



## **Hume and the Three Views of the Self**

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## HUME AND THE THREE VIEWS OF THE SELF

It is commonly acknowledged that Hume's discussion of our beliefs about the self parallels his earlier discussion of our beliefs about material objects in a number of important respects.<sup>1</sup> Yet while he clearly distinguishes a vulgar, a false philosophical, and a true philosophical view of material objects, a corresponding set of distinctions is not explicitly drawn in the case of the self. But although Hume is not as clear on the matter as we might wish, I shall try to show that he is committed to the existence of three similar views of the self and that an examination of their relationships illuminates several important aspects of his thought.

I shall begin by outlining Hume's treatment of the three views of material objects. I then argue that he is likewise committed to three quite distinct views of the self and sketch their general features. In the third section some implications of this reading are examined; in particular we will find that it casts light on Hume's perplexing notion of fictitious identity, the general pattern of argument running through his discussion of personal identity, and the extent of his skepticism with respect to the self. Although my aims are not primarily critical, my discussion clearly bears on the growing tendency among commentators to deny that Hume has any quarrel with the common man's ascriptions of identity to the self or that he means to distinguish the vulgar or everyday conception of the self from the true philosophical view of it.<sup>2</sup>

I. According to Hume's basic philosophical tenets, the only things with which we are truly acquainted are perceptions, i.e., impressions and ideas, there are no real or intrinsic connections between these, and each of our simple ideas is a copy of, and causally dependent upon, an earlier simple impression. These principles lead Hume to conclude that the only idea of a material object or substance we could have is

nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination (T16; cf. T219, 635). The collections of impressions that make up such objects sometimes contain temporal gaps, their successive members often display a qualitative diversity, and they will usually contain a number of simple impressions at any given moment; hence, they are rarely uninterrupted, invariable, or simple. Nevertheless, both the common man and the traditional philosopher attribute all three features to material objects, and Hume is concerned to explain why this is so.

Hume discusses uninterruptedness in the course of his attempt to explain why the vulgar--all of us, most of the time--fail to realize that they are acquainted only with internal perceptions and instead believe that they are directly aware of material bodies that enjoy a continued existence outside the mind even when not perceived. This can happen only if they mistake perceptions for external objects, and such errors are likely to occur when the members of a sequence of perceptions display either coherence or constancy. Since coherence plays little role in Hume's later discussions, however, I shall consider only constancy here.

A series of perceptions exhibits constancy just in case its members resemble each other. When the imagination (the mind's associative faculty) views such a series, it typically associates its members. But it does not stop with this, for the mind's disposition when it surveys the series is much like that when it considers a single, uninterrupted perception. So, because of the resemblance between the perceptions in the series, as well as that between the mental acts by which they are surveyed, the imagination is likely to go on to take the perceptions to be strictly or numerically identical (T61, 202/04). And since Hume thinks that our idea of strict identity demands the uninterruptedness and invariability through a *suppos'd variation of time* (T201) of the object to which it is ascribed, this identification

requires that we mistake the several perceptions for a single uninterrupted thing (T202/03).<sup>3</sup> Such mistakes are exposed by nearly every shift in our gaze. Yet they spring from a tendency so ingrained in the imagination that, rather than retract our misattributions of uninterruptedness, we instead try to disguise their incompatibility with the existence of gaps in perception. And this we do by supposing that the perceptions which we have misconstrued as a single object have an uninterrupted--and hence mind-independent--existence even when not perceived.

The tendency to such errors is present in everyone, but, realizing that we are typically acquainted only with interrupted sequences of perceptions, the philosopher sees through the common man's way of masking the tension between the interruptions and the belief that material objects are continuants. This belief is so natural, however, that even the philosopher cannot easily rid himself of it, and accordingly he is likely to replace the naive realism of the vulgar with the (false) philosophical view that material objects enjoy an uninterrupted existence outside the mind while causing our fleeting perceptions which represent them.

The vulgar also think of material objects as invariable, "continuing the same" through a variety of qualitative changes. Hume's discussion of coherence provides some explanation for this belief, but he mentions coherence only to drop it. However, he goes on to give a quite different account that draws upon mechanisms similar to those invoked in his Discussion of constancy, telling us that even in the case of a series of perceptions that would commonly be taken to be a highly protean material object, immediately successive members of the series are likely to resemble each other. When this occurs the imagination's easy transition from one member to the next will seem much like the act of contemplating a single, unchanging perception, and this will readily "deceive it" into identifying the distinct perceptions and considering them as *one continu'd object* (T220). As it stands

this account is rather rudimentary, though the discussion midway through the section on personal identity can, I think, be seen as elaborating the various sorts of resemblances, such as those in end or purpose, among successive perceptions that will lead to such identifications (cf. T255/8). In most cases, however, little reflection is needed to see that the perceptions further removed from each other in time are quite dissimilar and that the overall series is not invariable at all. The unease occasioned by the discrepancy between this rather obvious fact and our misattributions of invariability should provide an impetus for us to disguise our error (cf. T205). And, Hume tells us, this may be done by "feigning" the existence of an underlying substratum or substance which persists unchanged throughout the observed variations (T220).

Substance is surely too recondite a notion to arise spontaneously in the untutored imagination, and so this way of concealing the difficulty, i.e. "feigning", is presumably employed by philosophers rather than by the vulgar. Now the false philosophical views with respect to uninterruptedness and--as Hume later notes--simplicity are out-growths of the vulgar views with respect to each, and this suggests that the false philosophical view with respect to invariability would also be rooted in a vulgar view. Unfortunately, however, Hume does not mention the vulgar view in his discussion of the belief in the invariability of material objects. But in the section on personal identity he does tell us that our tendency to confuse resemblance and identity remains even if we do not feign the existence of a substratum. Instead we may imagine something *unknown and mysterious* to connect our changing perceptions, or we may simply tend to confound them even though we are *not able fully to satisfy ourselves* as to what is involved when we do so (T254/5). The vulgar are said to display an *indifference* to a related matter because of their *stupidity* (T224), however, and so in their *common and careless way of thinking* (T223) their failure to entirely

comprehend how their ascriptions of invariability might be reconciled with the presence of change need not disturb them unduly. And this suggests that they would manage to overlook the errors in their attributions of invariability by shrouding them in mystery or in vagueness. Since neither alternative would satisfy the philosopher, however, he would be inclined to invent something like substance in an effort to justify his ascriptions of invariability.

Finally, although an idea of a momentary material object will typically be a composite of discrete ideas like color, size, and shape (T219), the vulgar are inclined to regard the whole as simple. This is so because the actions of the mind when it considers a truly simple perception are much like those when it considers something whose parts are *connected together by a strong relation*, and this similarity will readily seduce it into mistaking the collection of related perceptions for a simple thing (T221). Then, to camouflage the incompatibility between the ascription of simplicity and the actual compositeness, the vulgar are likely to imagine that they in fact perceive a connection among the various parts. Similarly led to misattributions of simplicity, partisans of the false philosophy will see through this attempted disguise and so resort to some more subtle--though even less justifiable--contrivance like substance, which is now taken to explain identity or unity at a time as well as identity through change (T221/23).

There is a general mechanism at work in our ascriptions of uninterruptedness, invariability, and simplicity. For although our simple ideas are discrete particulars, it is said to be a general maxim of the science of human nature that closely related ideas are likely to be confounded by the mind (T60/1; cf. T202/03). This principle is never defended by Hume, and although it leads him to give accounts that sometimes border on the bizarre, he refers to it repeatedly, invoking it to explain both the vulgar and the false philosophical attributions of uninterruptedness, invariability, and simplicity to

material objects. Where the two views part company is in the way in which they then try to conceal from themselves the errors to which the principle leads.

II. Hume's characterization of the self as *nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions* (T252) united by *certain relations* (T207; cf. T277) recalls his earlier description of the correct idea of a material substance as a collection of related simple ideas, and in both the Appendix (T635) and in the Abstract of the Treatise he emphasizes the similarity. Indeed, the bundle of perceptions that we call the self is sometimes interrupted by lapses in consciousness (T252, T634/5), its perceptions differ from moment to moment, and it may comprise a number of perceptions at any given time. Hence it too is neither uninterrupted, invariable, nor simple.

But in spite of these facts, which are discoverable by simple introspection, *some philosophers* are said to suppose that we are always *intimately conscious* of the self and its continued existence, and are certain *beyond the evidence of a demonstration* of its perfect identity (*i.e.* its uninterruptedness and invariability) and simplicity (T251). And indeed this is not a bad summary of the dominant attitude of modern philosophers. Descartes and Leibniz both believed that they were directly acquainted with a simple self that persists through time and, though he denied that it was an object of acquaintance, Berkeley also thought that the self was simple.<sup>4</sup> Hume's examples and even his wording echo Locke's and, to a lesser degree, Shaftesbury's earlier discussions of the self, however, and this suggests that they may have been his more immediate targets. Thus Shaftesbury tells us that the self retains its simplicity and identity through all manner of change. And Locke opposes our intuitive, infallible knowledge of our own existence to our sensitive knowledge of material objects, though he thinks that our idea of the self is complex rather than simple and that its ultimate nature is as unknowable as that of material substance.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the differences among such figures, the general picture that emerges is one of a continuous, unchanging, and simple mental substance in which one's perceptions inhere, and the modern philosophy's picture of the self thus resembles Hume's depiction of the ancient philosophy's conception of material objects at a number of key points (cf. T219/25). But, Hume thinks, the problem with this picture is as simple as it is fatal, for we have no impression --and hence no idea-- of such a self, and indeed the very experiences cited as evidence for this view in fact point to its falsity (e.g., T233, 251). Hume is nevertheless concerned to explain why the picture has captivated so many. But before turning to this topic, we must ask whether he also believed that there is a vulgar view of the self which is distinct from the false philosophical view, on the one hand, and the true philosophical view, on the other.

That Hume thought the common view of the self distinct from the false philosophical view is suggested by the fact that in his discussion of the simplicity of material objects the two views differ in that at least some philosophers feign a substance while the vulgar do not, and we are given no reason for supposing matters would be otherwise in the case of the self. In fact, there is reason to suppose they would not, for the notion of a simple mental substratum does not loom large in unsophisticated thought about the mind. Nor, indeed, does that of immediate selfconsciousness. Moreover, the vulgar view of material objects was said to be closer to the true philosophical view than to the false one, so it would be surprising if it coincided with the latter with respect to the self.

These reflections may seem to reinforce the position of those commentators who would assimilate the vulgar view of the self to the true philosophical view. But such an assimilation is scarcely suggested by Hume's remarks that in common life the idea of the self is *never very fix'd nor determinate* and that questions about the identity and unity of the self cannot be answered without *recourse to the most*

*profound metaphysics* (T189/90). Moreover, in the case of material objects the false philosophical view was rooted in the mistakes of the vulgar (T211), and unless it is similarly rooted in the case of the self, it will require a very different sort of explanation; yet Hume's accounts in the two cases are quite similar (T253, 259). Furthermore, while the ordinary person may well agree with the "true view" that the self can undergo change, it is not at all clear he agrees that its existence is interrupted and that it ceases to be during lapses in consciousness (cf. T252, 634/5). But most important of all, the claim that the self is nothing but a bundle of perceptions is not an intuitive one, and, on the face of it, it seems remarkable to suppose that the common man thinks of himself in this way.

Such considerations suggest that if Hume was at all attentive to everyday beliefs he did not identify the vulgar view with either philosophical view, though in light of the unusual views that he elsewhere imputes to the vulgar (e.g., T199), such evidence is only circumstantial. However Hume's discussion of the origin of our beliefs about personal identity provides more direct support for the claim that he thinks that there are three views of the self. There he tells us quite clearly that our ascriptions of identity to the self result from the same mental operations that give rise to our ascriptions of identity to animals, ships, and the like (T259; cf. 253), and his detailed accounts of our beliefs about personal identity, especially the account involving resemblance, are in keeping with this claim (T260/1). Moreover, he could hardly be more explicit that such ascriptions are based upon a mistake; not a mistake resulting from philosophical extravagances, however, but one to which even *the mere vulgar* are prone (T254n).

In light of the trend to interpret Hume as regarding the common view of the self as correct, it will be useful to examine the nature of this mistake more closely. Hume speaks of our natural propensity to imagine the self possessed of a

proper identity and simplicity and goes on to remark on our great . . . propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions that constitute the self, and to suppose ourselves possess of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro' the whole course of our lives (T253 (my italics); cf. T207). This propensity is explained by the fact that the discrete perceptions that constitute the self bear such relations as resemblance to each other, and in our common way of thinking the idea of a succession of related things is generally confounded with that of identity (T253, my italics). Moreover, the identity with which it is confounded is strict, as is made clear by Hume's explicit references throughout to strict identity and its hallmarks, uninterruptedness and invariability.<sup>6</sup> As with our similar errors concerning material objects, the resemblance between ideas leads to the *confusion and mistake*, and the resulting *absurdity* is thus traceable to a *biass from the imagination* (T254).

Finally, the imagination's consideration of the "closely related" simple perceptions that make up the self at any given moment is similar to its consideration of a truly simple perception. Hence we are likely to compound our error of crediting the self with a perfect identity by ascribing a perfect simplicity to it as well (T263).

When he turns to specific examples of our ascriptions of identity to plants and animals and artifacts, Hume appears to take a more sanguine view of the matter, even remarking of one that it involves no *breach of the propriety of language* (T258). Yet even here he finds an underlying confusion of a succession of related perceptions with identity. If we subtract a small portion of matter from a larger one, for example, the changes as the imagination surveys the resulting series of perceptions will be so slight that we are *apt to imagine, that 'tis nothing but a continu'd survey of the same object* (T256). And Hume's other examples involve a similar "easy transition" of the imagination from one idea to

another of the sort likely to lead it to confound relation with strict identity (T256/8). So, in light of the confusions involved, Hume's remark about the propriety of language is surely not intended to absolve our everyday views about identity from error. It is compatible, however, with the view that ordinary language is philosophically neutral with respect to these issues or with the stronger view that the propensity to such errors is so deeply entrenched in human nature that it is reflected in ordinary language. Beliefs, for example, that material objects continue to exist unperceived may well be built into our common modes of speaking (cf. T202) --though this would not lead Hume to regard them as justified.

In keeping with the pattern noted in the discussion of material objects, the imagination is led to attribute features to the self that it could not possibly have. In the case of material objects we find both a vulgar and a false philosophical view, which differ in the way in which they attempt to conceal these errors, and I have offered reasons for thinking that Hume is committed to a similar distinction in the case of the self. He never discusses the matter explicitly, however, and although his remark that our common view of the self is neither very fixed nor determinate suggests that he distinguished a vulgar from a false philosophical view (which, though mistaken, is reasonably determinate), he clearly thought the former to be vague. Still, I believe that we can elicit from his scattered remarks a characterization of the vulgar view of the self that is sufficiently fixed to suggest the general ways in which it differs from each of the two philosophical views.

Since the perceptions that comprise a momentary aspect of either a material object or a self are *bound together by a close relation* (T221,263), it would seem that the vulgar's method of disguising their misattributions of simplicity to material objects could also be used to disguise their misattribution of simplicity to the self. Doubtless

the component perceptions of the self at a given instant will be more variegated than those that make up a momentary material object, but to the extent that the former are closely enough related to lead the vulgar to mistake the composite for a single thing, they should also be closely enough related to lead them to imagine that they actually perceive a connection among its parts. And since Hume mentions nothing that would cause this to occur in one case but not in the other, it is reasonable to conclude that it would happen in both.

We have already seen that Hume believed that people will tend to view plant and animal bodies as invariable even when they do not suppose the perceptions that (in fact) comprise them to be connected by an underlying substance. And since he tells us this in the very passage where he emphasizes the similarities between our ascriptions of identity to plants and animals and those to the self, it seems likely that Hume believed the vulgar would similarly conceal the difficulties arising from their imputation of invariability to the self either by imagining its constituent perceptions to be linked by something *unknown and mysterious* or simply by thinking of them as a single and invariable thing without knowing how this might be so (T254/5).

The real difficulty comes in seeing how the vulgar could reconcile their belief that the self is uninterrupted with the existence of gaps in consciousness. No straightforward extension of their method for dealing with the interruptedness of material objects seems available, since crediting perceptions with a continued existence is said to lead to the view that they are external to, and independent of, the mind (T210), and these are palpably not features of selves. Indeed, this may be why some have doubted that Hume wished to distinguish a uniquely vulgar view of the mind. Nevertheless, an analogue of the vulgar method of masking the difficulties occasioned by their belief in the uninterruptedness of material objects is available in the case of the self.

The simplest way to reconcile the existence of gaps in consciousness (T252) with the belief that the self is a continuant (T253) would be to suppose that some of our perceptions of reflection continue to exist unperceived. On the correct view of the matter, one cannot have unperceived perceptions (T189/90), and the only way to suppose that a perception continued to exist when not perceived would be to mistake it for something other than a perception. But if ordinary people's beliefs about perceptions are as *contrary to the plainest experience* as Hume makes them out to be (T210), they might well fail to realize this and instead conclude that some of their perceptions, though internal, can exist unperceived. Indeed, we often do think of such mental phenomena as beliefs, desires, and emotions as existing even when we are not aware of them. And so, because of the resemblance between the members of a series of impressions of reflection, the vulgar might confound the impressions' correspondent ideas, then disguise the tension between their belief in the uninterruptedness of the series with the gaps in it by supposing that it continues to exist internally during those gaps.

Hume, however, does not believe that we in fact think of impressions of reflection in this way (T194). Nevertheless, this account seems compatible with his theory of mental activity, for the mechanism that induces us to misapprehend discrete perceptions as a single thing is activated by the perceptions' resemblance rather than by their source, and so it should lead us to such an error even in the case of impressions of reflection (cf. T190, 267). Moreover, unless we are thought to attribute a continued existence to impressions of reflection, it is difficult to see how Hume can explain our propensity to think of the self as uninterrupted, since attributing a continued existence to impressions of sensation will produce only a belief in the uninterruptedness of material objects, not one in the uninterruptedness of the self. Such is not Hume's conclusion, however, and so a safer,

though less interesting, conjecture is that the vulgar would lapse into the same vagueness with respect to the uninterruptedness of the self as they do with respect to its invariability.

I should not wish to suggest that Hume would have accepted my sketch of the vulgar view of the self just as it stands. Its usefulness lies rather in the fact that it gives some content to the claim that there is a uniquely vulgar view of the self by supplying a characterization, grounded in Humean doctrine, of that view. But although the general claim that there are three views of the self does not depend upon the details of this sketch, insofar as the characterization is genuinely based in Humean principles, its overall outline should not be too different from the one Hume would have developed had he bothered to try.

Before turning to the implications of this reading it is worth asking why Hume did not depict the vulgar view of the self in more detail. We cannot be certain, of course, but there are at least three reasons why he might have neglected to do so. First, in light of the similarities between the views of material objects and those of the self, spelling the latter out in detail would have meant tediously retracing the steps of his earlier discussion. Second, Everyman's conception of the self is more elusive than his conception of material objects and, doubtless because of the theological stakes involved, it seems to incorporate undigested elements of the false philosophical view in the form of a vague belief in something capable of surviving the dissolution of the body. Thus a good deal of work would have been needed to portray a view of the self recognizable as the common one. Third, although the false philosophical view is rooted in a mistaken belief, Hume's chief target is not this belief, which is a natural one, but the philosopher's attempt to rationalize it by appealing to mental substance.

III. Recognition of the three views of the self has several important consequences. One is the light that it sheds on the perplexing notion of fictitious identity. Hume introduces this notion in a rather offhanded way and never bothers to define it, as he does 'strict identity', or even to explain it in much detail. It does seem to point to a genuine relation that holds between perceptions which bear the natural relations of resemblance, contiguity, or causality to each other, but it is never said to be a genuine species of identity. That Hume is ambivalent, or uncertain as to whether it is an authentic variety of identity is perhaps suggested by the fact that he sometimes speaks of it as imperfect identity, which suggests that it is, and sometimes as fictitious identity, which suggests that it isn't. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for concluding both that it is not a genuine kind of identity and that Hume does not regard it as one.<sup>7</sup>

In the first place we must reject the claims of recent commentators that the fictitious identity enjoyed by the self is simply an infelicitous label for what we would regard as its genuine identity. For Hume tells us that the self's (fictitious) identity is a matter of degree; moreover, this is not so because the concept of the self is vague--though in everyday life it is--but because fictitious identity is grounded in other relations which are themselves matters of degree (T262). And since genuine identity is an all or nothing affair, fictitious identity cannot be the same as it. Furthermore, there is reason to doubt that Hume regards the relation as a completely well-founded variety of identity. After all, his claim that the identity *which we ascribe* to plant and animal bodies is merely fictitious comes soon after his diagnosis of serious errors in these very ascriptions (T259). Indeed, as we have seen, even in those passages where Hume appears most favorably disposed to such attributions, he suggests that they issue from a confusion of the idea of related objects with that of strict identity (T255). And in

light of the magnitude of this error it seems plain that Hume does not find fictitious identity unexceptionable.

A clearer picture of Hume's accounts of the roles of resemblance and causality in the formation of our beliefs about personal identity also emerges from a recognition of the vulgar view of the self. We can now read each account both as providing some explanation of our natural tendency to think of the self as uninterrupted and invariable and also as explicating the "true idea" of the self.

In the account involving resemblance, Hume suggests that since one's ideas in memory will resemble the perceptions remembered, when one thinks back over his perceptions he will find some measure of resemblance among them. This will *convey the imagination more easily* from the idea of one to that of the next, and as Hume has repeatedly stressed, in such circumstances the imagination is likely to mistake the several ideas for a single, strictly identical thing. Now, true to form, he tells us that the resemblance will *make the whole seem like the continuance of one object* (T261, my italics). This provides some account of our propensity to *ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions*, and to *suppose ourselves possess of an invariable and uninterrupted existence* (T253). But it also tells us something about the true idea of the self, for this is just the idea of a collection of perceptions united by *certain relations* (T207), and we now learn that resemblance is one of these.

When he turns to the role of causation Hume tells us that the *true idea* of the self is that of a *system of different perceptions . . . link'd together by the relation of cause and effect* (T261). Thus causality is the other--and, indeed, the more important--of the relations that obtain between the perceptions that constitute the self. But, although Hume does not mention it, the causal relations between these perceptions also help to explain our propensity to accord the self a strict identity through time. For while a resemblance between discrete ideas most readily leads us to regard them

as strictly identical, causation *may also concur in the same influence* (T61). In short, the very relations that lead us to associate the simple ideas that compose the true idea of the self are precisely the ones that make it so natural to go a step further and mistakenly confound them (cf. T202/03).

If the reading suggested above is on the right track, the similarities between Hume's discussion of material objects and that of the self run much deeper than is often realized. There are, to be sure, differences between them, many of which arise from obvious differences between physical objects and selves. But behind these lie two crucial uniformities which, though not explicitly set out by Hume in quite this way, nevertheless follow from his account. First, the vulgar view in each instance results from the operation of the same mechanism, viz. the mind's tendency to incorrectly identify related ideas.<sup>8</sup> And, second, the false philosophical view in each instance arises in an effort to reconcile the belief thus obtained with the actual nature of perceptions.

As in the case of material objects, the vulgar view of the self comes closer to the true philosophical view than to the false. For it does fasten upon the two natural relations which in fact serve to unite the simple ideas in the true idea of the self, and it does so without recourse to such unjustifiable notions as substance. Hence it is the natural and ingenuous product of the imagination. Nevertheless, the vulgar view is rooted in our tendency to mistake or confuse related but distinct perceptions for a single thing, and so it is not fully rational.

The extent of Hume's skepticism with respect to the vulgar view of the self is never made entirely clear, however, and we are thus faced with a special case of the more general difficulty of determining the depth of his skepticism in Book I. I shall not pursue the general question here, but insofar as the vulgar views of the self and of material objects result from the operation of the same mechanism, we may

conclude that they are epistemologically on all fours. Hence, pending discovery of a relevant difference between them, Hume's degree of skepticism with respect to one should match that with respect to the other, and any reason for attributing a certain degree in one case is a reason to do so in both.<sup>9</sup> It seems to me that Hume's frequent willingness to think and to speak with the vulgar about both material objects and selves indicates that he regards the beliefs in the two cases as equally natural (e.g., T187, 218, 262). But even if his reservations about the commonsense views are more serious than this would suggest, his doubts never extend to the correct or true ideas of material objects or the self. It's just that neither are--as both the vulgar and the metaphysicians, in their different ways, are inclined to suppose--anything more than ideas of interrupted, variable, and compound collections of (related) perceptions.

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1. Throughout my concern is with Hume's discussion in the Treatise of Human Nature; references are given in the text in the pagination of the Selby-Bigge edition (Oxford: 1888).
2. For variants of these claims see James Noxon, "Senses of Identity in Hume's Treatise," Dialogue 8 (1969); 367-384; Lawrence Ashley and Michael Stack, "Hume's Theory of the Self and its Identity," Dialogue 13 (1974); 239-354; Nicholas Capaldi, David Hume: The Newtonian Philosopher (Boston: 1975); pp. 134-141; and Susan Mendus, "Personal Identity: The Two Analogies in Hume," Philosophical Quarterly 30 (1980); 61-68. I am in general agreement with Terence Penelhum's criticism of this interpretation in "Hume's Theory of the Self Revisited," Dialogue, 14 (1975); 389-409, though our projects differ in that my concern is with the vulgar view of the self and the morals to be drawn from an explicit recognition of it.
3. When modifying 'identity', 'strict' is often treated as synonymous with 'perfect' (T203, 205, 207, 251), 'numerical' (T69, 202, 217, 257), and 'real' (T635).

4. See Descartes, Meditation VI, in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I., E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, eds. (Cambridge: 1911), p.196; Leibniz, New Essays Concerning Human Understanding, II, xxvii, 11 (on simplicity) and IV, ix, 2 (on immediate acquaintance); Berkeley, Principles of Human Knowledge, Pt. 1, § 27. Reid later defended a view that is similar to these in many respects in Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Essay III, Ch. iv.
5. Shaftesbury, The Moralists, Pt. III, § 1; Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, IV, ix, 3 (on immediate acquaintance), II, xxiii, 15 and 22 (on the lack of simplicity), II, xxvii (on identity); on uninterruptedness, cf. II, x, 9ff. It was commonly held that the self was simple whereas material objects were not; cf. Descartes, op. cit., p. 141; Leibniz, Letter to Arnauld, 23 March 1690, in The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence (New York: 1967), p. 169; Berkeley, op. cit., Pt. I., § 1; Shaftesbury, ibid., and Reid, ibid., and the simplicity of the self was sometimes held to guarantee its invariability, cf. Descartes, op. cit., and Reid, op. cit. However Locke, Hume's more immediate target, viewed the substances (though not the identity conditions) of selves and of material objects as similar.
6. Hume speaks of the identity as strict (T253, 256), perfect (T254), and numerical (T257), and refers to uninterruptedness and invariability at T253, 254, and 255; cf. also 203.
7. Writing in 1736 Butler spoke of a "fictitious sense" of identity when discussing certain views of the self and clearly meant by it something that is not identity at all; see "Of Personal Identity," in the Works of Joseph Butler, Vol. I (Oxford: 1896), p.393. For Butler's influence on Hume cf. Treatise, (xvii).
8. This is an oversimplification since Hume thought that coherence figures in their view of material objects but not that of the self (T195). I shall ignore this, however, for it won't affect any points under discussion here (cf. f.n.T9), and Hume mentions coherence only to set it aside.
9. Since coherence is not grounded in rational processes (T197/8), it cannot supply a relevant difference. Perhaps Hume's later despair, recorded in the Appendix, of finding a satisfactory account of personal identity is based upon the recognition of a dissimilarity between the two cases, though his remark that he no longer sees the mental realm as free of the sorts of contradictions that beset our thinking about material objects seems to suggest the opposite (T633). A serious difference is suggested by

the frequent objection that Hume's account of the self as nothing but a bundle of perceptions is inconsistent with his account of the mind's activities, since the latter presupposes the existence of an enduring imagination. It seems to me, however, that this objection can be answered along roughly the lines suggested by Nelson Pike in "Hume's Bundle Theory of the Self: A Limited Defense," American Philosophical Quarterly, 4 (1967); 159-165.