consistency of Hume's Account of the Self," Hume Studies 5 (1979): 55-61. The major problem with such an overlap theory is its lack of any textual support, although the text does not prohibit such a view either.

perceptions along with the function of custom. And because of causal links and resemblance between perceptions in a bundle, the imagination is led to believe in the unity of the bundle and in that sense the bundle is indeed unified. But is there any real identity in the bundle? No; we have only the idea of identity produced by the imagination. How does this idea of personal identity arise? Central to Hume's answer to this question is memory and its role in connecting perceptions.

Memory perceptions make possible the relation of resemblance because they preserve much of our past experience. Hume says:

> . . . what is the memory but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of past perceptions? And as an image necessarily resembles its object, must not the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object? In this particular, then, the memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relations of resemblance among the perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others.[138]

Memory perceptions discover and produce resemblance relations; in other words, memory perceptions constitute an actual relation of resemblance between earlier and later perceptions, between themselves and other non-memory perceptions in the

[138]Ibid., 260-61.

collection. Memory perceptions have a relatively small degree of vivacity in comparison with present impressions (e.g., of today's earache) but a great degree of vivacity in comparison with an imagined earache (e.g., that of a character in a novel). A memory perception is ". . . intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea: . . . ."[139]

What is it about memory perceptions that enables them to discover and produce the relation of resemblance, which contributes to the idea of the identity of the self? In the perception of yesterday's earache is contained the fact that it is not today's earache but yesterday's. The perception would not be what it is without this fact. We might argue, in other words, that memory perceptions have a special kind of intentionality, i.e., past-directed intentionality.[140]

Here we encounter again a problem we discussed in Chapter One, i.e., Hume's lack of a sufficient act/object distinction. An intentional object view of perception would help clarify his view of perception in general and his view of memory perceptions in particular. It seems that any perception can have a purely intentional object; e.g., mentally, a color perception consists of a mental act of perceiving and an

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[139]Ibid., 8.

[140]Cf. J.I. Biro, "Hume on Self-Identity and Memory," Review of Metaphysics 30, no. 10 (1976): 30-31.

intentional object, i.e., the color which is perceived.[141] Now what about a memory perception? A memory perception is a present perception, but its intentional object is the past resembling perception which caused it. Of course, this past resembling perception may have occurred years ago, but remember that for Hume as long as there is a continuous web of interrelated contiguous causes from that past perception to the present memory of it, we can say that the past perception caused the present one.

But there is a certain problem here. If we restrict the term memory to a person's representations of just his past experiences, then memory seems to presuppose personal identity (or at least an idea of it), and Hume's account is circular. There is a way out here, however. Only memory-like perceptions which are veridical are relevant to personal identity. But now we need a non-question-begging analysis of veridical memory. This can be done if veridical memory is defined as, ". . . those representations of past experience which have a special causal connection with the occurrence of the past experience."[142] This enables a memory-based account

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[141]Pain perceptions can be viewed in the same way. Cf. Laird Addis, "Pains and Other Secondary Mental Entities," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 47, no. 1 (1986): 59-73.

[142]J.L. McIntyre, "Further Remarks," 57.

of the idea of personal identity to distinguish memories from pseudo-memories without an appeal to personal identity. Remember also the suggestion of a psychophysical substance, so that intervening physical and/or physiological states between the past perception and the present memory perception may help account for the constant conjunction of resembling perceptions, and thereby, the idea of the identity of the bundle.

So memory functions to produce resemblance among perceptions in a bundle, some of which occurred in the past, so that there is a continuous and contiguous stream of perceptions from the past right up to the present. The imagination, then, because of this stream of resembling perceptions, gives us the idea of the causal relations between the perceptions[143] and, thus, the idea of the identity of the

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[143]Garrett points out that memory perceptions may not be intentional enough. When two similar perceptions P1 and P2 occur at a given time, and a later idea, P3 of the same kind, occurs with the force appropriate to memories, it simply remains indeterminate whether P3 is a memory of P1 or of P2. Thus, we cannot say that one rather than the other has been collected into the same bundle as P3. If there were a genuine necessary connection between causally-related perceptions, we could say P3 was a memory of P1 just in case there were a real necessary connection between P1 and P3. Unfortunately, Hume does not admit the existence of such necessary connections as we have seen. Perceptions may or may not actually cause each other. All the imagination does is to ascribe the idea of the causal relation to them. See Donald Garrett, "Hume's Self-Doubts About Personal Identity," Philosophical Review 90, no. 3 (1981): 337-58.

bundle as a whole. We are misled into thinking that the bundle is one continuous object with perfect identity. It is not really, but we have the fictitious idea of identity due to the activity of the imagination which acts on the resembling perceptions in the bundle.

This brings us to the third problem we mentioned earlier, i.e., how do we get from bundle identity to self identity? What is it for me, for example, to be one of the bundles of perceptions? Or is it perhaps not really Hume's claim at all that I am? Perceptions, in one sense, seem to be simultaneously repeatable; in other words, Bob and Tom can have the same green spot before their eyes after looking into a red light. It is also conceivable that all of the sensations, perceptions, and thoughts of two people be exactly similar. In addition, spatio-temporal locations alone cannot individuate perceptions because thoughts or feelings or memories do not have spatial locations. So to what does the term 'I' refer and what does it express? Is Hume actually maintaining that I am one particular bundle of perceptions? Does he even really address this issue?

It will be helpful for us to examine Hume's view on the referent of 'I' a little more closely, because even if his views on bundle identity and unity are plausible, it may be

the case that his theory of personal identity is incomplete, as regards the issue of self-awareness.

CHAPTER III

HUME ON 'I'

Even if we were to grant that Hume has given an adequate account of the (fictitious) idea of bundle identity by using the relations of resemblance and causation and the activity of the imagination, we still must ask about the nature of 'I' in his philosophy of personal identity. For example, am I one particular bundle of perceptions? As suggested earlier, we might construe the problem here in Fregean terms, i.e., according to Hume, what is the referent of the term 'I' and what is its sense, and is the bundle theory really supposed to define the former? (Of course, Hume does not formulate the question in these terms.)

It is important to keep in mind that the sense of the term 'I' is a separate issue from the referent of the term. However, it may be that Hume was wrestling with such a distinction as this, although he did not have the language to express it. At the beginning of the section of the Treatise on personal identity, Hume points out that there are philosophers who think that we are always immediately aware of our self; according to these philosophers, my awareness of me is constant and is the foundation for all of my knowledge:

> There are some philosphers, who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity . . . nor is there any thing of which we can be certain, if we doubt of this.[144]

A little later Hume says

> . . . when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, ... I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception.[145]

Note the phrase "what I call myself"; there is something here to which Hume is referring, but what is it?

The discussion that follows the above quotes focuses on the term self. Hume clearly denies that the self is any substance which continues invariably the same throughout one's life. Since ideas come from impressions and since impressions change continually, we can have no idea of an invariable substantial self. There just is no substance-self to which perceptions belong and which supports their existence.[146] As we have seen, Hume's alternative to the substance-self view is his bundle theory; a self is ". . . nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each

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[144]Hume, Treatise, 251.

[145]Ibid., 252.

[146]Ibid.

other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."[147]

But if the self is only a bundle of perceptions, then, as we have seen, Hume has to wrestle with the problem that his opponents point out, i.e., we seem to be aware of self as a unity. So he proceeds to try to explain why we have the illusion or fictitious idea of the unity of the self. To do this he has to unify the particular bundles of perceptions, so he introduces the principles of association (resemblance and causation), memory, and the imagination, all of which function in such a way to give us the illusion of unity among our actually independent, constantly changing perceptions. (Of course, in explaining the illusion of his opponents Hume does not have to be offering a theory of his own as to what persons really are.) But are these tools adequate to the additional task of explaining the referent of the word 'I,' i.e., of showing how men can really <u>be</u> bundles of perceptions?

Commentators on Hume have discussed several difficulties and issues related to his unifying principles of association. We have already discussed some of these, e.g., the function of memory and the problem of contiguity and necessary connection in causation. But there are still additional problems critics raise, and it might be helpful at this point

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[147]Ibid.

to briefly note some of these. I am interested here primarily in problems related to individuation, and not just unity, of bundle-selves and self-awareness.

For example, Stroud[148] points out that we all believe that there are many persons, and we usually have no problem in real life distinguishing them. Since we think of persons this way, Hume should be able to explain why and how we do this, but he says nothing about it at all. The problem of how we distinguish one person from another or how we identify this person as the same one we saw yesterday is central to any account of personal identity. Hume, however, omits this issue entirely. Pears says that this is surprising because questions about a particular person's identity seem to presuppose the existence of other people.[149] If there are no other people, then there is nobody for me not to be, so I must have a way to know whether or not other people exist. And we might argue that we are only aware of other people through their bodies, through physical existence in space and time. But since Hume seems to ignore (at least on the surface) the physical aspect of persons in his account of personal

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[148]B. Stroud, Hume, 132.

[149]D.F. Pears, "Hume on Personal Identity," in David Hume: A Symposium, ed. D.F. Pears (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1963): 43-54.

identity, his account is incomplete. We will return to this point shortly.

The individuation of bundles of perceptions is frequently pointed out as a problem for Hume. Robison,[150] for example, says that if we can in fact mistake sets of independent successive perceptions for a single enduring bundle-self, this would mean that we are presupposing that the sets in succession have already been individuated somehow. But Hume has no explanation in his system for such individuation. He has no way to sort out bundle-selves to begin with, and yet we presuppose that a bundle being singled out as identical through time has been singled out as distinct from other bundles.

But is Hume necessarily presupposing individuation? Penelhum does not think so.[151] Each of us is just presented with his own discrete perceptions with which he performs the tasks of an imaginative construction of a world of distinct and continuing objects of perception and the generation of a psychological ascription of unity to the sequence of perceptions out of which the world of objects has been

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[150]Wade L. Robison, "In Defense of Hume's Appendix," in McGill Hume Studies, ed. David F. Norton (San Diego: Austin Hill Press, 1979): 89-99.

[151]Terence Penelhum, "Hume's Theory of the Self Revisited," Dialogue (Canada) 14, no. 3 (1975): 389-409. Cf. B. Stroud, Hume, 134 ff.

constructed. This is one answer to the charge that Hume presupposes that he can distinguish between one bundle of perceptions and another. He only asks how the one sequence of perceptions that I have is thought by me to be a unity, and once this question is answered, it provides an account of the development of the idea of oneself that can serve, in combination with the belief in external objects, to generate a further belief in a community of perceivers. This answer of course continues to assume that Hume is still trying to offer a theory as to what I am (and persons in general are), i.e., a theory as to the referent of the word 'I.'

On such an account as this, the notion of other selves is subsequent to, not prior to, the idea of one's own self. If someone says that the existence of other perceivers is presupposed in saying that one is only presented with one's own perceptions, this is true. But Hume does not have to admit that each of us realizes that the only perceptions he has are his own until after he has generated the idea of himself and then that of others.

This defense of Hume grants that the only data available to a person for the formation of ideas and beliefs are his own perceptions, even if they can only be thought of as his own after certain ideas regarding external objects, and others persons, are generated among these perceptions. It can be

objected, however, that Hume cannot even account for this fact. He himself possesses the idea of a single mind, so he can just state the fact from which his explanatory theory starts, but he cannot explain how or why that fact holds. He cannot explain how or why the data from which the idea of personal identity is constructed present themselves in the way they do, even though, if they did not present themselves this way, Hume's explanation would collapse. Stroud raises this problem.

Stroud suggests that we suppose that only one person exists and that all perceptions occur within that one mind.[152] According to Hume, that person is only a series of perceptions. If that series of perceptions exhibited appropriate resemblances and contiguities, then, according to Hume's theory of causality and imaginative activity, the series would eventually come to contain the idea of a single continuous mind. The idea of a single mind is derived from a survey of past perceptions via memory, and that survey would, in this case, encompass all perceptions there have ever been. There is no circularity in this.

But suppose there are many different minds independent of each other; in this case, not all the perceptions there are would fall within the scope of a single mind's experience.

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[152]B. Stroud, Hume, 137.

Surveys of past perceptions would not extend to all perceptions there have ever been. How then could there arise the idea of a single continuous mind? The idea could not be derived from a survey of all perceptions there are because there are no such surveys. Even if there were, it would be to no avail because the class of all perceptions there are does not exhibit the appropriate regularities. If all the perceptions there are did exhibit the appropriate regularities and they were all open to a single survey, we would be back in a world with only one mind. So in the world as it is, a non-solipsistic idea of one mind can only be derived from a survey of some but not all perceptions. To see himself as one mind among others a persons's experience must be restricted to only a subset of all perceptions that occur. <u>But which ones?</u>

If Jones were to try to use Smith's perceptions as his data, he would need some way to pick out Smith's perceptions from all the perceptions there are, and, therefore, he would need the idea of the mind who is Smith. But if he uses only his own perceptions as data, he needs no such prior idea <u>if</u> his own perceptions are in fact the only ones ever presented to him. Among all the perceptions there are, his reflective gaze must be restricted to a certain series, and as long as that series in fact exhibits certain features, there will

eventually occur in that series the idea of a single continuous mind. When that idea is applied to the earlier members in the series, Jones then comes to have the belief that he is a single mind with a continuous history.

So Hume's explanation of the origin of the idea of the self is not deficient in failing to give an account of how a certain idea arises from certain data, but it leaves completely unintelligible and mysterious the fact that the data are as they are. It is simply taken as a given fact about the universe of perceptions that the range of reflective vision of any one of them does not extend to all the rest. Only because his gaze is thus restricted to a certain subset of all the perceptions there are, can a person get the idea of himself.

Why is the gaze restricted this way? Why can we not survey all the perceptions there are? One's vision can be non-circularly restricted, from the start, to a certain subset or series only if perceptions in fact occur only <u>as</u> members of particular series, as if they come <u>already tied</u> into bundles so that no member of a particular series could be a perception of any perception outside that series. How can this be, according to Hume? For him all perceptions are distinct existences and so each one can exist independently of every other and independently of everything else in the

universe. There is nothing in any perception, considered in itself, which implies the existence of any other perception or of anything else whatever, and so there is nothing intrinsic to any perception that connects it with some particular series rather than another. So why do perceptions present themselves in discrete separate bundles? Hume cannot explain this even though his explanation of the origin of the idea of the self depends on it.[153]

If there were such things as simple spiritual substances to which perceptions necessarily belong or if there were real or necessary connections between certain perceptions, then we could explain why the field of vision of a particular reflective perception is restricted to a certain subset of all the perceptions there are. Each person would be presented with only those perceptions inhering in a particular spiritual substance or with those necessarily connected with present perceptions. Perceptions would come in separate discrete bundles, so that attention to the relations among perceptions in just <u>those</u> bundles could then be supposed to generate the idea of them <u>as</u> discrete bundles. This would explain why the data are in fact the way they must be if Hume's explanation

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[153]Cf. Andrew Ward, "Hume, Demonstratives, and Self-Ascriptions of Identity," <u>Hume Studies</u> 11 (April 1985): 69-93. Also see Donald Garrett, "Hume's Self-Doubts About Personal Identity," <u>Philosophical Review</u>, 90, no. 3 (1981): 337-58.

of the origin of the idea of the self is to be successful. But for Hume the theory of ideas, as we have seen, implies the impossibility of a perception's inhering in a substance and of there being any real connections between perceptions.

Another sort of objection is raised by James Noxon.[154] Noxon objects to Hume's claim that ". . . the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey[s] the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make[s] the whole seem like the continuance of one object?"[155] Assuming, with most commentators, that Hume's concern with the "one object" is a concern not simply with personal identity in the sense of unity, but with identity in a sense sufficient to individuate a referent for the word 'I,' Noxon objects that one's sense of continuing identity cannot arise simply from the "frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought." It depends on one's recapturing his own previous consciousness of such perceptions.

In any sense that can be relevant to the awareness of what I am, memory must involve more than just the appearance of an idea which copies first-hand impressions. When I

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[154]James Noxon, "Senses of Identity in Hume's Treatise," Dialogue (Canada) 8, no. 3 (1969): 367-84.

[155]Hume, Treatise, 261.

remember a place, in the relevant sense, I do not merely remember what I saw; I remember having seen it. So in order to remember that, I must have been aware at the time that I was seeing it. In order to secure his theory, Noxon thinks Hume has to ground it in a special sort of reflexive consciousness--in an awareness superimposed on every conscious experience that makes it impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he perceives.

According to Noxon, Hume's theory of consciousness can be kept intact only if it is reinforced by some notion of ideas of reflexion which constitute perception of the operations of the mind. Once Hume includes this internal sense (perhaps the awareness of an underlying subject of dispositions, a la Bricke?), he can account for otherwise inexplicable mental functions, e.g., perceiving relations and discriminating between sensation and memory, in such a way as to let them be relevant to the problem of identifying some object of awareness as oneself. Such a concept of reflexive consciousness seems to be implied by some of Hume's remarks and even required by his explanations of psychological events. For example, he says

> In thinking of our past thoughts we not only delineate out the objects, of which we were thinking, but also conceive the action of the mind in the meditation, that certain je-ne-scai-quoi, of which 'tis impossible to give any definition or

> description, but which every one sufficiently understands.[156]

This je-ne-scai-quoi might be reflexive consciousness. Compare also what Hume says in the Appendix:

> Most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect.[157]

So Noxon suggests that the problem for Hume is not to reconcile his theoretical needs with his inventory of concepts. Rather, the problem is to reconcile his definition of self with the role he assigns to the idea of the self in his psychological investigations. This is especially true, some commentators point out, in Hume's discussion of some of the passions in Book III of the Treatise.[158]

For example, when he describes the mechanics of pride and humility, Hume seems to introduce a new or different idea of the self without realizing it. Pride (a secondary and reflexive impression) occurs when a feeling of pleasure is evoked by a quality of something which is related to the self,

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[156]Hume, Treatise, 106.

[157]Ibid., 635.

[158]See James Noxon, "Senses of Identity;" Terence Penelhum, "The Self in Hume's Philosophy," Southwestern Journal of Philosophy, 7, no. 2 (1976): 9-23; David P. Behan, "Hume's Labyrinth," History of Philosophy Quarterly, 2, no. 3 (1985): 309-21.

as a house which is beautiful, e.g., might be related to a person through ownership. The pleasureable feeling excites the resembling impression of pride which produces the idea of the self, the natural object of the passion:

> We must, therefore, make a distinction betwixt the cause and the object of these passions; betwixt that idea, which excites them, and that to which they direct their view, when excited. Pride and humility, being once rais'd, immediately turn our attention to ourself, and regard that as their ultimate and final object; but there is something farther requisite in order to raise them: Something, which is peculiar to one of the passions, and produces not both in the very same degree. The first idea, that is presented to the mind, is that of the cause or productive principle. This excites the passion connected with it; and that passion, when excited, turns our view to another idea, which is that of self. Here then is a passion plac'd betwixt two ideas, of which the one produces it, and the other is produc'd by it. The first idea, therefore, represents the cause, the second the object of the passion.[159]

The difficulty is to understand how the idea of the self can play the role assigned here to it if the self is construed in accordance with Hume's definition as comprising only a collection of different perceptions. Noxon suggests that maybe Hume is working with two kinds of ideas of the self; in fact, Hume himself distinguishes between two senses of personal identity: i.e., personal identity ". . . as it

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[159]Hume, Treatise, 278.

regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves."[160]

The first of these senses would involve a reflexive idea which takes as it object the self defined as a bundle of perceptions. This is probably what Hume has in mind when he says that ". . . we are at all times intimately conscious of ourselves, . . . ;"[161] and "Ourself is intimately present to us, ..."[162] It also endorses what he states by saying:

> 'Tis evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person, that 'tis not possible to imagine, that any thing can in this particular go beyond it.[163]

So the self which represents personal identity, "as it regards our thought or imagination," is ". . . that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness."[164] It is dubious, Noxon implies, that self in this sense could be what one is in any ordinary sense.

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[160]Ibid., 253.

[161]Ibid., 339.

[162]Ibid., 427.

[163]Ibid., 317.

[164]Ibid., 277.

The second sense of personal identity is that which relates to the "concern we take in ourselves." This is the sort of idea that occurs e.g., when the passion of pride or humility ". . . turns our view to ourselves, and makes us think of our own qualities and circumstances."[165] It is not the sort of idea which is "always intimately present with us," because we are often thinking of qualities and circumstances of others or of impersonal things. All thoughts, according to Hume, are in ourselves but not all are of ourselves, in this sense. So, Noxon suggests, Hume failed to make his own distinction clear between the two senses of personal identity, and this may be a main source of problems in his psychological theories.

Noxon continues to assume that, although only one of these two senses of personal identity can reasonably be said to provide an account of who or what one is, in the ordinary sense, Hume nevertheless, failing clearly enough to distinguish them, thought of them both as relevant to the same question. But this raises the questions that we touched on earlier. Is it really fair to regard Hume's bundle theory as an attempt to deal with the problem of personal identity in the sense of defining the referent of the word 'I,' as opposed to dealing only with the problem of unity as we earlier

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[165]Ibid., 287.

discussed it (which may have something at least to do with the sense of the word 'I')? Is Hume really committed to offering as the referent of the word 'I' the very bundle that he, admittedly, calls "myself"? John Bricke, as noted earlier, has an interesting suggestion in this regard. It involves his notion of a psychophysical substance.[166]

There is an interesting, and certainly crucial, omission on Hume's part in his discussion of personal identity, and that is his omission of the body. Several commentators have pointed out this omission.[167] For example, Penelhum says that because Hume limits himself to a discussion of perceptions, which are mental entities, he is really not dealing with the identity of a person but of a mind, and these are not necessarily the same issues. To deal only with the identity of a mind severely limits the discussion of personal identity. It makes us ignore the common method we use to settle

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[166]J. Bricke, Hume's Philosophy of Mind, 66-67.

[167]See Terence Penelhum, "Hume on Personal Identity," in Hume, ed. V.C. Chappell (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968): 213-39; "The Self in Hume's PHilosophy," Southwestern Journal of Philosophy 7 (Summer 1976): 9-23; "Hume's Theory of the Self Revisited," Dialogue (Canada) 14, no. 3 (1975): 389-409; Antony Flew, David Hume: Philosopher of Moral Science (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); David Mouton, "Hume and Descartes on Self-Acquaintance," Dialogue (Canada) 13, no.2 (1974): 255-69; D.F. Pears, "Hume on Personal Identity," in David Hume: A Symposium, ed. D.F. Pears (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1963): 43-54; E.J. Borowski, "Identity and Personal Identity," Mind 85 (1976): 481-502.

practical problems of identification, which is to examine a person's physical appearance. Hume's approach to persons ignores some of the gradualness of changes in complex things that he claims is a main contributing cause of our calling them identical. These gradual changes are, in part at least, due to changes in the things' physical careers. Hume is ignoring the fact that the uninterruptedness we erroneously (according to him) attribute to people might be in fact a feature of their physical lives. Changes in body are more gradual usually than changes in mind, and it is only our mental life that we think is interrupted.

Part of Hume's difficulty may be that he subtracts body from his concept of a person and then still expects the mental phenomena that remain to exhibit the same stability that body gives to a psychophysical person. Maybe it is because of Hume's omission of the body that he has such real difficulty answering the question, what could distinguish between the series of perceptions making up my mind from the series of perceptions making up your mind, if that is indeed the question he is trying to answer. It seems highly likely that a reference to the world of separate bodies is essential to our ability to distinguish among persons.

In rejecting the substrate-self view, Hume considers only the standard version of such a theory, according to which any

properties ascribable to substrate-selves must be nonphysical properties, and they must (as perceptions) inhere in that substrate. Perhaps we need a non-standard version of the substrate-self theory; in this regard, Bricke suggests that the substrate-self is a psychophysical substrate that not only underlies all of one's mental experiences but also all of one's physical properties. It is important to remember that this psychophysical substrate is not something in which physical or mental properties inhere in the sense that Hume thought had to be the case for substance. But that must mean, then, that it is a kind of bundle after all, just not a bundle of perceptions. Bricke does not make this clear, but it seems that for him, the psychophysical substrate is going to have to be a bundle of physical properties which underlie--causally--mental properties. We may ignore this complication in what follows.

Recall that earlier we discussed the fact that for Hume perceptions (and ideas) seem to have physical causes. Psychological and physical events can be constantly conjoined; matter can act on the mind, so that we might conclude that ". . . motion . . . actually is, the cause of thought and perception."[168] There seems to be a physiological and physical

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[168]Hume, Treatise, 248. Hume also says that there may be causal explanations of the ultimate sources of our perceptions that are beyond our reach: "As to those impressions, which arise from the senses, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion,

basis for Hume's psychological principles of association. The same might be true for mental dispositions, which Hume seems to admit as causes of certain events in the mind, although these dispositions are not perceptions.[169] The possession of such dispositional properties must involve the possession of ". . . relatively long-term physical, specifically physiological, properties."[170] These physiological properties are needed to explain things like recollection, desires, intentions, the employment of abstract ideas, and volition. In other words, physiological properties are needed for the causal explanation of many occurrences of passions and ideas.

As already suggested in our discussion of Noxon, Hume himself seems to recognize that a theory of the self that is adequate to an understanding of the emotions must treat the self as a kind of psychophysical substance. He says, ". . . pride and humility have the qualities of our mind and body, that is self, for their natural and more immediate causes,

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perfectly inexplicable by human reason, and 'twill always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produc'd by the creative power of the mind, or are deriv'd from the author of our being." (Treatise, 84)

[169]Such dispositional properties are things like traits of character, possession of concepts, the knowledge of causal connections, and the retention of experience.

[170]J. Bricke, Hume's Philosophy, 30.

. . . . "[171] What "qualities" does Hume have in mind here? Maybe he is thinking about the kind of long-term physiological properties we just mentioned, properties which are part of the self gua psychophysical substance but which only underlie the self gua mere bundle of perceptions and which account, ultimately, for the causal unity (and apparent identity) of the latter. Hume then could, and may even need to, admit a single psychophysical substance, which is continuous but not necessarily always conscious. As we mentioned earlier, he seems to acknowledge the possibility of physiological properties to explain the causes of passions like pride and humility. In addition, admission of a psychophysical substance can get around the problem of gaps in consciousness and experience, because during such gaps the psychophysical substance continues to possess unobjectionable physical characteristics. A single psychophysical substance can also satisfy Hume's conditions for identity, e.g., all the states and properties of such a substance can display ". . . a sympathy of parts to their common end, ..."[172] and can ". . . bear to each other, the reciprocal relation of cause and effect in all their actions and operations."[173] Hume says,

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[171]Hume, Treatise, 303.

[172]Ibid., 257.

[173]Ibid.

". . . the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity."[174] Here character and disposition (which, on this view, are part of the psychophysical substance) are distinguished from perceptions in one's mind, yet both character and perceptions play a role in personal identity.

All of this will work if persons are fundamentally psychophysical substances. Again Hume says:

> Bodily pains and pleasures are the source of the mind; but arise originally in the soul, or in the body, whichever you please to call it, without any preceding thought or perception.[175]

Here he might be suggesting that the self is one thing, i.e., a psychophysical type of substance, with two sets of states and properties, one psychological and one physical or physiological.[176]

This psychophysical substance would underlie and be the ultimate source of perceptions and ideas; note Hume's phrase above, ". . . without any preceding thought or perception."

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[174]Ibid., 261.

[175]Ibid., 276.

[176]Perhaps we can compare Hume at this point to Descartes when he says, ". . . I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but . . . I am very closely united to it, and so to speak so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it one whole." R. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, Vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1977): 192.

But it would not be a self in the sense rejected by Hume. So perhaps we can adopt Bricke's suggestion regarding such a psychophysical substance and consider it as the referent of the term 'I.' Now, of course, Bricke's psychophysical substance is not ever an object of perception, since it is not itself a perception, nor a bundle of perceptions for that matter. So it is not given; it cannot directly be referred to as this or that, and one is not ever immediately aware of it as such on Hume's view. However, this introduces a real problem regarding the sense of 'I.' How does the term then function? How does one manage to refer, using the term 'I,' to the particular substance in question? Perhaps all that is left is a definite description, such as "The psychophysical substance whose properties and causal activity account for the `unity' of the bundle of which this or that perception is a member." If we adopted this suggestion, we could then simply distinguish between the self and the I, the latter being the referent of the word 'I,' and the former being the bundle in question. We would be justified in calling the bundle in question "the self" precisely because it provides, in the way suggested, the sense of self-reference.

Of course, even if the above is at all helpful in interpreting Hume, it cannot account for all of what Hume is doing. However, the other main part may be regarded as mainly

negative: to account for the mistaken idea that his chief opponents have, that the referent of the word 'I' is an immediate object of perception after all (and not simply the referent of a definite description). To deal with this problem from his theory's perspective, Hume has to account for a certain illusion, i.e., the illusion that we are given some kind of real unity in perception (and are not simply able to designate it by means of a definite description of the form "the . . . ").

On the other hand, we might argue that the term 'I' plays a primitive, fundamental role in our language and in our understanding of perceptions. Perry argues persuasively that 'I' is an essential indexical.[177] In other words, with regard to the subject at hand, if we try to replace 'I' with some other terms, e.g., a definite description like "the psychophysical substance whose causal activities . . . ," we destroy the force of our explanation of perception and the resultant action it might cause. It is one thing to say, "`The psychophysical substance satisfying the following description. . . ' perceives a fire and proceeds to put it out." But it is quite another thing to say "I am that psychophysical "substance" . . . ," thus, bringing in the

[177]John Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical," Nous 13, no. 1 (1979): 3-21.

indexical. That a being of a certain description perceives a fire cannot, it seems, explain why I put it out, even if I am that being (perhaps I fail to know that I am).

I do not know how Hume might respond to this argument. One possibility might be for him to say that the term 'I' is just some kind of communicative shortcut (to use Perry's phrase) for the longer, more accurate definite description. Those who are philosophically untaught might talk this way, and we know what they mean because we all talk this way every day. However, philosophical analysis shows that this way of talking is not accurate at all; the unity in perception we express by using the term 'I' is really an illusion; it just does not exist in fact. However, according to Perry's argument, which seems persuasive, the term 'I' cannot be viewed as only a communicative shortcut; it is essential to our language and our expression of perceptual acts. So in this regard, I would argue that Hume's theory is defective and incomplete, even if it is not subject to the standard sorts of objections to his bundle theory.

In the next chapter I want to present a view which is of the sort that Hume rejects; that is the substantial-self view of Thomas Reid. In contrast to Hume, Reid does argue that every person is immediately and constantly aware of himself as a self. And Reid tries to refute Hume's view. We will

see, however, that he is not very successful (which is not to argue, on the other hand, that Hume is correct and Reid is incorrect; I am not taking a strong stand on that issue).

CHAPTER IV

THOMAS REID ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

One of Hume's contemporaries who disagreed with him on just about everything was Thomas Reid, the father of "Common Sense" philosophy. Reid's view on personal identity was of the sort that Hume rejects. Before we examine the foundations of Reid's view, I want to present the view itself. Following our discussion of the view and its basis in common sense philosophy, we will discuss it in relation to Hume, and we will see how Hume might respond to Reid (Chapter V).

For Reid, personal identity is the source of our general notion of identity. We must have a conviction of our own continued existence and identity ". . . as soon as we are reasonable creatures,"[178] i.e., as soon as we are able to think or do anything. This conviction is the basis for our idea of identity. Identity in general is a ". . . relation between a thing which is known to exist at one time, and a thing which is known to have existed at another time."[179] If we ask whether or not they are the same or two different things,

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[178]Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, in The Works of Thomas Reid, ed. Sir William Hamilton, I (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1863), 344b.

[179]Ibid.

every person of common sense perfectly understands the meaning of the question. Therefore, we can infer with certainty that every person of common sense has a clear and distinct idea of identity. Reid cannot give a definition of identity itself. He says it is too simple an idea to admit of a logical definition. It <u>is</u> a relation, but he cannot distinguish it from any other relation by means of a definition, although he is confident that we cannot confuse the relation of identity with any other relation.

Identity for Reid presupposes an uninterrupted continuance of existence. He says

> That which hath ceased to exist, cannot be the same with that which afterwards begins to exist; for this would be to suppose a being to exist after it ceased to exist, and to have had existence before it was produced, which are manifest contradictions.[180]

Therefore, continued uninterrupted existence is necessarily implied in identity. Since this is the case, we cannot properly apply the notion of identity to things like pains, thoughts, or any operations of the mind. Such things are by nature successive and momentary. Reid compares them to time, which is successive, i.e., no two moments of time can be the same moment; moments of time succeed one another. By contrast, we all have the conviction of our uninterrupted

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[180]Ibid.

existence; without this we would experience ". . . some degree of insanity."[181]

Reid attempts to give some arguments for his position. These arguments are not based on truths more self-evident or necessary than a person's knowledge of his self-identity. Nothing is more basic than that. Rather, they are either transcendental or reductio, i.e., they try to show that identity, as Reid understands it, is not only a necessary ground for or condition of the way we understand the world, but also they show that to deny that identity is as Reid says, leads to all kinds of absurdities in everyday life. The transcendental element in Reid's argument is employed in a Kantian fashion. A person's conviction of his own identity is indispensable to any and all exercise of reason. The operations of reason are made up of successive parts. Antecedents are foundations of consequents. But without the conviction that antecedents have been known by me, hence I am identical with a past knower of them, I can have no reason to proceed to any consequents.

The reductio element in Reid's argument is found in his attempt to reduce to absurdity the supposition that persons are composites of parts. Because they are not composites, a person is either totally there or not there at all. If a

[181]Ibid., 344a.

person loses his estate, health, or strength, he is still the same person he was before. If he has an arm or leg amputated, he is still the same person he was before. If the amputated part of his body were part of his person, it would have a right to part of his estate and be liable for part of his business. It would also be entitled to a share of his merit and demerit, which is absurd, according to Reid. A person for him is indivisible; a person is a kind of "monad."[182]

Personal identity, then, ". . . implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself."[183] Reid does not know what the monad-self actually is, but it is something that thinks, acts, suffers, etc. I am not thought or feeling; I am something that acts and feels. My actions and feelings change constantly; they have a successive, not a continued existence. But the self to which they belong is permanent and has the same relation to all of my successive thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Reid's view is obviously a substance-self view of the kind that Hume rejects. Reid's monad-self is something we are immediately aware <u>of</u>, even if we are not aware of its inner nature, and it is the subject of all of my properties and perceptions, and is the "doer" behind all of my actions.

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[182]Ibid., 345a.

[183]Ibid.

So what, for Reid, is the sense and what is the referent of the term 'I'?[184] With regard to the sense, I would suggest that 'I' means "the subject (monad, of which we are, or at least of whose existence we are, immediately aware) whose thoughts and perceptions these are." Clearly, the referent of 'I' is the monad-self, which is permanent and indivisible; it is the ". . . thing which I call myself." This "thing" has perfect identity with no ambiguity and no degrees. In contrast, as we will see, bodies (including my own body) have only imperfect identity because they change, and their identity does admit of degrees. Therefore, it seems the monad-self cannot be a physical body. It also is not equivalent to thought or emotion, although it has thoughts and feelings. So what is the nature of the referent of 'I'? Reid's answer seems even less clear than the answer we suggested for Hume earlier. Reid's answer is not a psychophysical substance; it is not a known substance of any kind at all. It is more like some kind of a "bare" particular or perhaps, better, an immaterial or spiritual substance, which each individual just is uniquely and absolutely and of

[184]Of course, Reid, like Hume, does not address these issues in terms of a sense-reference distinction.

which he is immediately aware. Whether or not this answer is more acceptable than Hume's is certainly debatable.[185]

Now what evidence does Reid have that this undefined, permanent monad-self, which somehow thinks and acts, actually exists as this indivisible monad? He claims that the evidence is memory. I remember that twenty years ago I conversed with a certain person. My memory tells me that not only did this conversation occur but that it was had by me. If it was had by me, I must have existed at that time and continued to exist from then until now. It is true that I may not remember everything I have done, but if I remember it veridically, I must have existed at the point in time in the past which I remember. So memory provides the most irresistible evidence for the existence of the monad-self (as a monad). But it is not the only evidence available to me, particularly with regard to things I do not necessarily remember. For example, ". . . I know who bore me and suckled me, but I do not remember these events."[186] According to Reid, no one of sound mind ever doubts his own identity, as far as he ". . . distinctly remembered."[187]

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[185]Reid's view of an unchanging immaterial substance-self is also motivated by and important to his religious views, particularly his views on survival after death.

[186]Reid, Works, I, 345b.

[187]Ibid.

The identity of a person is perfect identity; it has no ambiguity and no degrees. We are most certain with regard to our own identity; however, we are less certain about the identity of others. Personal identity for Reid becomes the measure of the identity of other things; the identity of others is always imperfect and it does admit of degrees:

> It may . . . be observed, that the identity of objects of sense is never perfect. All bodies, as they consist of innumerable parts that may be disjoined from them by a great variety of causes, are subject to continual changes of their substance, increasing, diminishing, changing insensibly. . . .
> . . . . . .
> The identity, therefore, which we ascribe to bodies, whether natural or artificial, is not perfect identity; it is rather something which, for the conveniency of speech, we call identity. . . . It has no fixed nature when applied to bodies; and questions about the identity of a body are very often questions about words.[188]

Our conclusions about the identity of other human bodies or physical objects is based on similarity. Whenever we observe similarity we are liable to presume identity. This tendency is probably natural, Reid thinks, because it appears even in small children, and it continues throughout our life's experiences.[189] The testimony of witnesses to a person's identity, e.g., the thief who stole the car, is based on

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[188]Ibid., 346a-b. Presumably, if there were such things as ultimate physical "atoms" of some sort which are permanent and indivisible, they would also have perfect identity.

[189]Ibid., 346a.

similarity. We observe great similarity between, e.g., a book, at time t2 and a book at an earlier time t1: the place both books rest is the same; the color of the books and their thickness are all totally similar. Thus, we are liable to conclude, Reid says, that the two books are so much alike that they must be one and the same book.

The evidence we have of our own identity is of a very different kind from the evidence we have of the identity of other persons or objects. The first is based on memory and gives us certainty; the second is based on similarity and often leaves room for doubt. Since this is the case, the identity of objects of sense is never perfect. All bodies (presumably also human bodies) consist of many parts which can be altered and disconnected by a variety of causes; therefore, bodies are subject to all kinds of changes, some large and some so small that we cannot even sense them. However, because of convenience of speech, we call bodies the same even through change. This is because when changes are gradual, language just cannot provide a different name for every different state of every changing being. So we retain the same name for the object and consider it the same thing. For example, we say that a ship which successively changes anchors, sails, masts, and planks and timbers is the same ship

at time tn that it was at time t1.[190] We call the ship by the same name and consider it to be the same ship, even though it really is not. So the identity we ascribe to bodies of all kinds is not perfect identity. It has no fixed nature, and so questions about the identity of a body are often only questions about words. Identity applied to persons, on the other hand, has no ambiguity and no degrees; it is fixed and precise and perfect.

Before addressing the basis of Reid's view and critically comparing it to Hume's, I want to discuss Reid's contention that we have a different way of knowing about personal identity than we do the identity of material objects,[191] and because this is so, personal identity and the identity of material objects are two different kinds of identity, one is perfect (personal identity) and one is imperfect (material-object identity). Are either of these contentions valid? Remember, Reid says that personal identity is based on memory, is perfect, and gives certainty. This implies that personal identity is somehow a superior kind of knowledge with more justification than is the case with the identity of material objects. But the only way my memory can give me a superior

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[190]Ibid., 346a.

[191]Recall that for Hume, personal identity is just a particular but similar type of identity to other kinds of identity, e.g., the identity of animals or plants.

kind of knowledge of my own identity is if my memory beliefs about what I did in the past enjoy some kind of privileged status as compared to another person's beliefs about what I did. (This status would presumably involve more than just the fact that these memory beliefs are mine, rather than yours.)

But this is often not the case. If I seem to remember having done x, my memory belief is based on my previous knowledge of having done x, and this may be no more justified than Smith's memory belief that he saw me do x. If I witnessed an event in the past and Smith was there, and he both witnessed the event and noticed that I witnessed the event, our memory beliefs that I am the same person as the one that witnessed the event enjoy the same epistemic status. In the case of amnesia, someone else may know more about my past than I do. So my memory beliefs about what I did or witnessed in the past do not necessarily enjoy any special warrant as compared to someone else's possible memory beliefs about what I did or witnessed. Present memory knowledge cannot be superior to the previous knowledge upon which it is based. Therefore, memory knowledge of our own self-identity is not necessarily a more perfect kind of knowledge, at least in the sense that it is somehow more justified than the sort of knowledge available to others.

But suppose a person's memory beliefs about his own past history were more justified than any beliefs about his past history which are available to others. This fact by itself would not be a sufficient reason for saying that personal identity involves a stricter concept of identity or is a different kind of identity. There are other cases in which people necessarily have more justification for certain identity claims where we do not distinguish different concepts of identity. For example, we have more justification for identity claims about material objects which we have observed continuously than we do when our observation has been interrupted. However, we do not usually distinguish between two senses of identity in such a case.

Our memory knowledge about our own identity might be more certain than our knowledge about the identity of objects, as Reid claims. By "certain" we might mean "cannot doubt." In this sense, we do seem more certain that we are identical with the person who did certain things that we remember having done in the past, and we are not so confident when making identity judgments about other bodies or persons. However, we can be quite sure and confident in some of our identity judgments about material objects. For example, I can be just as sure that the pencil I am using is the same pencil I have been using all day, as I am that I am the same person who went to

the grocery store yesterday. There is no necessary epistemic difference here. There may seem to be a difference in degree and frequency, but not in kind. We are more often certain of our past identity through our memory beliefs than we are about bodily identity, but this may just be because we have a greater interest in our own past than in bodily reidentification.

But Reid might suggest another possibility here. It is a necessary truth that if I successfully remember doing something, then I did it. Now if we could show that our knowledge of our own identity involves necessary truths in an important way that our knowledge of bodily identity does not, then this might justify our talking about a sense in which personal identity is a stricter sense or concept of identity because it is logically certain. But it is clear that our memory beliefs that we did something in the past are not necessarily true beliefs. Nevertheless, we might construct a case of a necessary truth in terms of the reliability of our confident memory beliefs, which mark off a distinction between our knowledge of personal identity and our knowledge of bodily identity.

On the whole, our memory beliefs are considered reliable. Memory beliefs about what one experienced and did are thought of as constituting a consistent, coherent picture of one's

past history. It is a necessary truth that our confident and sincere perceptual and memory reports are true more often than not.[192] So this might mark off a difference in the epistemic status of one's judgment about his own identity and his judgment about the identity of others, ie. our knowledge of our own past self will be more perfect. This is so, we might argue, because it is a necessary truth that most of our beliefs about our past are true, even though any particular belief might be in error.

Smythe[193] argues that even if there were a difference in the epistemic status of judgments of self-identity vs. judgments about the identity of others, this would not

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[192]See Sydney Shoemaker, Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity (Cornell University Press, 1963): 136-43. Shoemaker argues for this view in the following way: he uses the "entailing sense" of the word "remember," in such a way that "A remembers that P" entails "P," and "A remembers X occurring" entails "X occurred." In this sense of "remember," if "P" is false, or X did not occur, then the most that anyone can do is seem to remember that P, or seem to remember X occurring. In other words, if one remembers an event then he must have been in a position to have direct knowledge of the event at the time of its occurrence. I have direct knowledge that is not observational of my own actions while they are occurring. So that ". . . if we can remember past events at all there are some first-person past-tense statements that can be known without being grounded on criteria of identity, namely statements to the effect that the speaker was present when certain past events occurred. This is sufficient to refute the claim that all first-person past-tense statements must be grounded on criteria of identity if they are known to be true, . . ." pp. 139-40.

[193]Thomas W. Smythe, "The Identity of Persons and Bodies," The Southern Journal of Philosophy 19, no. 1 (1981): 85-93.

distinguish between different kinds of identity, which Reid needs.

A distinction between necessary (in the case of personal identity) and contingent (in all other cases of identity) truths does not necessarily show that personal identity and bodily identity are two different kinds of identity in the way Reid wanted. For example, the statement "If P successfully remembers doing X, he is the person who did X," is a necessarily true statement; and Reid would argue that such a statement employs a perfect or strict sense of identity as regards P. However, it seems that we can formulate other kinds of necessarily true statements which do not involve personal identity. For example, if we take 'seven' and 'five' as rigid designators, the statement "Seven is identical with the smallest prime number greater than five," is a necessarily true statement of identity. Thus, contrary to Reid's view that non-personal identity is imperfect (because it is contingent), this statement should be regarded as employing the same kind of strict or perfect kind of identity that is employed by statements of personal identity. So I do not think that Reid has convincingly established that necessity in the case of personal identity and contingency in other cases of identity proves that there are two different concepts of identity.

But there is a further point here. Perhaps we can argue (and Reid certainly would argue) that our knowledge of our own identity is different from and superior to our knowledge of bodily identity because knowledge of our own identity is non-inductive and non-criterial, whereas knowledge of bodily identity is inductive and criterial.[194] However, this is not sufficient in itself to make this distinction because we can have inductive, non-criterial knowledge about bodily identity. For example, we can use fingerprints to reidentify a person, in which case we are not necessarily using any criterion.

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[194]On a related point, Shoemaker argues that mental states need to be conceived adjectivally as states of a subject; one cannot perceive a state of a self without perceiving the self. And instead of gaining self-knowledge by receiving identification information from the self, by which one picks out that about which he has information, he has beliefs about himself and his states as a direct result of being in those states. See Sydney Shoemaker "Introspection and the Self," in Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Studies in the Philosophy of Mind, ed. Peter French, Theodore Uehling, Jr., Howard Wettstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986): 101-20. Against this view, Newton argues that while we can make spontaneous true assertions about our mental states, we also have the ability to be uncertain about them, to speculate upon their nature, and to make use of evidence in identifying them. This ability to reflect on our mental states is an important part of introspection; yet it has certain similarities also to the identification of objects in perception. In other words, when we reflect in this way, ". . . our mental states figure as entities constrained by the conceptual structure of the self as a frame of reference. When we do this we use evidence to determine the nature of mental states analogously to the way we use evidence to determine the nature of external objects." So we are not necessarily immediately aware of our mental states or of our self. See Natika Newton, "Introspection and Perception," Topoi 7, no. 1 (1988): 25-30.

Is there any additional feature of the knowledge of our own identity which distinguishes it from our knowledge of bodily identity? Maybe there is. Maybe there is a sense in which, when I remember doing something, I have immediate or direct knowledge that I did it. In other words, this knowledge of my past and my identity is noninferential, while the knowledge of the identity of other things is not immediate but is based on inference. I can know that I did x on the basis of memory without knowing anything else on the basis of memory from which I infer that I did x. For example, I do not even have to base the judgment that I did x on the fact that I remember doing it.

Now can we have noninferential, immediate knowledge of the identity of objects? The answer to this is not clear, but we might argue that even in a case where we observe an object continuously, we need to make some inferences from certain evidence. For example, there is a present immediate perception claim about what I am now seeing; then there is the memory claim about the object I remember seeing at the moments just prior to the present moment, and then there is the additional evidence that I do not recall shifting my gaze from the object at any time. Such evidence does not seem to be necessary for me to say "I did x" on the basis of memory.

But even if memory knowledge is necessarily noninferential and noncriterial, this does not prove that personal identity and bodily identity are necessarily different kinds of identity. Compare another context in which there is a necessary contrast between inferential or criterial knowledge of something and noninferential, noncriterial knowledge. For example, consider ascriptions of mental predicates to ourselves and others. The statement "Smith feels tired" said by someone besides Smith is true when and only when Smith could truly say "I feel tired." But when the statement is made by someone besides Smith, it is made on the basis of criteria or at least inductive evidence. When Smith says, "I feel tired," he does not say it on the basis of any criterion or inference. He has noncriterial and noninferential knowledge that he is tired.

However, we cannot then argue that the mental predicate "feels tired" has a different meaning when applied to Smith by us and when he applies it to himself. When he says, "I feel tired," and we say, "Smith does not feel tired," we deny what he affirms; and this would not be possible unless we were talking about the same thing and using the same concept of feeling tired. A contrast between inferential and criterial knowledge of something in one kind of situation and noninferential, noncriterial knowledge in another situation

is not a sufficient reason for distinguishing between the objects of the knowledge in the two cases.

There are different ways a person can discover his own identity and the identity of others. There is more than one way a person can discover that he is the person who performed some past action. Most knowledge of the past comes through memory. But I can also know it from the testimony of others, a diary, fingerprints, photographs, etc., even though I may have no recollection of it. I can also use similarity in personality or in bodily appearance as criteria for whether or not I did something. If it is memory knowledge of our own identity that alone qualifies personal identity as being a perfect kind of identity, as Reid claims, then the knowledge I have that my body is the same body as the one possessed by the person who did x, i.e., my knowledge of my own bodily identity, will for Reid qualify the identity of my own body as identity only in the imperfect sense. This seems peculiar; surely something like a person's fingerprints can give knowledge of perfect identity about a body, just as memory can give a notion of perfect identity to the self. And yet, according to Reid, when I know my own identity in some way other than by remembering certain parts of my past, such as when I use bodily identity as a criterion or the testimony of others, this knowledge qualifies my self-identity as being

only an imperfect kind of identity. Reid gives no explanation for why memory alone has such a favored position as over against other means for acquiring knowledge of personal identity.

It may be the case, then, that there is no convincing epistemological reason to say that we are not talking about the same thing when we talk about the identity through time of persons and objects. Thus, we cannot distinguish different concepts of identity on the basis of the supposed different kinds of knowledge we have of personal identity and the identity of material objects.

Reid's view of personal identity grows out of his principles of common sense. These principles are not merely the general beliefs of a culture or of common people generally. They are assumptions which have to be made in order for theoretical or practical activity to be possible at all. The principles of common sense are always accepted in practice even if they are denied in theory. Their justification for Reid is rational, not merely psychological, and it is based on the impossibility of thinking and acting coherently without them. He says:

> If there are certain principles, as I think there are, which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns for life, without being able to give a reason for them, these are what we call the principles of common sense; and

what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd.[195]

In the Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Reid states specifically some of his common sense principles.[196] They include the following: (1) Everything of which I am conscious exists; the objects of my consciousness include all the actions and operations of my mind while they are present. The conviction I have of the reality of the passions and operations of my mind is not the result of reasoning; it is immediate and intuitive; (2) my conscious thoughts are thoughts of a being which I call myself, my mind, my person; our thoughts change constantly but ". . . something which I call myself, remains under this change of thought."[197] There is no proof for this; it is just impossible that there can be a thought without a thinker; (3) what I distinctly remember really happened; the testimony of memory is immediate; (4) the things I distinctly perceive with my senses really exist and are what I perceive them to be; ". . . all men are by nature led to give implicit faith to the distinct testimony of their

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[195]Thomas Reid, Inquiry Into the Human Mind, in The Works of Thomas Reid, ed. Sir William Hamilton, I (Edinburgh: MacLachlan & Stewart, 1863), 108b.

[196]Reid, Works, I 442b-452a.

[197]Ibid., 443b.

senses, ... ";[198] (5) my natural faculties, by which I distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious; it is necessary because of my nature to trust my reasoning and judging powers; (6) my fellow men have life and intelligence; (7) we must pay a certain regard to human testimony in matters of fact and even to human authority in matters of opinion; (8) in the natural world, what will happen will probably be like what has happened before in similar circumstances; this principle is the foundation of all natural philosophy and science.

Principles such as these, Reid thinks, are common convictions of the masses. What philosophical weight do they have? Notice again in the earlier quote from Reid that ". . . we are under a necessity to take [these common sense principles] for granted . . . . " This separates these principles from mere opinion and belief. They are gifts from our Creator and are part of our constitution, which we need for survival and growth. Because of this, principles of common sense do not need to even be present in the consciousness of a person, let alone in his beliefs. It is by the constitution of our nature that we conform, e.g., to the law of noncontradiction, whether or not we have studied any logic. It is by the constitution of our nature that we

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[198]Ibid., 445b.

are not abandoned to only a world of impressions to furnish our minds (this is in contrast to Hume's theory of ideas, which we discussed earlier). Reid says

> . . . every operation of the senses, in its very nature, implies judgment or belief . . . When I perceive a tree before me, my faculty of seeing gives me not only a notion or simple apprehension of the tree, but a belief of its existence, and of its figure,, distance, and magnitude; and this judgment or belief is not got by comparing ideas, it is included in the very nature of the perception . . .
>
> Such original and natural judgments are, therefore, a part of that furniture which Nature hath given to the human understanding . . . They are a part of our constitution; and all the discoveries of our reason are grounded upon them. They make up what is called the common sense of mankind; . . . .[199]

Common sense principles, then, undergird all of Reid's system, including his views on personal identity. They also play the major role in his attack on Hume's theory of ideas and theory of personal identity. Hume accepted the validity of some principles similar to Reid's, e.g., the uniformity of nature. However, Reid was dissatisfied with Hume's account because of the grounds Hume gives for accepting them. Hume regards these beliefs, e.g., belief in the validity of induction, as non-rational and deriving from our psychological constitution. Reid, on the other hand, believed their justification was rational, not merely psychological, since

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[199]Ibid., 209a-b.

it is based on the impossibility of thinking and acting coherently without them. For Reid, Hume was a thoroughgoing skeptic on all subjects, and this was so because of his theory of ideas. Reid says

> . . . all these consequences of the doctrine of ideas were tolerable, compared with those which came afterwards to be discovered by Berkeley and Hume:--That there is no material world: No abstract ideas or notions: That the mind is only a train of related impressions and ideas, without any subject on which they may be impressed: That there is neither space nor time, body nor mind, but impressions and ideas only: And, to sum up all, That there is no probability, even in demonstration itself, nor any one proposition more probable than its contrary.
>
> These are the noble fruits which have grown upon this theory of ideas, since it began to be cultivated by skilful hands. It is no wonder that sensible men should be disgusted at philosophy, when such wild and shocking paradoxes pass under its name. However, as these paradoxes have, with great acuteness and ingenuity, been deduced by just reasoning from the theory of ideas, they must at last bring this advantage, that positions so shocking to the common sense of mankind, and so contrary to the decisions of all our intellectual powers, will open men's eyes, and break the force of the prejudice which hath held them entangled in that theory.[200]

It will be helpful to present some of Reid's views on the theory of ideas because it will help us understand his attack on Hume's theory of mind. Reid says regarding "the ideal theory":

> If it should be asked, Whether, according to the opinion of philosophers, we perceive the images or ideas only, and infer the existence and qualities

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[200]Ibid., 306b.

> of the external object from what we perceive in the image; or, whether we really perceive the external object as well as its image?--the answer to this question is not quite obvious.
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> On the one hand, philosophers, if we except Berkeley and Hume, believe the existence of external objects of sense, and call them objects of perception, though not immediate objects. But what they mean by a mediate object of perception I do not find clearly explained: whether, they suit their language to popular opinion, and mean that we perceive external objects in that figurative sense in which we say that we perceive an absent friend when we look on his picture; or whether they mean that, really, and without a figure, we perceive both the external object and its idea in the mind. If the last be their meaning, it would follow that, in every instance of perception, there is a double object perceived: . . . that I perceive, for instance, one sun in the heavens, and another in my own mind. But I do not find that they affirm this; and, as it contradicts the experiences of all mankind, I will not impute it to them.
>
> It seems, therefore, that their opinion is, that we do not really perceive the external object, but the internal only; and that, when they speak of perceiving external objects, they mean it only in a popular or in a figurative sense, as above explained.[201]

Reid seems to be uncomfortable at times with the ideal theory's usage of the notion of immediacy. However, this notion plays an important role in his own thought. For example, he says that consciousness is the <u>immediate</u> knowledge we have of the present operations of our mind.[202] Perception itself is the <u>immediate</u> knowledge of external objects which

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[201]Ibid., 263b.

[202]Ibid., 222b.

we have by our senses:

> I know . . . that the perception of an object implies both a conception of its form, and a belief of its present existence.[203]
>
> Perception implies an immediate conviction and belief of something external--something different both from the mind that perceives, and from the act of perception.[204]

Perception involves a belief in the present existence of an object of perception that is irresistible and immediate:

> The external senses have a double province--to make us feel, and to make us perceive. They furnish us with a variety of sensations, some pleasant, others painful, and others indifferent; at the same time, they give us a conception and an invisible belief of the existence of external objects. This conception of external objects is the work of nature. The belief of their existence, which our senses give, is the work of nature; so likewise is the sensation that accompanies it. This conception and belief which nature produces by means of the senses, we call perception.[205]

When Reid talks about immediate perception, there are two aspects to it: (1) negatively, immediate perception involves a belief that is not the result of a train of reasoning and that requires no evidential support to be acceptable;[206] (2) positively, immediate perceptions are the basis of all further

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[203]Ibid., 183a; cf. 280a.

[204]Ibid., 312b.

[205]Ibid., 318b; cf. 259b.

[206]Ibid.

beliefs about the external world.[207] With regard to these two aspects, Reid and the ideal theory are in agreement. Both agree that our a posteriori knowledge of the external world comes through the senses.[208]

The ideal theory, however, is committed to the thesis that the immediate perception of ideas provides evidential support for all reasonable beliefs about the external world. This Reid denies. He denies the existence of ideas: "I believe ideas, taken in this sense [i.e., in the sense that ideas only are the immediate objects of all our thoughts], to be a mere fiction of philosophers."[209] He insists that the objects of immediate perception are material objects and the qualities of material objects:

> It seems, therefore, to be a judgment of nature, that the things immediately perceived are qualities, which must belong to a subject; and all the information that our senses give us about this subject, is, that it is that to which such qualities belong.[210]
>
> I see a chair on my right hand. What is the meaning of this? It is, that I have by my constitution, a distinct conception and firm belief of the present existence of the chair in such a place and such a position; and I give the name of

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[207]Ibid., 332a.

[208]Ibid., 331a.

[209]Ibid., 226b.

[210]Ibid., 319a.

> seeing to that part of my constitution by which I have this immediate conviction.[211]

Therefore, it seems that Reid's basic disagreement with the ideal theory is ontological, i.e., he denies the existence of certain mental entities that the ideal theory adopts.[212]

According to Reid, the ideal theory proceeds from a dubious hypothesis against undeniable facts. The facts are: I exist; I am an embodied self with powers, abilities, and dispositions; other persons like myself exist; we immediately perceive independently existing physical objects, etc. These facts are dictates of common sense principles, as we have seen. Whatever is contradictory to them is absurd. The hypothesis in question here is that the only immediate objects of perception are ideas or sensations. If this is true, then our beliefs about physical objects are not justifiable, and we are led, Reid believes, inevitably into Humean skepticism. Now since skepticism is absurd, Reid thinks that the

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[211]Ibid., 329b; cf. 326b, 332a.

[212]Sleigh believes that this interpretation may be in error. He argues that Reid's avoidance of skepticism is not due to any ontological commitments or lack of commitments, but rather to epistemological considerations. See R.C. Sleigh, Jr., "Reid and the Ideal Theory on Conception and Perception," in Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations, ed. S.F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp (Philadelphia: University City Science Center, 1976): 77-85; see also Selwyn Grave, "The 'Theory of Ideas'," in Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations, ed. S.F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp (Philadelphia: University City Science Center, 1976): 55-61.

foundational hypothesis of the ideal theory must be false. In fact, he thinks there is no real evidence for it at all.

There are some facts which seem to support the ideal theory. These facts include the facts of perceptual relativity, optical illusions, and hallucinations. Arguments using these kinds of facts have frequently been used by ideal theorists to establish their theory. For example, Hume and Berkeley attempt to prove the ideal theory using facts of perceptual relativity and illusion. Hume says:

> It seems also evident that when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images presented by the senses to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion that the one are nothing but representations of the other. This very table which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist independent of our perception and to be something external to our mind which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it; our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings who perceive or contemplate it.
>
> But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy which teaches us that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table which we see seems to diminish as we remove further from it; but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration. It was, therefore, nothing but its image which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man who reflects ever doubted that the existences which we consider when we say this house and that tree are nothing but perceptions in the mind and fleeting copies or representations of other existences which remain uniform and independent.

> So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses.[213]

In order to answer Hume's argument, Reid introduces Berkeley's distinction between real or tangible magnitude and apparent or visible magnitude. Real magnitude is the size a thing actually has; visible magnitude is the size it appears to have. For example, the real magnitude of a line is measured in inches or feet. Real magnitude is the object of touch but not of sight. We learn by experience to judge real figure and magnitude from visible figure and magnitude at different distances, so that the former becomes the sign of the latter (this is acquired perception for Reid; original perception, which is unlearned, is the immediate connection between a sensation and the quality of a body [but of course not mere inference from one to the other]). Apparent or visible magnitude is measured by the angle an object subtends at the eye. The larger the real magnitude of the object is, the larger the angle it subtends at the eye is, and, therefore, the visible magnitude is larger.[214]

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[213]David Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Charles W. Hendel (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1955): 160-61.

[214]Reid, Works, I, 303b.

The real magnitude of an object has three dimensions, length, breadth, and depth, whereas apparent magnitude has only length and breadth. Also, the real magnitude of an object remains constant so long as the object is unchanged, whereas the visible magnitude of the object varies in inverse proportion to the distance from which it is viewed. Using this distinction, Reid can show that Hume's argument is invalid. Hume argues that as we move farther away from a table, its apparent magnitude diminishes; however, the real table does not change at all; its real magnitude remains the same. Therefore, we do not pereive the real table at all. (For Hume, of course, there may not even be a real table there.) Reid says this argument is fallacious because Hume's syllogism has two different middle terms, apparent magnitude in the first premise and real magnitude in the second, and these are not the same at all.

However, it could be objected, maybe Reid has not really answered Hume. Maybe what Reid calls apparent magnitude is the same as what Hume calls "image," i.e., just as, for Hume, an image is a representation of an object, so, for Reid, the apparent magnitude is a representation of the real magnitude of an object. Therefore, even with Reid's distinction between real and apparent magnitude, it is not the <u>real</u> table I see but only its apparent magnitude.

Reid responds to this as follows: when we see an object under normal circumstances, we must distinguish the appearance the object makes to the eye from the things suggested by that appearance (i.e., the object itself or its qualities). The former Reid calls the "visible appearance" of the object, and within it we must further distinguish appearance of color from appearance of extension, figure, and motion.[215] The appearance of color is a mere sensation (i.e., an original and simple feeling of the mind with no act of perception involved; so for Reid, colors are clearly not intentional objects), but other appearances like visible magnitude (extension) and visible figure are not. Nevertheless, they are presented to the mind along with the sensation of color, and they suggest to us the individual direction, shape, and size of the cause of that sensation.[216] For example, the visible position of an object is its position in the visual field. Objects lying on the same straight line drawn from the center of the eye have the same visible position, regardless of their distance from the eye. Objects lying on two different straight lines drawn from the eye have different visible positions; the size of this

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[215]Ibid., 142bff.

[216]Ibid., 145a.

difference varies in proportion to the size of the angle made at the eye by these two straight lines.[217]

The real figure of an object, then, is the position of its several parts with regard to one another. The visible figure, on the other hand, is the position of the parts of an object with regard to the eye (relative visible positions). Reid says:

> . . . the visible figure of all bodies will be the same with that of their projection upon the surface of a hollow sphere, when the eye is placed in the centre . . .
> . . . . . .
> It is . . . the position of the several parts of a figured body with regard to the eye. The different positions of the several parts of the body with regard to the eye, when put together, make a real figure, which is truly extended in length and breadth, and which represents a figure that is extended in length, breadth, and thickness.[218]

Using these concepts, Reid formulates several conclusions: (1) the visible figure of an object extends in two dimensions, length, and breadth; ideas and impressions, as mental entities, cannot be extended like this; (some sense data philosophers would agree with this because they could say sense data are not mental entities), (2) the visible figure of an object is a public object external to the eye, and it

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[217]Ibid., 143a-b.

[218]Ibid., 143a, 144b. Some believe that Reid is presenting an early form of non-Euclidean geometry in his concept of visible figure. See, e.g., Norman Daniels, Thomas Reid's Inquiry (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1974).

represents the real object (visible figures are real, not ideal, objects, although they are not material objects in three-dimensional space; there are other objects like them[219]); (3) visible figure, like real figure, is the proper subject of mathematical reasoning;[220] (4) while it is true that visible figure is not really inherent in the object itself, nevertheless, there is a resemblance and a necessary connection between the visible figure and magnitude of an object and its real figure and magnitude, so that

> . . . we can assign a reason why a circle placed obliquely to the eye, should appear in the form of an ellipse. The visible figure, magnitude, and position may, by mathematical reasoning, be deduced from the real; and it may be demonstrated, that every eye that sees distinctly and perfectly, must, in the same situation, see it under this form, and no other. Nay, we may venture to affirm, that a man born blind, if he were instructed in mathematics would be able to determine the visible figure of a

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[219]Ibid., 144b. If this be granted, Reid seems to be no different from the ideal theory at this point; he just does not call those objects ideas or impressions because for him they are another kind of entity. However, some sense data philosophers would agree with this. Reid seems to limit his attack on the ideal theory to a certain form of the theory that deals only with mental impressions and ideas. But not all forms of the ideal theory limit themselves to mental impressions only. Against these forms of the theory Reid's refutation is useless. Reid himself seems to offer one such form of the ideal theory in the case of visible figure, which is an entity of some kind, it seems, and which represents an object but is not an idea or impression. So at least in this case, Reid is inconsistent with his own account.

[220]Ibid., 147ff.

> body , when its real figure, distance, and position, are given.[221]

Thus, not only are visible figure and magnitude not themselves sensations or mental impressions (although they are some kind of entity for Reid), but also one can form a distinct conception of them without having any visual sensations at all. Hume's argument, then, does not support its conclusion. Since apparent magnitude varies as we know it must (while we perceive a real table), no more proof is needed that we are perceiving the real table; we are not perceiving just a representation of it. The laws of perspective account for the diversity in the visible appearance of objects.[222]

If we reject the supposition that immediately perceived objects are external and assert with Hume that they are internal, then

> . . . no account can be given of any one of these appearances, nor any physical cause assigned why a visible object should, in any one case, have one apparent figure and magnitude rather than another.[223]

However, on Reid's view we can give such an account. For example, suppose I think I see a table, and as I move farther away from where I think it is, the appearance of the table

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[221]Ibid., 142b-143a.

[222]Ibid., 304b.

[223]Ibid., 305a.

continues to occupy exactly the same portion of my visual field. I would conclude that I was having a hallucination or experiencing an illusion and that I am not really seeing a table at all. If, however, as I move farther away from the place the table is supposeod to be and the table begins to occupy less and less of my visual field, I could rightfully conclude that my perception of the table is truthful.

To summarize, Hume's argument (also Berkeley's) is a version of the standard form of argument from illusion:

1. Sometimes things appear other than they are.
2. When things appear other than they are, what we immediately perceive are ideas (sensations, sense-data, etc.)
3. Such occasions as described in (1) are phenomenologically indistinguishable from occasions on which things appear <u>as</u> they are.
4. Therefore, all we ever immediately perceive are ideas.[224]

Reid refutes this argument in at least two main ways: (1) there is no need to introduce a class of mental entities called ideas to explain (1) above, which is actually not surprising at all; (2) such entities lead to confusion.

Reid is chiefly interested in refuting the second premise of the illusion argument. The reasoning behind this second premise is as follows: assume that a material object (O) appears (i.e., smells, tastes, feels, etc.) (Y) to a

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[224]David A. Tebaldi, "Thomas Reid's Refutation of the Argument from Illusion," in <u>Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations</u>, 28.

person (P), and (O) is not (Y); then something else, an idea (I) existing only in the mind really is (Y) and what (P) sees is (I), so (I) has all the properties (O) appears to have.

First of all, Reid rejects the idea that there exists this something else in the mind; there is nothing else there. (However, it leaves open the possibility that he could accept a "something else" which is nonmental, and some sense data theories suggest this.) Another problem here is that ideas are of such a nature that they cannot be said to <u>have</u> properties which (O) appears to have. All the apparent properties of (O), Reid thinks, are apparent physical properties. According to him, no account of these properties can be given in terms of sensations alone.[225] Sensations are feelings, and they bear no resemblance to nor have any logical connection with our concepts of these properties.[226]

Reid therefore agrees that sensation <u>alone</u> is not sufficient to deduce the existence of primary qualities of body:

> They [primary qualities of body] have no resemblance to any sensation, or to any operation of our minds; and, therefore, they cannot be ideas either of sensation or of reflection.[227]

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[225]If we allow Hume to use the term 'perception' not just for sensory states, but also for the <u>immediate intentional objects</u> of them, he might be able to avoid this objection.

[226]Reid, <u>Works</u>, I, 119.

[227]Ibid., 126b.

We have some notion of primary qualities as far back as we can remember.[228] Therefore, Reid can only account for such notions by attributing them to our constitution:

> That our sensations of touch indicate something external, extended, figured, hard or soft, is not a deduction of reason, but a natural principle. The belief of it, and the very conception of it, are equally parts of our constitution.[229]

Reid has other reasons for denying the ideal theory besides those involved in his criticism of the arguments from illusion and perceptual relativity. For example, for him the theory is useless as an explanatory hypothesis. Reid gives the reason for the ideal theory's development as follows:

> There is no phaenomenon in nature more unaccountable than the intercourse that is carried on between the mind and the external world--there is no phaenomenon which philosophical spirits have shewn greater avidity to pry into, and to resolve. It is agreed by all, that this intercourse is carried on by means of the senses; and this satisfies the vulgar curiosity, but not the philosophic. Philosophers must have some system, some hypothesis, that shews the manner in which our

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[228]Ibid.

[229]Ibid., 130a-b; also see 122b. According to Reid, sensory consequences of stimulation serve as "natural signs," and the mind by its constitution moves immediately from the "sign" to the thing signified. This feature of the mind is one which we are under a necessity to take for granted; it is not deduced from any higher principle, nor is it a product of deliberation. It cannot be denied by an act of the will. It is more basic as a premise than any other premise which can be advanced either to prove or disprove it. It is as much a part of our mental constitution as digestion is a part of our biological constitution, and like digestion, it does its work whether we know of it or not or believe it or not.

> senses make us acquainted with external things. All the fertility of human invention seems to have produced only one hypothesis for this purpose, which, therefore, hath been universally received; and that is, that the mind, like a mirror, receives the images of things from without, by means of the senses; so that their use must be to convey these images into the mind.[230]

Philosophers, in attempting to account for the relationship between the physical object and the mind, have used the analogy of interaction between two physical objects.

The problem for perception is how an object at some distance from the mind makes the mind perceive it. According to Locke, for example, bodies affect our senses by immediate contact or by means of impulses of sensible particles coming from them. Thus, particles transmitted by objects bridge the gap between an object and the sense organ. Ideas bridge the gap between the sense organ or, (ultimately) brain, and the mind. The mind, then, is in direct contact with a present idea (this is the principle of cognitive contact).[231] However, the theory of ideas does not explain <u>how</u> we perceive these mental objects. How does the mind perceive images "received" from the brain? The theory has no answer to <u>this</u> question. Hence, it has no answer to how we perceive anything.

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[230]Ibid., 140a-b.

[231]Ibid., 368b-369a.

Not only does Reid believe that there is no empirical evidence in experience to support the ideal theory, he also believes there is evidence that at least part of it is false. The proponents of the theory claim that a present idea is always the immediate object of a thought or perception, and that every object of thought must either be an idea or like an idea. Reid shows that we can think of something besides ideas or sensations. Therefore, at least this part of the ideal theory must be false (i.e., points (3) and (4) above). He says

> . . . I have as clear a conception of extension, hardness, and motion, as I have of the point of a sword; and, with some pains and practice, I can form as clear a notion of the other sensations of touch as I have of pain. When I do so, and compare them together, it appears to me clear as daylight, that the former are not of kin to the latter, nor resemble them in any one feature.[232]

The sensation of pain one feels when hitting his head on the sidewalk does not resemble the quality of hardness or the impenetrability of the sidewalk. Mental occurrences like sensations differ from qualities: sensations are intensive and non-measureable; qualities are extensive and measureable. Reid says

> . . . they [the words heat and cold] signify a quality in bodies, which, by the laws of nature, occasions the sensations of heat and cold in us--a quality which, though connected by custom so closely with the sensation, that we cannot, without

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[232]Ibid., 127b-128a.

> difficulty, separate them, yet hath not the least resemblance to it and may continue to exist when there is no sensation at all.[233]

I need to emphasize a point here that comes from our earlier discussion of Hume. Recall that we suggested that if we interpret Hume according to an intentional object theory of perception, his view might make more sense, particularly as at relates to the topic of identity. In that connection, we need to note here that in his theory of ideas, if by "idea" we mean the immediate intentional object of perceptual awareness, then at least some of Reid's objections against him seem to lose their force. This is because we can then speak about these intentional objects as objects which have qualities and properties in much the same way Reid speaks about objects of perception.

Another objection of Reid's against the ideal theory is that the theory is committed to the thesis that if a person thinks about y, then there exists a y, an idea, which is the object of his thought. This contradicts the common-sense belief that we can think about non-existent objects, e.g., unicorns.[234] We cannot think about nothing; there must be an

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[233]Ibid., 119a-b.

[234]Of course, an ideal theorist might hold that we <u>can</u> think about things other than ideas, including even non-existent things, but we can only do so via or by means of a mediating idea which represents these things. Reid would probably respond to this maneuver by asking what evidence there is for such an idea. He can find none. Also, he would

object of thought, but to think about a unicorn is not to say that a unicorn exists. Reid says

> I acknowledge that a man cannot perceive an object that does not exist; nor can he remember an object that did not exist; but there appears to me no contradiction in his conceiving an object (as a merely intentional object) that neither does nor ever did exist.[235]

A unicorn is not the same thing as an image of a unicorn. Though we can conceive of unicorns without forming an image, Reid would allow that we can conceive of a unicorn pictorially by forming an image of it. However, the image is not the object of thought, but is only a way or manner of thinking. Thinking is a mental act, but the thing conceived of is not a mental act:

> The philosopher says, I cannot conceive a centaur without having an idea of it in my mind. I am at a loss to understand what he means. He surely does not mean that I cannot conceive it without conceiving it. This would make me no wiser. What then is this idea? Is it an animal, half horse and half man? No. Then I am certain it is not the thing I conceive. Perhaps he will say, that the idea is an image of the animal, and is the immediate object of my conception, and that the animal is the mediate or remote object.
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> To this I answer--First, I am certain there are not two objects of this conception, but one only; and that one is as immediate an object of my conception as any can be.

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want to know what this idea is, and he would want to ask, why do we need such an idea at all? For Reid, all such ideas are mere fictions of the mind. To speak in terms of images or ideas is only metaphorical talk.

[235]Ibid., 373a.

> Secondly, This one object which I conceive is not the image of an animal--it is an animal. I know what it is to conceive an image of an animal, and what it is to conceive an animal; and I can distinguish the one of these from the other without any danger of mistake.[236]

I think the weight of the evidence, then, is on the side of saying that there is an ontological difference between Reid and the ideal theory of Hume, at least as Hume is generally understood. Reid's main tactic, as we have seen, against the theory is to discredit the principles upon which it is founded. These principles inevitably lead, Reid thinks, to skepticism, and of skepticism in Hume he says:

> It seems to be a peculiar strain of humour in this author [Hume], to set out in his introduction by promising, with a grave face, no less than a complete system of the sciences, upon a foundation entirely new--to wit, that of human nature--when the intention of the whole work is to shew, that there is neither human nature nor science in the world. It may perhaps be unreasonable to complain of this conduct in an author who neither believes his own existence nor that of his reader; . . . .[237]

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[236]Ibid., 373a-b. If an ideal theorist were to respond to this by saying that I do conceive an animal here, but conceiving of something involves being in a mental state directed toward an image as an intentional object of which I am aware in some way (other than by means of conception), Reid would probably again say that there is no evidence at all in my mind of such an image or mental state. If there were such an image, I would certainly be conscious of it right now (222), but I am not. I am only conscious of the act of conceiving an object and this involves simple and immediate apprehension only with no judgment involved at all (223a).

[237]Ibid., 102a.

Reid points out that even Hume admitted his inability to assent to his philosophy in the ordinary affairs of life. Had he attempted to act on his philosophical principles, his friends would have had to come to his rescue. It is clear, Reid say, that the Treatise ". . . was not written in company."[238] So why did Hume give assent to his principles in private? Because, says Reid, it was made philosophically inevitable by the ideal theory, first advanced, in his view, by Descartes in modern times and developed by Locke and Berkeley. Once Hume adopted it, he was forced by logic to be skeptical of the material world, the world of spirits, and even of his very self. Reid thinks the ideal theory boils down to:

> . . . ideas, being the only objects of thought, and having no existence but when we are conscious of them, it necessarily follows that there is no object of our thought which can have a continued and permanent existence. Body and spirit, cause and effect, time and space, to which we were wont to ascribe an existence independent of our thought, 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 ideas of sensation or reflection, they can have no existence but when we are conscious of them; if they are not ideas of sensation or reflection, they are words without any meaning.[239]

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[238]Ibid.

[239]Ibid., 207b.

With regard to personal identity, Reid is convinced that Hume begged the central question by assuming without argument that only (impressions and) ideas exist and, therefore, that there can be no other and no permanent features of mind.[240] Reid also argues that Hume cannot possibly achieve his goal of supplying an account of personal identity because his skepticism destroys belief in a human nature. Neither of these arguments, however, is his central one; his central argument rests on the common sense foundations we sketched earlier. Reid insists that if something has perceptions, then Hume is wrong to argue that the mind is nothing but its perceptions. And we all believe that there must be something which has perceptions, just as certainly as we believe that if there is treason, there must be a traitor. What is the justification for this common-sense belief? Reid contends that the mind is not only furnished with what are not impressions, it is not furnished with impressions at all, and what it is furnished with Hume himself cannot deny. He accepts his own impressions and ideas, not because of insufficient enthusiasm for skepticism, but because he is under necessity to do so. We are built this way by nature.

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[240]See Chapter II for a possible response to Reid's claim here.

So Reid's answer to Hume on personal identity is four-fold: (1) the grounds for skepticism about the self are those presented by the ideal theory, and since this theory is factually wrong, it cannot serve as a challenge to any concept of personal identity; (2) even if we grant Hume's impressions and ideas, they still presuppose a subject who is able to confer on them the capacity to evince belief; (3) the fact of personal identity is grounded in the very constitution of our nature; it is the starting point of all reason and experience; its very denial affirms it; (4) even the theorist who challenges it cannot conduct his affairs in a manner consistent with his skepticism; he literally cannot, even if he tries.

To question Hume's theory of ideas and personal identity, as Reid does, is really to challenge all of Book I of the Treatise. Is his challenge successful? To answer this question we need to look again at Reid's arguments and to see how Hume might respond to them.

CHAPTER V

HUME AND REID INTERACT

It is clear that Hume and Reid are in disagreement about the nature of the self. As we saw earlier, for Hume the self is either a bundle of momentary, causally connected perceptions, or else a psychophysical substrate underlying such a bundle, while for Reid the self is a monad, an unchanging, permanent, indivisible subject of experience and action. We need to look at Reid's arguments more closely and try to see how Hume might respond to them and also, whether or not Reid actually challenges Hume's theory of personal identity at all. I think we will see that Reid does not really confront the critical issue in Hume's theory of personal identity.

One of Reid's arguments is basically an argument from language. He contends that Hume's bundle theory cannot be coherently stated. Reid says that in all languages the verbs for "think" and "perceive" are invariably active. This proves that in all societies, thought and perception are believed to be activities, and as activities, they must be products of an agent or a mind, which is distinct from the perceptions and thoughts themselves. He says:

> The operations of our mind are denoted, in all languages, by active transitive verbs, which, from their construction in grammar, require not only a person or agent, but likewise an object of the operation. Thus, the verb know, denotes an operation of mind. From the general structure of language, this verb requires a person--I know, you know, or he knows;
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> . . . . . .
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> We find, in the structure of all languages, the distinction of acting and being acted upon, the distinction of action and agent, of quality and subject, and many others of the like kind; which shews that these distinctions are founded in the universal sense of mankind.[241]

However, the fact is that even languages Reid knew about use active verbs to denote <u>processes</u> as well as actions and activities, e.g., rivers run and stones fall. The mere use of verbs in the active voice by itself proves nothing.

However, Reid is right to point out the linguistic oddity that seems to result from ordinary speech incorporating Hume's doctrine of personal identity, or at least the doctrine usually ascribed to Hume. According to that doctrine, terms like 'I' or 'Hume' mean particular successions or bundles of related perceptions. Reid says that this would mean that

> . . . this succession of ideas and impressions, not only remembers and is conscious, but that it judges, reasons, affirms, denies--nay, that it eats and drinks, and is sometimes merry and sometimes sad.
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> If these things can be ascribed to a succession of ideas and impressions, in a consistency with common sense, I should be very glad to know what is nonsense.[242]

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[241]Reid, <u>Works</u>, I, 233a-b.

[242]Ibid., 444a.

Surely, even if the doctrine usually ascribed to Hume is his intended view, Reid is overstating his point here. It may be absurd that a mere succession of perceptions can eat and drink, but it is equally absurd that a Cartesian ego or any nonphysical self, such as Reid's own monad, can eat and drink. These absurdities result from defining a person without reference to a body. This might be cited as a major weakness of both Reid's theory which posits an indefineable monad-self and Hume's theory which defines a self as a bundle of mental perceptions.

However, as we noted earlier, Hume's view may be a little more complicated than this. It may not actually exclude the body and physical causes at all. In fact, the referent of the term 'I' for Hume, we suggested, may be a psychophysical "substance" which underlies and accounts for the causal unity among the perceptions in a given bundle. The fact that the bulk of Hume's discussion on personal identity focuses on mental perceptions and their connections should not negate or obscure the fact that he recognizes the crucial role that body probably plays in all perceptual experience.

Similarly, even though Reid's self is an indivisible monad, which seems to be more like a bare particular or immaterial substance, he recognizes that this monad-self can only manifest itself through one's thoughts, consciousness,

and actions; and the latter require body. For example, one of the pieces of evidence Reid cites to support his view of personal identity is the knowledge of who bore him and suckled him. His knowledge of his lineage and the activity of his birth required bodily or physical activity; and such physical relationship, according to Reid, lends support to the perfect knowledge he says he has of his personal identity. Thus, both Hume and Reid acknowledge an important role for body and the physical world in their theories of personal identity.

Now let us return to the above quotation from Reid. Can a mere succession of perceptions intelligibly be said to be conscious? Reid says

> I would wish to be farther instructed, whether the impressions remember and are conscious of the ideas, or the ideas remember and are conscious of the impressions, or if both remember and are conscious of both?[243]

Hume might indeed respond by saying that it is probably incoherent to say "a succession remembers," but, even on the doctrine standardly ascribed to Hume, is this the only thing his view can propose? We can say, "Yesterday Smith remembered his childhood," using ordinary speech, and this is perfectly acceptable once we know what we mean by it. Or we can say, according to the doctrine in question, "Yesterday there was contained in the bundle of perceptions we call Smith a memory

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[243]Ibid.

perception of certain earlier events." For Hume, this is a more accurate but, granted, a more awkward way to talk, and it may not be suitable for ordinary purposes. But the problem of absurdity only arises if we try to mix these two ways of talking and say, "Yesterday the bundle of events remembered its childhood."

Reid thinks, however, that an impersonal mode of speech of this sort is just absurd, where, for example, instead of saying, "I thought it was lunch time, so I decided to stop mowing the lawn and went to eat," we would say, "At such and such a place and time, there was a thought about lunch in a particular bundle of perceptions, a volitional decision that lawn-mowing should stop at that place and time, and then a movement towards food." Reid thinks this is just nonsense. Furthermore, why would we want to talk like this, even if we were to assume for a moment that Hume's analysis is correct? The impersonal mode of speech is too long and convoluted for ordinary purposes.

Secondly, without names or personal pronouns that have a defined sense and reference (to use Fregean terminology), we would have difficulty discovering in what chain or bundle of perceptions a particular perception belonged, e.g., does it belong to "Smith" or "Hume" or "me"?

Thirdly, Reid finds the impersonal mode of speech too emotionally neutral and focussed on particular events instead of their interdependance and interconnectedness. What we usually need in human interaction is an awareness of the continuing influence of one state of mind or body on another, whether they are within the same person or between two different persons. Reid thinks this awareness demands the common sense, ordinary way of talking about persons, i.e., as entities that feel and think and remember.

But perhaps our ordinary ways of conceptualizing and talking are largely pragmatic, so that common sense and ordinary speech are just more convenient or useful. This would not prove that a more impersonal mode of speech is unintelligible or uninformative or even more accurate or more useful for some purposes. The language of particle physics is not of much use for ordinary talk about physical objects, but that does not mean that it is not useful or more accurate at a fundamental level of analysis. Similarly, if the proposed Humean analysis is correct, the impersonal mode of speech about mental states might be useful for the purpose of accurate and dispassionate self-analysis. Therefore, Reid's argument, if interpreted only as a linguistic one, is not necessarily persuasive.

However, Reid clearly thinks that Hume's theory itself is incoherent. To talk or think about mental activity impersonally, Reid thinks, is incoherent, simply because it tries to be impersonal. To say that there are thoughts, emotions, and actions, but no thinkers or agents or emoters, is for Reid just incoherent nonsense. He says, "That every act or operation, therefore, supposes an agent, that every quality supposes a subject, are things which I do not attempt to prove, but take for granted."[244]

On one level, perhaps Hume and Reid can agree on the need for some distinction between different sorts of events, some of which ought to be called "acts."[245] There seem to be at least three ordinary sorts of "events," or things that happen: (1) events which simply happen, e.g., a storm or a sunset; (2) events which have to happen to something or someone in order to take place, e.g., a fall or color change; (3) events which at least in some ordinary sense, must be performed by some "agent," e.g., murder, listening, making promises, etc.; we

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[244]Ibid., 232b. Given my suggestion, with Bricke, that Hume's self is a psychophysical substance, and given an intentional-object theory of perception (which Hume himself does not seem to have), Hume does not need to deny Reid's contention in this quotation. It is just that Hume's thinker or actor would be defined differently from Reid's.

[245]Cf. Harry Lesser, "Reid's Criticism of Hume's Theory of Personal Identity," Hume Studies 4 (1978): 41-63.

usually call these things "actions" and distinguish them from states or processes.

On some level, Hume and Reid no doubt agree with this distinction, but Reid says that it is a self-evident truth that the difference between actions and processes is that "every act . . . supposes an agent" in some sense that Hume denies. The sense apparently is that, for Hume, events of type (3) are ultimately analyzeable in terms of events of type (1).[246]

Can there be pure events which do not happen to anything? Reid can argue, it seems, that a state can exist only if it is a state of something or someone and a process can exist only if it is undergone by something or someone. If this is correct and if it is a valid objection to Hume, it shows the impossibility of a view of the world which admits only processes and states but not entities or substances. We can indeed construct a language with no nouns but only verbs, e.g., stoning, house-ing, being-a-person, etc., but if the taking place of such events presupposes that there are

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[246]Again, if we remember that Hume's self can be a psychophysical substance, which underlies each particular bundle of perceptions, then the problem might be solved, i.e., there would be an agent for an action, at least in a sense. On the other hand, if the "underlying" substrate is at most the cause of perceptions, and these are not its properties in any further sense, then the notion of agency might, to the mind of many--and no doubt to Reid--still be lost.

entities to which the sub-events which make up these larger events are happening, then the getting rid of entities has taken place only on the verbal level, and their existence is still being presupposed.

But even if we admit this objection (and we might not have to if selves are psychophysical substances), it still would not require Hume to recognize the existence of the monad-selves of Reid. All Hume would have to posit are momentarily existing bundle-entities, and he could still describe the world at any point of time as consisting of a set of states of or relations among these entities, causally connected in various complex ways with the states of other equally momentary bundle-entities. Such momentary bundles would lack both persistence and, in Reid's sense, agency; they would simply take part in events but not <u>do</u> anything in Reid's sense. So far, Reid seems to have no convincing argument against this.

As we have already seen, a very important proposition in Hume's theory of personal identity is that particular perceptions in a bundle can be connected together through time by relations of resemblance and causation. And these possible connections (granted, Hume's account of causation might be inadequate) spell trouble for Reid's critique. Reid's attempted refutation of Hume's ideal theory does <u>not</u> refute

or even address the bundle theory and its view that causal relatedness between perceptions in a particular bundle is a necessary and, perhaps, even sufficient, condition of personal identity.

Perhaps the knowledge of an elaborate network of causal and other connections between perceptions in a particular bundle can be described in Hume's program as generated by principles which form what Reid calls the "constitution of our nature." It is Hume's purpose in the Treatise to develop a theory of human nature, as Reid acknowledges. The foundations of such a system are located in perceptions and in the relations between them, particularly the causal relations. Hume calls these permanent universal principles of mind, and they are essential to an account of human nature. They are necessary and unavoidable in the conduct of life.[247]

In light of this, it is uncertain that Reid refutes Hume. Quite apart from the status of the bundle theory, Reid never gives a constructive argument to prove the existence of an immaterial indivisible monad-substance, as opposed to a psychophysical being underlying each causally related bundle of perceptions. Furthermore, constitutive features of the human mind compel belief for both Hume and Reid; we cannot but believe them. Thus, Hume's account may be broad enough to

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[247]Hume, Treatise, 225.

include Reid's views on human nature. This point is important because it undermines the foundation Reid built to refute Hume, i.e., the "constitution of our nature" and its principles of common sense. Hume can account for human nature and its propensities in his program, so Reid has not refuted him.

Still, there are differences betweeen Hume and Reid in the matter of natural constitution, and Hume may not have entirely anticipated Reid in this regard. Hume's constitutionalism is the result of inductively generalized introspective methods, whereas Reid's is naturalistic. The explanation for Reid's constitutionalism is rooted in the adaptive success of all animal species. Furthermore, principles for Hume are either ultimate or products of custom. For Reid what we receive from God is exactly what is needed for successful interaction with the environment. Organisms lacking these common sense principles of perception and action will perish, and human beings are so constituted that they cannot but believe them. Thus, Reid's constitutionalism has an explanatory dimension lacking in Hume's. Reid's faculties are drawn from the evidence of nature and are subject to the tests of natural science. So even if Hume and Reid agreed on the number and nature of these faculties, they would do so on different grounds. The fact of this difference alone,

however, does not refute Hume's theory of personal identity.

Reid also offers independent arguments against Hume's general approach to causality, on which of course his theory of human nature rests. The crux of Reid's critique is the following:[248] (1) the principle of universal causation (whatever begins to exist must have a cause) is a necessary first principle and not a contingent one; and, therefore, it is capable of proof by scientific induction. The principle of uniform causation (similar causes, similar effects), on the other hand, is a contingent first principle. For Hume both of these principles are matters of belief grounded only in experience and custom, whereas Reid claims that first principles are the nonderivative foundation of all knowledge.[249] (2) The proper original meaning of cause in general for Reid is that of an agent bringing about a change. This fundamental notion of cause as agency is derived exclusively from our own voluntary exertions in bringing about

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[248]Reid does accept Hume's account of causation as a correct analysis of the operation of the laws of nature, which deal with natural correlations, not agencies in actions. See Thomas Reid, Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1969), especially Essay IV, chapters 2 and 3.

[249]Reid, Works, I, 455-57. Another point to note here is that Hume says that there ". . . is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that the common distinction betwixt moral and physical necessity is without any foundation in nature." (Treatise, 171)

effects, and if we were unacquainted with such exertions, we would have no conception at all of a cause or of an active power.[250]

Reid, therefore, thinks that Hume's account of the constitution of our nature is deficient for various reasons. But the main one of course is that Hume totally misses the agent behind the perceptions. Reid finds this unacceptable to common sense: ". . . in certain motions of my body, and directions of my thought, I know, not only that there must be a cause that has power to produce these effects, but that I am that cause; . . . ."[251]

This notion of causation is inextricably bound up with certain notions of the understanding and volition, and it is not dependent on memory, as Hume claims. Thus, Reid inverts the Humean understanding of personal identity, i.e., rather than personal identity being understood through causation and memory as in Hume, for Reid causation is only understood through the notion of personal agents who remain the same through time. Reid denies that a perception such as a volition can be understood only in terms of certain perceptions being present in certain relations with each other

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[250]Hume, in contrast, says, "The distinction, which we often make betwixt power and the exercise of it, is . . . without foundation." (Treatise, 171)

[251]Ibid., 36.

in a particular bundle. Rather, he claims that the cause of a volitional act is the person who wills it.[252]

Reid thinks that our fundamental belief in free will would be destroyed if mental events are only processes or states or successions of perception, because persons are only free if they can act. Belief in some degree of free will and the power to use it ". . . is necessarily implied in many operations of the mind [e.g., volition and moral judgment], which are familiar to every man, and without which no man can act the part of a reasonable being."[253] So no belief that is inconsistent with free will can be held in practice, only in theory, and since Hume's "no-owner" theory is inconsistent with belief in free will, according to Reid, it must be rejected.

Hume might reply to Reid that the "no-owner" theory is neutral on the determinism-indeterminism issue. If we identify a person with a bundle of perceptions, as Hume seems to do, we do have to admit that earlier perceptions in the chain "influence" later ones somehow, but we do not have to hold that earlier perceptions totally determine the nature of

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[252]This objection against Hume, if sound at all, would hold on either of the readings of him we have considered. For even if the "agent" is an underlying "substrate" for Hume, it seems that its relation to the perception that it "underlies" can at most be causal.

[253]Reid, Works, I, 446b.

all later ones. However, Reid's defense of free will is not just a defense of some degree of indeterminism. The principle of common sense he holds is one that says ". . . we have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our will."[254] This is not just the acceptance of indeterminism; it is positive insistence on an ontological distinction between acts and mere events. The important point for Reid is not that some of our actions are undetermined ("free"), but that we have some real control over them; in other words, they are genuine actions.

Let us assume that it might be correct to distinguish between what a person does and what just happens to or in him. Now can we make this distinction without positing persisting agents, or by positing them only in the sense of underlying causes like any other causes in nature? Perhaps it will be argued that even if, in this way, Hume classes both "actions" and processes as similar events, he can still maintain that they are events of relevantly different kinds and that a sufficiently detailed account of the physical and mental circumstances of each event will enable us to distinguish between them. For example, a full account of what happens when I bend my knee and when my knee jerks as a reflex will show that the two events are different. To make the

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[254]Ibid.

distinction, it may be convenient to introduce the term 'I,' but it would not follow that anything other than Humean causality is in question; we need only describe events, and what precedes and follows them in sufficient detail. On the other hand, Hume would be completely wrong--on any reading of his theory--if it is the case that descriptions cannot be substituted for the term 'I,' because of its essentially indexical nature.[255]

But then, it is not perfectly clear that Reid himself could accommodate this point. Does Reid really grant that we can refer to the referent of 'I' as a kind of directly given this or that. Or is his own position not in fact that, by the term 'I,' we simply mean something like "The thinker of this thought," where I am immediately aware that there is such a thing, but not aware of it in any further sense? Reid never faces this issue.

Closely allied to Reid's argument from free will is his contention that some of our essential moral notions, e.g., rights, duty and responsibility, depend on the supposition that there are moral agents who persist through time. A person can only claim a right if he is the same person as the person on whom the right was conferred. A person can only be justly punished if he is the same person as the person who

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[255]See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

committed the offence for which the punishment is being exacted. Furthermore, according to Reid, the identity in question must be strict and perfect.

Of course, Hume might simply reply that we can treat rights and obligations as inheritable, i.e., they can be transferred from one person to another. Therefore, even if a person at any one time is not perfectly identical with himself at any earlier time, which would be the case on either reading of Hume, he is the result of his earlier life because present events are influenced by and follow past events. This is so whether or not determinism is true. Earlier events may or may not be sufficient conditions for later ones; nevertheless, they are certainly necessary conditions for their taking place in the way they do. Because of this close connection between the momentary bundle-states making up a person, it does not seem in any way unjust that later states should inherit the rights and obligations of earlier ones.

Reid might reply that rights and obligations are not in this respect on the same level. Rights arise either through a person's status, e.g., being human or being an American citizen, or through being conferred by, e.g., the making of a promise or the transfer of property. Arguments about rights usually deal with what follows from certain kinds of status or acts of conferring. Both of these might be passed on from

one stage of a person's life to a later stage, provided that the later stages have the same relevant status as earlier ones, and/or the person conferring the right intends to confer it for a period of time, i.e., he intends it to be inherited. But obligations might be different from rights. Maybe obligations can only be justly created by a voluntary act of a person. One person just cannot bind another, so that if a later person is not the same bundle as the earlier person in a sense sufficently strong to support agency, he cannot be bound by the earlier person's responsibilities. A son can inherit both his father's assets and his debts or he can refuse both; this option is a matter of justice to him.

However, two exceptions come to mind to this view of obligation: one is the obligation toward members of one's family and the other is the obligation to help people in trouble (e.g., rescuing a drowning person if one can swim). On one interpretation, this latter obligation is based simply on the fact of one's being the only person in a certain place at a certain time. Now if simply being in a certain situation can create a duty, why cannot simply being the successor to someone who took on a responsibility do the same thing?

Also, we might argue that certain obligations are the result of voluntary but assumed reciprocal agreements among people to give each other help in times of need. Of course,

it is true that someone with perfect justice might opt neither to give nor receive help. However, as Kant points out, a maxim never to give or receive help is one that a rational being cannot adopt.[256] Such a maxim presupposes that a rational being has purposes of some kind, but he cannot always guarantee that he can achieve his purposes by himself. He will one day need others' help. Therefore, he cannot rationally adopt a principle that he should never receive help; this would be to will an end without willing any means to the end.

Thus, Hume might argue that a world in which people did not inherit rights and duties from their previous selves (bundles) would be a world in which their behavior towards each other would be so unpredictable that that very unpredictability would interfere with any purposive behavior and, therefore, no purposive being could adopt such a view. Obligations (at least some) must be inheritable if purposive behavior and morality are to be possible. One can only opt out if he refuses to act morally at all.

Another problem Reid raises for Hume is the problem of guilt and appropriate punishment. If the one being punished

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[256]See Kant's discussion of the fourth example of his categorical imperative. I. Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Lewis W. Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), 41.

is never perfectly identical with the one who performed the crime, which Reid thinks is the case for Hume, then all punishment is unjust and undeserved. Is this necessarily so? Perhaps we need to revise the notion of guilt. We suppose a person becomes guilty by doing wrong, and he stays guilty until either he is punished or he repents and is forgiven. Maybe, however, we should say that a person is guilty not because of what he has done, but because of, and as long as he remains, the kind of person who would commit the act again under similar circumstances.[257] Only in this sense can we speak of a stain of guilt, which is a phrase that seems to refer to a persisting fault of character. While this fault persists, the person who has committed the offence, even though he might have changed in other respects, can be said both to need punishment if its aim is reform, and to have no complaint if he is punished in order to deter others. So that even though his present bundle-state may be different in some respects from his earlier bundle-state during which the offence was committed, this difference is not relevant to his guilt.

If we take this kind of view of guilt and believe that punishment can reform or deter, then we do not have to regard

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[257]This suggestion is made by Harry Lesser. See Harry Lesser, "Reid's Criticism of Hume's Theory of Personal Identity," 60-63.

the institution of punishment as being, in principle, unjust. And such an account matches some of our moral intuitions. For example, we believe that real repentance consists in the reformation of character, and if and when this takes place, guilt is removed. We also think that the justice of reward and punishment diminishes with time; if a long enough period of time elapses, it almost seems like we are punishing a different person from the offender. According to Hume's bundle theory, perhaps we are, at least in some respects, and such a view does not seem incoherent. So as was the case with the issue of free will in human action, it seems, in the case of the issue of punishment, that Hume can deal with Reid's objections.

So where does this leave us in our comparison of Hume and Reid? According to their own words, they clearly have different views on the nature of the self. They have different ideas as pertains to the sense of the term 'self'; for Hume the sense of 'self' either is, or is largely defined by, a bundle of perceptions which are causally related, while for Reid the sense of 'self' is "the subject (of whose existence we are immediately aware) whose thoughts and perceptions these are." With regard to the referent of the term 'I,' I have suggested, following Bricke, that the

referent of 'I' for Hume is a psychophysical substance which underlies the perceptions in a bundle and accounts in unclarified ways for their causal relations and activity. If it is not that, then it is of course the bundle of perceptions itself. For Reid, the referent of 'I' is an immaterial substance or monad, of the existence and perfect identity of which each person is immediately and perfectly aware through their entire life. This view, it can be argued, has the support of common sense experience, even though it is notoriously elusive and mysterious from an empirical point of view.

However, Reid, as we have seen, does not really refute Hume's view of personal identity, on either of its variants. He spends a great deal of time refuting Hume's theory of ideas, and in that he may have been somewhat successful. But to refute the ideal theory, although that may have undermined Hume's epistemology, does not really address his theory of personal identity. To do that, Reid would have had to present more convincing arguments on behalf of his own view of personal agency, and of causality in general, not to mention various common assumptions regarding morality.

As we have seen, both Hume and Reid build much of their case in their theory of personal identity on principles supposedly derived from human nature. But Reid does not show

convincingly enough how at least much of his view of human nature and Hume's are in fact incompatible. Furthermore, Reid does not address specific and central problems in Hume's view, e.g., the unity of bundles problem or the problem of how we get the idea of identity at all, according to Hume.

For Reid, the idea of personal identity is fundamental and obvious to every person; it is something none of us can deny or even doubt or question. This approach seems to have the support of our immediate experience; for Reid it is part of certain undeniable common sense truths which are part of our nature as persons. Hume does not disagree that we have the idea of identity; he is just trying to account for it philosophically. He takes a more analytical and critical view of the idea from an empiricist philosophical standpoint than does Reid. But that fact should not surprise us, since Reid is the philosopher of generally uncritical common sense, and he finds it difficult to live with critical skepticism; Hume, on the other hand, is at home with critical skepticism in his philosophy, but he does settle for common sense with his friends.

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VITA

Paul Chester Boling was born in Aberdeen, Washington on November 18, 1947. He attended elementary school in that city until he was ten years of age, and then his family moved to Oakland, California where he graduated from Oakland High School in June, 1965. The following September he entered the University of California at Berkeley, California, and in June, 1969, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in zoology. In the fall of 1969, he entered the Dallas Theological Seminary and graduated from there with a Master's degree in Theology in May, 1973.

Following this, Mr. Boling returned to California where he pursued one full year of study in psychology at the California State University in Hayward, California. In June, 1975, he took a position on the staff of New Life, Inc. in Knoxville, Tennessee. In July, 1977, he participated in the founding of Search Ministries. He entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, graduate school in January, 1978 to work on a Master's degree in philosophy; that degree was awarded in June, 1980. In June, 1981, Mr. Boling began his own organization called Anchor Foundation, and in the same year he also began studies toward the Ph.D. degree in philosophy. That degree was awarded in December, 1989.

The author is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Evangelical Church Alliance, the Evengelical Theological Society, the Evangelical Philosophical Society, and the American Philosophical Association.

Mr. Boling is married to the former Lauralee Bryan of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and he has three daughters and two sons.