



A Defense of Hume on Identity Through Time

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Hume Studies Volume XIII, Number 2 (November, 1987) 323 - 342.

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A DEFENSE OF HUME ON IDENTITY THROUGH TIME

A durable complaint against Hume is that he blatantly begs the question in his Treatise account of our acquisition of the idea of identity through time.¹ Green and Grose made the accusation in 1878; one hundred years later Stroud echoed the same accusation, its force and liveliness seemingly undiminished. I suggest that this accusation is based on a tempting but unwarranted assumption about Humean perceptions. It is unwarranted despite Price's arguments for it. When the assumption is corrected Hume is exonerated. This defense prepares the way for a new understanding of Hume's subtle and important theory of identity. Clarifying his theory is the goal; defending him is the means.

I will merely summarize the Green and Grose interpretation, saving detailed examination for Stroud's. Stroud's version seems more tightly argued for and spares one the problems of interpreting commentators from a different philosophical tradition.

Green and Grose run together Hume's account of the acquisition of the idea of identity, with his account of the application of that idea to a succession of related perceptions. This fully intended confusion can be explained by their understanding of Hume's claim that "impressions are ... perishing existences." (T 194) They assume that for Hume no perception (impression or idea) is a unity if it exists at an interval of time composed of a succession of times. Rather the perception is really a succession of perceptions. Their assumed interpretation makes Hume seem to them to beg the question as follows: To acquire the idea of identity through time is to acquire the idea of something

which is unitary and exists at a succession of times. But any impression which might give this idea is really a succession of related impressions. A succession of related impressions can convey the idea of identity only by being confused with a unitary impression which exists at a succession of times. Such confusion would be possible only for someone who already had the idea of something unitary which exists at a succession of times. So the idea of identity can be acquired only if it is already had.²

In other words, Hume claims that an impression had for a relatively long time gives the idea of identity. Any long impression is really a succession. A succession can give the idea of identity only if it is confused with something that has identity. That confusion requires the idea of identity already. So Hume begs the question.

There are gaps in this argument. But its influence has been important and its structure is clear: If we assume that perceptions are exceedingly brief, then Hume begs the question. (I will call the assumption 'the prosecution's assumption.')

Stroud's argument that Hume begs the question has the same structure, or so I will argue. The role of the prosecution's assumption is not immediately apparent, but it is a crucial role. Stroud's accusation is as follows: By Hume's definition, identity is the invariableness and uninterruptedness of an object through a supposed change in time. (T 201) However, on Hume's account of acquiring the concept of identity, the acquisition involves imagining a change in time without any variation or interruption in an object. But that just is, by definition, to imagine the object's identity through the change in time. So acquiring the concept of identity requires an act of imagination involving the

concept of identity. So, Stroud concludes, on Hume's account the concept of identity can be acquired only if it is had. Hume's account begs the question.³

I think it is usually unwise to attribute blunders to subtle thinkers. I will not do it to Hume, nor to his commentators.

I will argue that what Hume presupposes in explaining identity through time is a little different from identity through time. Thus the presupposition is not question-begging. More specifically, I will argue that Hume distinguishes three technical concepts, three ways to take up time: (i) merely occupying an interval of time, (ii) having duration for an interval of time, and (iii) being identical through an interval of time. Concept (iii) is a composite of (i) and (ii), so both are presupposed in Hume's account of (iii). But because (i) and (ii) are each distinct from (iii), neither presupposition is question begging.

Hume distinguishes these as follows: (i) entails being really a single thing -- it is a case of unity, (ii) entails being really many things -- it is a case of number, and (iii) entails being really a single thing from one perspective and being really many things from another -- it is a "medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it...." (T 201) For Hume (i) and (ii) can be instantiated but (iii) is a fiction because it entails being really one thing and really many things (i.e., really not one thing). (T 200-201) Since neither the concept of unity nor the concept of number is the composite concept of identity, Hume does not beg the question in his account of identity through time.

I will argue that Hume's accusers are prevented from recognizing these distinctions by their assumption that all perceptions are momentary, that is, exceedingly brief, that is, no longer than a temporal minimum. A more elaborate way of putting the relevant part of the prosecution's assumption is this: What would appear to be a single perception remaining in existence for a while is really a series of momentary perceptions. This assumption prevents one from distinguishing the Humean ideas needed to conceive the three different ways of taking up time mentioned above. Denying this assumption will let me make the distinctions necessary to defend Hume.

By relying on Hume's subtlety and by explaining how a commentator could overlook the subtlety, I follow the interpretive maxim against attributing blunders. This alone is enough to make the interpretation offered here better than one which has Hume begging the question. In addition my interpretation better accords with Hume's text and illuminates his theory of identity through time. Furthermore, as I argue at the end of the paper, the main subtle distinction I rely on can be independently motivated.

I

Stroud assumes with Green and Grose that perceptions (both impressions and ideas) are uniformly exceedingly brief in their existence. He thinks that contemplating a steadfast unchanging object causes a constant series of these briefly existing perceptions, viz. impressions.⁴ I disagree with this assumption. As I will show at the end of section II, the prosecution's assumption directly contradicts the following: Hume's claim that a

steadfast unchanging object produces "none but co-existent impressions" (T 36), the discussion of having a perception but not successive perceptions (T 35), the claim that the faculties of the mind can "continue" an idea (T 203), and the mention of "one constant and uninterrupted perception" (T 204). Furthermore the seeming textual support for the prosecution's assumption does not warrant it, as I will argue next. First let me consider Price's argument for the prosecution's assumption.

Price argues that (a) the fact that anything might have been a series (because it might have been interrupted) proves that it is a series, and that (b) nothing lasts longer than an instant on pain of contradiction -- viz. both having and lacking certain relational properties.⁵ But whether the assumption is a good thing to believe is a question independent of whether Hume believed it. Price gives no proof that Hume did. In fact according to Price himself Hume did not. He quotes Hume speaking of "one constant and uninterrupted perception."⁶ So Price's arguments for the prosecution's assumption do not justify using it to interpret Hume.

Nor does Hume's text. The best support for the prosecution's assumption seems to be Hume's claim at T 252 in a subordinate clause, that perceptions "...succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity." This seems to imply that a lot of perceptions go by in a short amount of time, and so the perceptions must all be very brief. I will call this the prosecution's reading. But it may well also mean that there is only an inconceivably small gap, if any, between successive perceptions: when one ceases to exist there is no delay before the coming into being of its successor. This is my reading for Hume's defense. My reading is better for two

reasons. First, consider Hume's claim that "...according as his [a man's] perceptions succeed each other with greater or less rapidity, the same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination." (T 35) Here Hume is talking about the number of perceptions that go by in a given amount of time, as far as I can tell. This would contradict the "inconceivable rapidity" clause if that clause were to be given the prosecution's reading. For that reading entails that perceptions always go by exceedingly quickly, and therefore not sometimes more quickly and other times more slowly (as Hume implies at T 35). I submit that a contradiction indicates a defect in the interpretation rather than the text. Giving the T 252 clause the sense I suggest avoids contradiction. Thus I am proposing that at T 252 Hume is calling attention to the interesting fact that there are no perceptible gaps between successive perceptions, and at T 35 he is noting that the rate of succession (i.e., the frequency) of perceptions varies. Secondly, my reading is the better one given that Hume is talking of inconceivable rapidity. Given that there are sequences of perceptions that can be accurately remembered -- i.e., can be accurately copied by an idea -- there are sequences of perceptions whose frequency can be conceived. On the other hand the 'gap' between successive perceptions is indeed inconceivable -- no idea can copy it since there is no perceptible gap.

Hume does go on to say that the perceptions "...are in a perpetual flux and movement." (T 252) But this is just to say that they "pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle..." in the mind-theater. (T 253) Actors can do these things without being exceedingly short-lived; so can perceptions. In the same section Hume says "...nor is there any single

power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment." (T 253) But here he cannot be talking about perceptions, for perceptions are not powers. He is talking about sight, hearing, imagination, etc. which are constantly subject to some new input (though not necessarily to all new input).

Hume uses phrases such as "the incessant revolutions, which we are conscious of in ourselves." (T 191) But the prosecution cannot find support here. A republic, as much as a mind, undergoes "incessant changes of its parts." (T 261) The relevant parts of a republic (i.e., its members) are not momentary, so incessant change of parts need not entail momentariness of parts.

Presumably Stroud⁷ would take the fact that perceptions are "perishing" (T 194) (generalizing from impressions which are what are mentioned in Hume's text) to support the prosecution's assumption. But the fact that perceptions are relatively short-lived entails neither that they are momentary nor that all are uniformly so. I assume that for Hume 'perishing' is in opposition to 'enduring,' the way that for us 'perishable' is in opposition to 'durable.' They are relative terms. Stroud seems to quote the phrase "momentary and fleeting," but there is no citation.⁸ I have not yet found this phrase in the Treatise. I have found "fleeting and perishing" (T 195), but there Hume is clearly referring to a certain sub-set of "internal impressions" -- i.e., those to which we are not tempted to attribute distinct and continued existence -- and saying how we regard them. And even so, the phrase does not entail that these impressions are momentary. I see no reason to attribute to Hume a special sense of 'perishing' (or 'fleeting') that makes him vulnerable

to the prosecution's accusation. It might seem that something perishing is not continued and so is momentary. Hume does use 'perishing' and 'continued' as opposites. But Hume clearly uses 'continued' as short for 'continued when no longer perceived.' (T 188) The opposite of this does not entail momentary.

Hume indeed says that "...there is no impression constant and invariable." (T 251) But it is clear from the context that he means there is none constant and invariable "thro' the whole course of our lives." (T 251) He is not asserting here that they are momentary. Also Hume does say, "'Tis impossible for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable time." (T 283) But a length of time may well not be a considerable length of time, and yet still be longer than a moment.

So to repeat, Stroud with Green and Grose thinks that contemplating a steadfast object causes (and remembering one consists of) a constant series of exceedingly briefly existing perceptions. They are exactly wrong here. As I will argue next, contemplating a steadfast unchanging object causes a single perception that takes up the same interval of time as the contemplation. How big an interval a given perception takes up depends on many things about the object and the perceiver. Some perceptions take up big intervals. Others take up small intervals. The point is that perceptions are not uniformly exceedingly brief.

II

Nonetheless perceptions do not have duration, for Hume. Although they take up intervals of time they do not have duration for those intervals. This seems to imply that perceptions both have duration

and do not have duration. To explain and remove this paradox I will appeal to Hume's account of time. But first let me give the simple exegetical argument that underlies the complexities to follow. Hume thinks that there are steadfast objects. (T 201) They take up intervals of time (otherwise they would not be steadfast). They do not have duration (as Hume explicitly says at T 37).⁹ So something can take up an interval of time without having duration, according to Hume. He never explicitly says this, but it is entailed via the simple argument by what he does say. Now for the details.

For Hume, time is the manner in which successions are arrayed. (T 36-37, 39-40) This conception involves an idiosyncratic notion of duration -- that all and only successions have it. He assumes that all successions have duration. For example a 5-note phrase played on a flute has duration because it is a succession of five notes. (T 36-37) He argues the converse: that everything with duration is a succession. He argues that the idea of duration is properly applicable only to what it can be derived from, viz. "a succession of changeable objects."¹⁰ (T 37)

Why does Hume use this strange phrase? Is he talking about qualitative or numerical change? What is it for the objects (plural) to be "changeable?" If he meant qualitative change in our sense of alteration, he would have mentioned a changeable object (singular). Since successions are what are under consideration, the 'change' in 'changeable' must be numerical change. That is, I assume that Hume is using 'change' in Samuel Johnson's second sense of the word, viz. "a succession of one thing in the place of another."¹¹ The five notes on the flute may well be qualitatively indistinguishable; that

they are five numerically distinct notes is what is important. That Hume has available such a sense of 'change' is clear from T 74: "...nor can we otherwise have any security, that the object is not chang'd [my emphasis] upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses." In this case he is envisioning numerical change without qualitative change. Given my assumption about the relevant sense of 'change,' and given that 'changeable' means "subject to change" (according to Johnson),¹² a changeable object is one which is subject to replacement by a successor. So it makes perfect (if redundant) sense for Hume to talk of "a succession of changeable objects." (T 37) The changeable objects are changeable the way tires are -- one is subject to replacement by a next. Furthermore, I gather, the word 'changeable' indicates not only that the replacements can occur, but that they tend to. This usage is preserved in the modern day phrase 'variable winds.' A wind from one direction tends to be replaced by one from another, and that by one from another, in relatively rapid succession, when the winds are variable. Tendency to relatively frequent replacement is also meant by 'changeable moods.' An advantage of my interpretation here is that it puts 'changeable' in direct opposition to 'stedfast' in the latter's literal sense. Johnson's dictionary defines 'steadfast' as "fast in place, firm; fixed" (from 'stead' plus 'fast').¹³ Something fixed in place does not tend to be replaced by a successor. In this sense it is "stedfast and unchangeable" to use Hume's phrase and my emphasis. (T 37) There does not tend to be "succession of one thing in the place of another."¹⁴ On the other hand, changeable objects are not steadfast, hence they tend to occur in

successions. So Hume is talking about numerical change only, in his discussion of duration. Thus his doctrine is that all and only successions have duration; steadfast objects explicitly do not.

But surely steadfast objects take up time. Something is not steadfast if it is quickly removed or replaced. It must be in place for a time, otherwise it would not count as fixed in place. So Hume must be implicitly allowing for a second way of taking up time in addition to having duration. Presumably each of a succession's members (if the member is not itself a succession) would take up time this second way. For instance one of the flute's notes would. Thus for Hume there are two ways to take up time: (1) the way a succession does, or (2) the way a non-succession does. Only something taking up time the first way, has duration (in Hume's technical sense of the term).

Let us make sense of this distinction as follows: Something that has duration (in Hume's sense) takes up time by occupying each of a succession of sub-intervals. Something that merely takes up time without having duration, merely occupies one whole interval. It occupies none of the individual sub-intervals. Successions occupy the succession of small intervals their members occupy; they have duration. Non-successions merely occupy their own intervals and no smaller intervals; they take up time without having duration.

I am asking the reader to distinguish a number of small intervals in succession, from the single large interval which they are parts of. In other words, distinguish a number of parts from a single whole. In other words, distinguish many things from one thing.

My suggestion is that according to Hume perceptions are such that they take up time without having duration. They can be members of successions, but are not successions themselves. In support of this contention consider Hume's claim that "A man ... strongly occupy'd with one thought, is insensible of time." (T 35) It does not matter how large an interval the thought takes up. If it is just a single thought, not a succession of thoughts, then a fortiori there is no manner in which the succession is arrayed. What the man is long occupied with does not have duration. And so he has no sense of time. As Hume states further down, "Wherever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time...." (T 35) It is clear from the context that he thinks that there are intervals when we have a perception but not successive perceptions.

There is further evidence that Hume believes in single perceptions, not just successions of them, occupying intervals of time. He says that in thinking of a steadfast object the mind merely continues an idea in existence as opposed to producing any new one. And he says that in this case the passage of time does not distinguish itself by a different perception or idea.¹⁵ (T 203) Furthermore he thinks that a steadfast object produces "none but co-existent impressions..." (T 36), therefore not successive ones. And he speaks of having "one constant and uninterrupted perception" (T 204), whereas a succession is many perceptions.

Now it might be objected here that perhaps lengthy perceptions are not necessarily successions of perceptions, but surely they are successions of some sort of temporal parts.¹⁶ Thus they have duration. But Hume specifically relies on the fact that "Every thing that enters the mind" is "in

reality" a perception. (T 190) If temporal parts of perceptions have gotten into the mind, then these parts must themselves be perceptions. So a perception that is not a succession of perceptions is not a succession of anything.

Thus a perception can take up time without having duration. How does this help in the defense of Hume against the prosecution's accusation of circularity? To see, let's review Hume's account of acquiring the concept of identity.

III

The problem is to explain how we can conceive of a single object's having duration for an interval of time. As I have noted, Hume thinks that only successions have duration. Note (and this is of crucial importance) that for Hume a succession is a single thing only in a manner of speaking. Hume emphasizes that a group is really many things. (T 30) A succession is really many objects in succession. Hence the problem: for a single object to have duration it must both be a single object and also many objects in succession. It must be just one and also many. This is contradiction, of course, and so Hume calls the idea of a single object having duration, a fiction. (T 200) But fiction or not, it is an idea we have and so there must be some way we hold together its conflicting aspects.

We hold them together by taking the object as many or one depending on perspective. We take two views of the object, that is, look at it in two ways. Looked at one way it is a succession; it has duration. Looked at another way it is one thing; it has unity. Our imagination holds together the conflicting aspects of the idea of a single thing

having duration, by taking the aspects to be the results of taking different perspectives. (T 201) There may well be problems with this account, but this is what Hume says. The idea of identity is a "medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it...." (T 201)

On the first perspective the object is taken to be located at sub-intervals (and so have duration) by being considered to be a succession (i.e., many objects in succession). Thus it is considered to have duration, at the cost of its unity. On the second perspective the object is taken to be occupying a block of time: The block consists of a succession of sub-intervals, but the object is not considered to be located at each of them; it is not considered to be a succession of many things. Rather it is considered to be a single thing. Thus it is considered a unity, at the cost of its duration. The idea of identity -- of a single object which nonetheless has duration -- is a combination of these two perspectives.

Stroud for the prosecution fixes on the second perspective in making the accusation. Hume describes the second of the two perspectives we take as follows: We imagine "a change in the time without any variation or interruption in the object." (T 201) That is just to say that we take the object not to be a succession, we take it to be unitary, despite the passage of time. We imagine a succession of intervals (perhaps by imagining some succession of other objects) and to do that is to imagine the change in time ('change' in the succession sense); all the while we imagine the single steadfast object. In other words, we have a single idea, of the steadfast object, accompanied by a succession of

ideas, of whatever objects. Stroud argues that right here Hume is committed to our having an idea of the single object with duration. But Stroud is wrong. Hume is committed at this point only to our having an idea of the single object merely occupying an interval. On the second perspective the object is not taken to exist at the various moments, but only to occupy an interval the same size as that which the succession of moments composes. It is from the first perspective that the object is taken to occupy the sub-intervals. On the second perspective the object is taken merely to occupy the whole interval. To think of the object from the second perspective requires just the sort of idea which Hume says (T 203) is used to think of a steadfast object: namely, a single continued idea. The idea cannot have duration (that is, cannot be a succession), for then it would be of something with duration. (T 37) That we can have the sort of idea this second perspective requires, follows from what I argued before: perceptions (including ideas) can take up time without having duration.

Why does the prosecution go wrong? I conjecture that it is because of their assumption about perceptions. If perceptions were momentary, then it would take a succession of them to imagine a steadfast object occupying a block of time. But this would be no different than imagining the steadfast object to be having duration. For if the idea is a succession then it can serve as an idea of duration. (T 37) But then it would not really be an idea of a steadfast object after all, because duration is not supposed to apply to steadfast objects. (T 37) So assuming perceptions are momentary removes just the resource Hume needs to give his account of the idea of identity. That resource is perceptions which take

up time without having duration. When the prosecution tries to resupply the resource, the closest they can get is successions of momentary perceptions. But these, being successions, have duration. So the prosecution cannot give a subtle enough rendering of Hume's account to prevent apparent question-begging. To try to give Hume the resource he needs, they try to let such a succession be an idea of a steadfast object. But the successiveness makes it (at best) an idea of a steadfast object with duration. So on the prosecution's interpretation the resource becomes the finished product. Hence their accusation.

Here is the upshot: Assuming that perceptions are momentary entails that any apparently sustained perception is really a succession of perceptions. So it is impossible for the prosecution to capture the structure of Hume's account. On the prosecution's interpretation, thinking of the steadfast object from the first perspective, from the second perspective, and from their combination requires in each case a number of ideas in succession. Since Hume uses the perspectives to explain the idea of identity, the prosecution's interpretation makes Hume seem to beg the question; but that is a flaw in the interpretation and not in Hume's account. On Hume's account thinking of the steadfast object from the first perspective requires a number of ideas in succession, thinking of it from the second perspective requires a single idea (plus a number of ideas of other things), and thinking of the steadfast object from the combination of perspectives requires a combination of the succession of ideas of it and the single idea of it. The second perspective is different from the first, and from

their combination. So Hume's explanation of our acquisition of the concept of identity does not assume that we have it.

Let me tie up few loose ends in order to close.

Stroud is confirmed in his assumption about perceptions by his belief that, "Of course, there is not any single, identical perception which does remain in existence. If there were, we could get the idea of identity ... just from having that perception...."¹⁷ But this is too fast. As I have argued a single perception can remain in existence. It (if it is an idea) or a copy of it (if it is an impression) can serve as an idea of unity. So we can get the idea of unity just from having that perception. But getting the idea of identity is not so simple. Hume explicitly distinguishes the idea of unity from that of identity. (T 200) We could go on to get the idea of identity from an idea of a single perception which remains in existence. Like any steadfast object, a steadfast perception could give rise to an idea of identity in the complicated way described at T 200-201 (so it is acceptable for Stroud to call such a perception both single and identical). But we would not get the idea of identity "just from having the perception" as Stroud asserts. So Stroud is confirmed in his assumption for a bad reason.

It might be objected that whereas the prosecution's interpretation relies on a bad assumption, my alternative relies on an obviously bogus distinction -- that between having duration and merely occupying an interval of time (in the senses I have attributed to Hume). But certainly this concept of merely occupying an interval can be distinguished

from this concept of having duration: The former does not entail existing at sub-intervals and the latter does.

Some might think that nothing merely occupies a whole interval or that only things that occupy the sub-intervals, occupy the whole interval. But this needs to be argued for. And it seems false, if we consider certain events. For instance it seems false that one can hold one's breath for a minute, for a second. The event of holding one's breath for a minute (as opposed to the event of holding one's breath) seems not to exist at sub-intervals of that minute. Perhaps parts of the event in question exist at the sub-intervals, but the whole seems not to. I do not claim to be settling this complex issue here; I am just showing that there really is an issue and thus that the distinction being urged is legitimate.

The objector might persist that there obviously can be no such distinction as I am making. To be located at a whole interval just is to be located at all its parts, i.e., at all its sub-intervals. But this objection plays on an ambiguity in 'all its parts.' If the phrase means 'all its parts taken together,' and we believe that the whole is the sum of its parts, then the objection says something true but unresponsive. It says that to be located at a whole interval just is to be located at the sum of its parts. To be responsive to my claims, the objection would need 'all its parts' to mean 'each part separately.' And I submit that it is not at all obvious that something located at a whole interval can properly be said to be located at each separate part of the interval. Is an hour of music located at its first minute? Some argument would be needed to say yes. Thus the objection is either unresponsive or by no means obvious.

However, regardless of the outcomes of these arguments, Hume's reliance on such distinctions makes false the prosecution's charge. Furthermore, admitting the distinctions allows much more sense to be made of Hume's account of identity through time at T 200-201. I have briefly indicated the beginnings of the resulting account, but full exegesis is a big project appropriate to another time.¹⁸

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1. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 200-201. Further references will be cited as 'T' followed by the relevant page number(s).
2. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, (London: Longmans Green, and Co., 1878), pp. 254-256.
3. Barry Stroud, Hume, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 103-104.
4. Ibid., pp. 101-103, see especially bottom p. 102.
5. H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), pp. 46-47.
6. Ibid., p. 46.
7. Stroud, p. 105.
8. Ibid.
9. The idea of duration cannot be applied to a steadfast object "without a fiction." (T 37) Thus it cannot be applied without being false. So for Hume steadfast objects do not have duration. By the interpretation I go on to defend, the fiction amounts to taking what is not a succession to be a succession.

10. Hume's argument here might be construed as saying that steadfast objects not only do not have duration, but are not in time in any sense. This construal goes too far: A steadfast object exists after some things exist and before others do. Thus it is a member of a succession (one grander than those I consider in the paper), and that places it in time.
11. Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, (London: W. Strahan, 1755), s.v. 'change'.
12. Ibid., s.v. 'changeable'.
13. Ibid., s.v. 'steadfast'.
14. Ibid., s.v. 'change'.
15. Stroud's mistaken assumption produces a misreading of this passage (T 203) and a claim to the effect that Hume cannot mean what he says. See Stroud, p. 103.
16. Price, p. 46.
17. Stroud, p. 103.
18. I thank Joseph Camp, Annette Baier, James Van Aken, Saul Traiger, George Pitcher, Mike Morris, James Ward Smith, Stewart Cohen, and a Hume Studies referee for helpful comments.