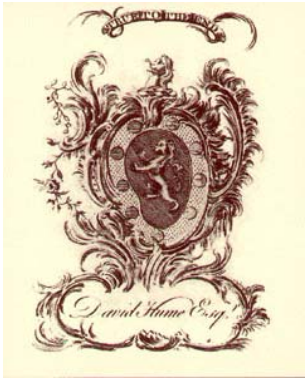

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# Humean Self-Consciousness Explained

GORDON PARK STEVENSON

Although Hume makes numerous allusions to consciousness throughout both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, he only *once* characterizes consciousness explicitly. His somewhat elliptical characterization occurs in a passage from the Appendix to the *Treatise*, wherein he boasts:

> 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. (T 635)[1]

There are some fertile claims contained in this short passage, but unfortunately, Hume doesn't adequately develop them. In general, as a number of commentators have noted,[2] Hume consistently neglects to explicate the relationship between consciousness, perception, and the self within his writings, and accordingly, both the *Treatise* and the first *Enquiry* lack the treatment of *self-consciousness* that his overall psychological theory appears to require. As James Noxon puts it, Hume takes "no notice of the self-consciousness upon which he constantly relies until he arrives at Book II."[3] Furthermore, it should be noted that the species of self-consciousness of which Hume finally comes to "take notice" in Book II itself does not seem identical to the species of self-consciousness upon which he so "constantly" relies in Book I. Thus, there lurks an intimidating explanatory gap in Hume's

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system which commentators have yet to bridge. In what follows, I try to bridge this gap by showing how Hume's accounts of reflexion, perception, and the self can be interpreted and conjoined in such a manner as to reveal a view of self-consciousness largely compatible with Hume's overall psychological project.

In attempting such a task, I take my cue—and inspiration—from Hume himself, and particularly from his suggestion at T 635 that "consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception," and that "personal identity arises from consciousness." The ensuing pages comprise an attempt to understand more fully what Hume could mean by these pithy remarks. I will argue that, *contra* those who suggest that Humean self-consciousness should be equated with the mental act of being aware of some "idea of the self," Humean self-consciousness should rather be identified with the *feeling of personal identity*, or more accurately, with the *phenomenological feelings of vivacity and facility (felt ease of transition) as they are associated intentionally with the constituent perceptions of the successive bundles that characterize the Humean self or mind*. In other words, I intend to show how self-consciousness for Hume can be said to arise from consciousness *simpliciter*. To accomplish this end I first will need to spend some time—the entire first half of the paper—considering Hume's account of consciousness itself. By developing a Humean account of consciousness as a species of *reflexion*, and by arguing at length that the phenomenological feelings of vivacity and facility that figure so prominently within Hume's psychology can both be characterized as *impressions of reflexion*, I will ultimately try to show how Humean self-consciousness—*qua* the *feeling* of personal identity—can properly be said to arise from such impressions of reflexion, or to "arise from consciousness" as Hume so aptly puts it at T 635. In the final section of the paper, a tentative effort is made to reconcile the view of self-consciousness presented in Book II of the *Treatise* (self-consciousness "as it regards our passions") with the form of self-consciousness (self-consciousness "as it regards our thought") targeted in Book I.

## I. Consciousness as "Nothing But a Reflected Thought or Perception"

**A. Consciousness in the Plural, and The Consciousness Question Broached.** Hume's identification of consciousness with *a* "reflected" thought or perception immediately presents an interpretive dilemma regarding the temporality of consciousness: is it the case that consciousness for Hume is an abiding, unitary feature of the mind—consciousness *in the singular*—or rather, that there are simply successions of transitory consciousnesses—consciousness *in the plural*—which accompany our perceptions and are mutually related in some fashion? Given Hume's strong reservations about

the mind's ability to perceive any sort of unchanging substance ("the impressions of reflexion... [can't] possibly represent a substance" [T 16]), and his conviction that "there is no impression constant and invariable" (T 251) to be found within the bundle of perceptions that constitutes the mind or self,[4] it seems clear that Hume has in mind the latter notion of consciousness in the plural at T 635 and throughout the *Treatise*.

So, a singular instance of consciousness is identical to some sort of "reflected thought or perception," and if we take Hume's choice of the word "reflected" quite seriously, it follows that Hume is here hinting that consciousness is a species of *reflexion*. Given that reflexive ideas must have reflexive impressions as their source (T 8), our clarificatory reformulation of T 635 cashes out as the following: an instance of Humean consciousness is equivalent to an *impression of reflexion* (or its subsequent idea-copy). This characterization of consciousness as some species of impression appears to occur explicitly at T 318 where Hume mentions the existence of the "*impression or consciousness* of our own person." (my emphasis) The *Consciousness Question* now rears its head: *which reflexive impressions or ideas, if any, could legitimately be said to constitute consciousness (in the plural) for Hume?* In the remainder of Section I, I will try to provide an answer to this question that can be reconciled with the rest of Hume's theory of consciousness and perception as it is presented in the *Treatise*. My answer will be that vivacity and facility, as species of reflexive impressions, are the likeliest candidates for Humean acts of consciousness.

**B. Impressions of Reflexion and Humean Intentionality.** Hume's treatment of *reflexion* in Book I of the *Treatise* unfortunately lacks the consistency and rigor of his account of sensation. At times, his writing suggests a simple synonymy between reflexion and *reason*[5] while in numerous other passages he lists the "passions, desires, and emotions" (T 8)[6] as the *sole* species of *reflexion* which "deserve our attention," completely neglecting to include *consciousness* within its purview. Hume's clearest discussion of reflexion itself occurs at T 7–8 where he writes:

> Impressions may be divided into two kinds, those of SENSATION and those of REFLEXION. The first kind arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived in a great measure from our ideas, and that in the following order. An impression first strikes upon the senses.... Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind...and this we call an idea. This idea...when it returns upon the soul, produces new impressions...which may properly be called *impressions of reflexion*.... [Thus] the impressions of reflexion are only antecedent to their corresponding ideas; but posterior to those of sensation, and deriv'd from them. (my emphasis; see also T 275)

This passage clearly shows that, as Daniel Flage puts it, for Hume "ideas are historical in their orientation: they *represent* what has occurred in the mind."[7] Wherein does this "representationality" reside? Given our perception of a constant conjunction, an exact resemblance, and a temporal contiguity among ideas and impressions (such that impressions are always perceived to temporally precede their corresponding idea-copies), ideas are *taken by the mind* to *represent* their founding impressions; "ideas always represent their objects or impressions" (T 157; see also T 96). Clearly, this representational status is not something *intrinsic* to ideas themselves; "to form the idea of an object, and to form an idea simply is the same thing; *the reference of the idea to an object being an extraneous denomination, of which in itself it bears no mark or character*" (T 20, my emphasis).[8] They are *taken* to be representations of sense impressions because of a combination of their immediately *perceived* resemblance and temporal contiguity,[9] and their "constant conjunction" (see T 4–5), which is itself undergirded by the *felt* ease of transition from impression to idea (*facility* or the "determination" or "propensity" of the mind to pass smoothly from one to the other) and the *felt* degree of vivacity "communicated" to the idea by the impression (see T 98ff.).

This construal of the representation process is further evidenced by Hume's discussion of abstract ideas wherein he concludes that "some ideas are particular in their nature, but *general* in their representation" (T 22). They are general in their representation simply because they are customarily felt to be smoothly associated with myriad other perceptions which they resemble in some aspect or another. Now, when we become aware of an idea whose founding memory impression we have *forgotten*, then accordingly "this idea is not here consider'd, as the *representation* of any absent object, but as a real perception in the mind, of which we are intimately conscious" (T 106, my emphasis).[10] There is no impression which is *felt* to be associated causally with this idea, therefore there is no evidence of representationality. The case is exactly analogous with *sensory impressions* themselves; since their "ultimate cause is...perfectly inexplicable by human reason" or the senses themselves, "'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" (T 84). For this reason, sensory impressions cannot *strictly* be *taken to be representational.* They "never give us the least intimation of anything beyond" (T 189).[11] They are "original existences."

The story is a bit different regarding impressions of *reflexion*. Impressions of reflexion are perceived temporally to succeed sensory ideas and they accordingly become *causally* related to impressions of sensation and their idea-copies. However, although they are causally related to antecedent ideas in a way analogous to the aforementioned causal relation felt to exist

between sensory impressions and ideas, reflexive impressions constitute *reactions* to their antecedent ideas more than mirror-like representations. This point becomes clearer if one bears in mind some characteristic Humean examples of reflexive impressions, namely those of "aversion, hope, and fear" (T 8). While these can surely be causally related to their antecedent "idea of pleasure or pain," they can't be said to *represent* that idea in exactly the same way that sensory ideas are taken to represent objects. They rather seem to function as primitive *intentional attitudes* towards objects insofar as the mind takes them to be *directed* to their idea-objects without their resembling them. In other words, they appear to the imagination (i.e., extraneously) as hopes *that* or fears *of* certain objects.[12] Given that "we infer a cause immediately from its effect" and that "this inference is not only a true species of reasoning, but the strongest of all others" (T 97n), it follows that we take the reflexive impression to be a natural sign of sorts which in effect "points" causally toward the idea of which it is a reflexion. In this manner, impressions of reflexion *seemingly* assert themselves more as intentional *actions* of the mind than as the mere *objects* of perception which Hume portrays sensory impressions and ideas to be. This point will become important a bit later in the discussion when I clarify the relationship between *mental actions* and *phenomenological feelings* within Hume's theory of consciousness.

At present it is sufficient to realize, *contra* Husserl, who at one point claimed that Hume's "sensualism...blinded him to the whole sphere of intentionality, of 'consciousness of'," [13] that the Humean elements of perception allow for the possibility of representationality and intentionality at a primitive level primarily via the relation of cause and effect. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this is a form of intentionality which is not limited to human understanding but is available to "brutes" as well. Hume's conviction that the applicability of his associationist theory of consciousness to the rest of the animal world furnishes a "touchstone, by which we may try every system in this species of philosophy" (T 176) *cannot* go ignored by the commentator.[14]

**C. Vivacity as an Impression of Reflexion.** Having discussed the manner whereby impressions of reflexion come into existence and the process by which the mind accords them some degree of intentionality, it remains to consider some specific kinds of reflexive impressions in order to determine which—if any—of these might properly be treated as acts of consciousness within Hume's system. Let's begin by considering Hume's account of *vivacity*, or belief. In the Appendix, Hume presents a nice summary of his account of vivacity, conceding that

> 'tis evident, that belief consists not in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their *feeling to*

> *the mind*.... And in philosophy we can go no farther, than assert, that it is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more force and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; infixes them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of all our actions. (T 629, first emphasis mine)

Belief is thus constituted phenomenologically by an internal "operation of the mind" (T 629). It is a primitive form of mental act attributable to non-human animals, too.

In several other passages throughout Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume emphasizes the point that "vivacity...alone distinguishes [perceptions of the memory and senses] *from* [ideas of] the imagination" (T 86; see also T 98–106). Given Hume's subsumption of a number of different *descriptive qualities* under the rubric of vivacity (e.g., "force," "solidity," "firmness," "steadiness," "assent," "strength," "liveliness," etc.), it appears *either* (a) that the term denotes a *collection* of several *de facto* indistinguishable (or imprecisely distinguishable) phenomenological qualities *or* (b) that there are simply a *variety* of phenomenological qualities within consciousness which can't reasonably be taxonomized along the single axis of "vivacity."[15] While it matters little for this discussion which possibility actually holds—the essential point being that we are here dealing with phenomenological feelings *of a kind* with vivacity—the *latter* scenario in particular appears to be supported by T 636, where Hume states that "there are other differences among ideas, which cannot properly be comprehended under these terms [force and vivacity]." His intriguing discussion of the interaction between vivacity and memory in an absolutely crucial passage from T 106 perhaps serves to accentuate the likelihood of such "other differences":

> 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. When the memory offers an idea of this, and *represents it as past*, 'tis easily conceiv'd how that idea may have more vigour and firmness, than when we think of a past thought, of which we have no remembrance. (first and final emphases mine)[16]

I submit that the susceptibility of the mental action targeted in this passage to *idea-copying* within memory strongly suggests that it originally manifests itself as an *impression*, and given that "the phaenomenon of belief...is merely internal" (T 102) and an "operation of the mind" (T 629), it seems natural to

assume at least *this* action of the mind to be an impression of *reflexion* rather than an impression of sensation. And this action of the mind, given its correlation with "vigour and firmness," is clearly *of a kind* with—or is a *species* of—vivacity. So, it would appear defensible to claim that vivacity is *both* a reflexive impression and an action of the mind, and furthermore, that vivacity figures prominently in Hume's explanation of how the memory operates.

In several other passages, Hume characterizes vivacity as "an *act of the mind* arising from custom,"(T 114, my emphasis) and additionally, as the "*quality*, by which the mind enlivens some ideas beyond others" (T 265, my emphasis) and the "quality...with which the mind reflects upon [a perception]" (T 106). Furthermore, Hume's claim at T 61 that "wherever the *actions of the mind* in forming any two ideas are *the same or resembling*, we are very apt to confound these ideas" (my emphasis) intimates that *actions of the mind* can function like perceptions—that is, that the mind can be conscious *of* its own actions and thus be *self-reflective. Only if such actions of the mind were reflexive impressions which were accordingly susceptible to idea-copying would the relations of identity or resemblance be properly applicable to them, and clearly such relations must be applicable to any actions of the mind if such actions are to function as elements within Hume's associationist psychology.*

Such considerations demonstrate vivacity to be simultaneously a reflexive impression, an action, and a quality. Given that "all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness" (T 190, my emphasis), that the "mind can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of perception," (T 456) and that "*every impression, external and internal*...[is] originally on the same footing; and ...whatever other differences we may observe among them, they appear, all of them, in their true colors, as impressions or perceptions" (T 190, my emphasis), it is clear that Hume also regards vivacity as a *perception* of the mind.

For Hume, *phenomenological feelings* involve features of both actions and qualities, for as I have suggested above, reflexions of impression *function* like primitive intentional attitudes, as *felt re*actions of the mind to the objects of perception toward which they are causally "directed."[18] This *intentionality* of belief is nicely suggested by Hume when he writes that "the idea of an object is an essential part of the belief of it, but not the whole" (T 94). The phenomenological feelings associated with vivacity comprise the other "part" of the whole. Vivacity is a *natural* feature of the mind felt to be "conjoined" with perceptions whereof we are *conscious*.[19] Admittedly, due to the consciousness-dulling effects of custom, it is quite often rather *imperceptibly* conjoined with our perceptions, and this conjunction is achieved simply via the causal process of intentionality outlined in section IB. It also appears that in the realm of subjective phenomenological

inquiry, the cause(s) underlying this conjunction must remain inexplicable and can be safely bracketed out. We simply *find vivacity to be conjoined with the perceptions whereof we are conscious*, and in this way it is perhaps akin to a *phenomenological brute fact*. As Wayne Waxman puts it, "Hume supposes us to be aware of the feeling of vivacity/verisimilitude simply in being aware at all; it is an *original* quality of our consciousness of perceptions...."[20]

While in everyday life we can perhaps never *separate* in our imaginations a given idea from the degree of vivacity which we associate with it, if Hume's psychology is to offer an adequate account of memory (and Hume implies that it does at T 106) then actions of the mind like the vivacity-related *je-ne-scai-quoi* feeling of T 106 must be at least *theoretically* distinguishable from their intended perception-objects. And granted that an adequate psychology in general must proffer some account of how the *memory*—a crucial faculty of the human mind—operates, the adequacy of Hume's *overall* psychological project accordingly demands the present treatment of vivacity, unless there is some other theoretical manner by which vivacity can be adequately distinguished and separated from other things in the mind without interpreting vivacity itself to be a (distinct) perception. The only other option that appears to fit this bill is one that involves treating vivacity as separable from perceptions in the mind purely via a *distinction of reason*.[21] But by denying vivacity the capacity to be truly distinct from other elements of the mind, such an alternative account does not really fit the bill, since it is not able to offer an account of how memory functions, and hence does not jibe well with Hume's discussion at T 106 of the vivacity-related *je-ne-scai-quoi* feeling. Additionally, how such a "distinction of reason" is even possible within the constraints of Hume's associationist system is a question that has never been adequately answered, and hence, wheeling in a "distinction of reason" in order to clarify the present discussion of consciousness as reflexion would not prove very helpful.

Let us return to the above passage from T 106 in order once again to view *memory* in light of the present conceptualization of vivacity. Previously, *representation* was revealed to be undergirded simply by the perceived and felt causal association of two perceptions which in effect provides the necessary condition for that designation to be deemed applicable. So, for the memory to represent the idea of this *action of the mind* as *past*, one of two situations must occur: either (1) the idea of a particular act of the mind is felt to be causally associated with some phenomenological feeling (reflexive impression or its idea-copy) of *pastness* (which would presumably, like other species of vivacity, exhibit *degrees* and thus be capable of representing different basic temporal locations within the past); or (2) this idea is associated with another idea (or chain thereof) which in turn is associated with this variety of the vivacity-feeling.

Hume's account, if it is to be plausible, appears to require the potential presence of such a past-quality in the mind if proper remembrances are to occur. The presence of vivacity in the sense of "degree of immediate consciousness associated with an idea" or "degree of attention-fixing power" (formulations which I think capture the essence of vivacity better than those in terms of "force" or "vigour") is enough to enable us to distinguish impressions from ideas and thus perceptions of the memory from those of the imagination—fact from fiction—but *by itself* it is inadequate at enabling us to distinguish *past* ideas or fictions from *past* impressions. Thus, it appears that there must be a phenomenological feeling of "pastness" which *may or may not* be suitably subsumed under the category of "vivacity," but which nevertheless constitutes an additional *dimension* of consciousness. As Flage has put it, "as impressions of reflection 'force and vivacity' function fundamentally as the basis for the *differentiation* of cognitive states."[22] If he were to add that there must be *several* species of such impressions, then he would here be in exact concurrence with my account thus far.

**D. Hume vs. Hume on the Status of Vivacity as an Impression of Reflexion.** Before examining the phenomenological feeling of *facility* in a similar light as vivacity, I must address Hume's *denial* in the *Treatise* that vivacity is indeed a reflexive impression *distinct* from its idea-object. If it proves to be a convincing argument then my account of vivacity as an impression of reflexion that represents or rather, intends (i.e., is causally associated with) its idea-source will be greatly challenged. However, in the next few paragraphs I will show (a) that his argument is not at all strong and (b) that, *pace* Flage, Hume seemed to realize this in the first *Enquiry* where he more explicitly admits belief to be an impression "annex'd" to an idea.

Hume's most sustained critique of the position that belief is a species of reflexive impression occurs in the Appendix at T 623–627 after he has shown that belief cannot consist of an additional distinct *idea* "annex'd" to the object-idea.[23] His argument at T 625–626 is as follows: (1) In *most* cases, we are not *aware* of any *impressions* distinct from the idea-objects of belief, and even though we do on occasion experience a "feeling distinct and separate from the conception," for the most part the idea and feeling seem "immediate"; (2) there is no need to "multiply suppositions without necessity";[24] and (3) we "can explain the *causes* of the firm conception, but not those of any separate impression."[25] These points are a bit weak. First, objection (1) demonstrates little in itself. The case which Hume *admits* to be an *exception* to his position, namely the scenario whereby "the mind has been agitated with doubts and difficulties; and afterwards, upon taking the object in a new point of view, or being presented with a new argument, fixes and reposes itself in one settled conclusion or belief," (T 625) is surely not as rare or singular as Hume would have us believe.

Indeed, accounting for change in belief of an idea over time might be considered a touchstone for Hume's associationist psychology, and it seems that only by regarding the *feeling* of belief as a reflexive impression in *some sense* "distinct...from the conception" does Hume allow himself the theoretical resources needed to account for the flexible, changing nature of belief. To propose the presence of a "separate" feeling in one instance, and a merely indistinguishable one in other instances is to sacrifice the overall economy of the theory;[26] as far as multiplying entities is concerned, it would appear better to assume that there is a distinguishable feeling there *all along* of whose distinctness we are not always keenly aware or capable of properly delineating. This would obviate the need to posit any mysterious, causally inexplicable "feelings." As for Hume's contention that we are often unaware of impressions *as such*, I would respond by admitting that while the phenomenological feeling that constitutes vivacity is certainly not as "conspicuous" as the feeling associated with many of the passions, we nevertheless *can* distinguish the feeling attending fact from fancy, and when we are unable to do so we can defer to Humean theoretical concerns which appear to entail that the feeling of vivacity is a reflexive impression at least theoretically distinct from any other perception. Only by making this move can we understand the possibility of distinguishing varying *degrees* of vivacity from one another or distinguishing vivacity from facility (or other species of reflexive feelings). If we refuse to consider vivacity thusly, then we are left without the resources to explain how the memory is capable of making an "idea" of the *je-ne-scai-quoi* feeling and representing it as past, and this would seem to make Hume's theory of consciousness seriously inadequate.

It appears that Hume's second and third objections (2 and 3 respectively) are equally problematic. His desire not to "multiply suppositions without necessity" should *not* be allowed to override his presumed goal of developing an *adequate* associationist theory of mind, especially *given that he* admits *belief to be a* distinct feeling *in situations wherein the degree of belief one feels toward a particular idea has changed.* Regarding objection (3), I heartily concur with Flage's analysis that

> on his own principles, the claim that 'We can explain the causes of the firm conception but not those of any separate impression' is *false*, unless it is limited to impressions of sensation (cf. T 84). *Giving such explanations is precisely what he does throughout his discussion of impressions of reflection.* Thus, there is little reason to accept his conclusion that 'force and vivacity' are properties of impressions and ideas rather than impressions of reflection that are merely 'annex'd' to impressions and ideas. At best, his arguments show that 'force and vivacity' cannot be deemed impressions of *sensation*.[27]

Interestingly, as Flage further suggests, Hume seems to have noticed the weakness of these arguments by the time of the *Enquiry*, and in that work he reinstates the view most consistent with the rest of his theory of consciousness: that vivacity is but a species of reflexion, a reflexive impression or idea.[28] For example, Hume writes there that "the difference between fiction and belief lies in some *sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former*, and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure."[29] The Hume of the *Enquiry* thus seems to give his approval to the account of vivacity developed here thus far, and unless otherwise distinct reflexive perceptions can become "annex'd" to their intended idea-objects in such a way as to truly *merge* with them and lose their former distinctness, then we must acknowledge that they do indeed remain distinct in principle from their intended idea-objects.

**E. Facility as Another Species of Reflexive Impression.** Before finally taking stock of where *consciousness* fits into this discussion of vivacity and reflexion, we must briefly examine *facility*, the *feeling* of "easy" or "smooth" transition among related[30] perceptions normally accompanying our stream of associations. This is another principal *phenomenological feeling* characteristic of our mental activity (and feelings of necessary connection in particular), and we should examine it in the same light as we have viewed vivacity. In other words, the present task is that of showing how facility is *of a kind* with vivacity, and thus a reflexive impression, a feeling, a quality, an action, and a perception (or at least, a perception-like object of consciousness). At T 205 when Hume writes that the "smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of...resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity" he is describing this quality of facility. He also in part targets this phenomenological feeling amidst his discussion of the idea of necessity at T 165–166, where he claims:

> The idea of necessity arises from some impression. There is no impression convey'd by our senses, which can give rise to that idea. It must, therefore, be deriv'd from some internal impression, or *impression of reflexion*. There is no internal impression, which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendent.... [And] this customary transition is, therefore, the same with the power and necessity; which are consequently qualities of perceptions, not of objects, and are internally felt by the soul, and not perceiv'd externally in bodies. (my emphasis)[31]

In the section entitled "Of Personal Identity," he distills his treatment of facility a bit more, writing:

> That *action* of the imagination, by which we consider the uninterrupted and invariable object, and that by which we *reflect* on the succession of related objects, are almost the same to the *feeling*.... The relation facilitates the transition of the mind from one object to another, and renders its passage as smooth as if it contemplated one continu'd object. (T 253–254, my emphases)

Clearly, this feeling is instrumental in leading us to attribute *falsely* the notion of *identity* to many objects. Hume underscores this at T 255 where he writes that

> as the relation of parts, which leads us into this mistake, is really nothing but a *quality*, which produces an association of ideas, and an *easy transition* of the imagination from one to another, it can only be from the resemblance, which this act of *the mind* bears to that, by which we contemplate one continu'd object, that the error arises.[32]

I submit that the above passages portray facility, like vivacity, to be simultaneously a feeling, a quality, and an act of the mind. Further, if facility as an act of the mind is susceptible to the relation of resemblance (*vis-à-vis* other mental acts) it is apparent that it is capable of being idea-copied, and this possibility—in addition to Hume's characterization of facility as an action "by which we reflect on the succession of related objects"—marks its source as an *impression of reflexion.*

F. **Answering the Consciousness Question.** So we now must return to the question which spurred this entire interpretive foray into Hume's theory of consciousness: *which reflexive impressions, if any, could legitimately be said to constitute consciousness (in the plural) for Hume?* I think that the reflexive impressions of vivacity (which perhaps includes the "pastness feeling" within its purview) and *facility* are the most qualified ones for the job, and not the "passions, desires, and emotions" (T 8).[33] Thus, *there are at least*[34] *two species of consciousness, the reflexive impressions of vivacity and facility, which often (but not always) follow in the wake of our perceptions, and which, due to their causal associations with them, are taken to represent or rather* intend *these various perception-objects. Additionally, given that idea-copies can be made of these reflexive impressions (see above and T 106, T 61), it appears that these bare instances of consciousness can themselves be represented or intended and thus further reflected upon by higher-order acts of the mind.*[35]

Given that facility, like vivacity, constitutes a *species of consciousness,* Hume's claim that "the thought alone finds personal identity, when *reflecting* on the train of past perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are *felt* to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other" (T 635,

my emphases) and his heretofore elliptical comment that "personal identity *arises* from consciousness" (T 635) are rendered more intelligible via my interpretation of Hume's account of consciousness as reflexion in Book I of the *Treatise*. Since facility is a species of consciousness, a *feeling* engendered by an act of *reflexion* targeting various perceptions of the mind as they *successively* occur, personal identity can be said to "arise from consciousness" insofar as the *feeling* of personal identity can be said to arise from the reflexive impression of facility, or as I will put it further subsequently, insofar as *self-consciousness* ("as it concerns our thought") can be said to arise from the reflexive impressions of vivacity and facility working in concert. By treating self-consciousness for Hume as the *feeling of personal identity* which we share in principle with "brutes," Humean self-consciousness can truly be viewed as "arising" from consciousness simpliciter in some fashion.

In the remainder of Section I, I will defend my account against some potential objections regarding the incompatibility of my interpretation of Hume's account of consciousness as reflexion with (a) his seeming claims regarding the apparent "immediacy" of consciousness and (b) his own *separability principle*. I conclude the section by briefly defending my interpretation of Humean consciousness *vis-à-vis* the quite different view of Humean consciousness which Wayne Waxman has proposed.

**G. The Problem of "Pre-reflective" Consciousness.** According to my interpretation, acts of reflexive consciousness are posterior to sensory perceptions; *we are not always conscious of perceptions qua objects of consciousness*. Hume suggests as much when he claims that, at times, "(t)he custom [of causal association often] operates *before* we have time for reflexion (T 104, my emphasis),[36] and that "belief is an act of the mind *arising* from custom" (T 114, my emphasis). But how do we reconcile these points with Hume's oft-repeated claims pertaining to the *immediacy* of consciousness? Examples of such claims can be found at T 212 where he writes that the "only existences of which we are certain, are perceptions, which being *immediately present to us by consciousness*, command our strongest assent..." (my emphasis); at T 624–625 where he writes that "impressions...are immediately present to us" and that the view of belief as a distinct impression is "contrary to...our *immediate consciousness*" (my emphasis); and at T 265, where he makes the interesting remark that without vivacity, "we cou'd only admit of those perceptions, which are immediately present to our consciousness."

Regarding Hume's claim at T 212 that perceptions are "immediately present to us by consciousness...[and] command our strongest assent..." we can interpret "assent" already to involve vivacity and thus reflexion. However, this does not remove the temporal problem that his choice of words ("immediately present") presents. We might conclude that in this instance—and in similar such instances throughout the *Treatise*—Hume is not exhibiting the utmost degree of precision, and that it would be more

felicitous to say that perceptions feel *as if they were* immediately present to consciousness. Nevertheless, his apparent claim at T 265 that without vivacity, we could still "admit of those perceptions, which are immediately present to our consciousness" appears to pose a problem, namely that there can be *consciousness without reflexion*, or *pre-reflexive consciousness*. And this wouldn't sit too well with an account of consciousness as "nothing but a reflected thought or perception" (T 635).

Perhaps the present difficulty of perceptions *non-reflexively* being "present to consciousness," can be removed simply by interpreting "present to consciousness" as meaning "*potentially* functioning as an intended *object of consciousness*." However, I think we have to dig deeper to get to the underlying problem here. There can be some reconciliation if we permit ourselves to distinguish *perceiving* from *being conscious of*. For Hume, the *act* of perceiving appears to be primitive, inseparable from and thus immanent to the object of perception. On this account, there could be no instance of perceiving without a correlative *object* of perception, and *vice versa*. This is partly evinced by Hume's example at T 634 of an oyster whose (simple) "mind...[has] only one perception, as of thirst or hunger." He asks us to "[c]onsider it in that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that perception?" The term "perception" here appears to denote either an inseparable conglomeration, a unity, or a conflation of *act* and *object*; "all actions and sensations of the mind" are directly *known* by us and thus "appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear" (T 190). Perhaps it is only insofar as they engender or are transformed into *idea-copies* that acts of the mind (i.e., impressions) properly become objects capable of being intended.

But Hume is unclear on this; he considers *both* impressions and ideas to be perceptions, and he considers perceptions on the whole to be the *objects* of consciousness, the sole such objects. *Contra* some interpretations of Hume's separability principle, I think the oyster example shows that when Hume is considering a perception "loosen'd" from the *bundle*, he does not have in mind an *unperceived* perception. The *oyster* is certainly perceiving the hunger or thirst, but that is *all* it is perceiving. And this act of perceiving and its object constitute the "one perception" (T 634). *Acts of perception are as immediately present to us as are their correlative objects*. These considerations suggest that, in order to solve resolutely the problem with T 265, we have two available options: either we designate the amalgam of perceptional act and object as a form of *pre-reflexive* consciousness, or we simply assert that Hume has conflated *perception* with *consciousness* (and *vice versa*) at various points in the *Treatise*. Take your pick.[37]

Given that "the present situation of the person is always that of the imagination" (T 430), it appears that, *pace* my interpretive account, *our* view of the world is always constituted in and through acts of consciousness.[38]

The world of *pre-reflective immediate consciousness* is really only *theorized* by the philosopher; we as (experiential and phenomenological) *selves* seldom if ever experience this state wherein "there can be no ego, no subjectivity, nothing over and above the flux of perceptions itself...."[39] Regardless, it is certain that sensory perception *pre-dates* reflexive consciousness and comprises merely a *necessary*—and not a *sufficient*—condition for its presence. Hence, when I speak hereafter of an instance of consciousness as a perception, I am speaking loosely, like Hume, for whom everything "present" to the mind, *including actions of the mind*, is dubbed a "perception."

Since, as I have pointed out above, impressions of sensation cannot —strictly speaking—be taken to represent any existence beyond them,[40] they cannot (*internally*) be determined to be exclusively *either* actions *or* objects *simpliciter* for Hume. They are the primitive elements of perception—and thus consciousness—and are conceived as act/object conglomerations. However, the case with *consciousness as reflexion* is different. Phenomenological acts of consciousness like vivacity and facility *are not* such primitive elements; their causal ancestry can be traced, and thus they can properly be deemed intentional. While for Hume, there can be no *unperceived* perceptions, there *can* be perceptions which are not intended by any reflexive act of consciousness; our daily life is perhaps filled more with perceptions than it is with *apperceptions*. However, once impressions of either sensation or reflexion become transformed into ideas, they *both* become proper objects of intention. In this way, reflexive acts of consciousness are capable of being transformed into perceptions upon which the mind can operate. If they were incapable of becoming perceptions, then we could have no memory (T 106) or higher-order reflexive consciousness of them as such (i.e., consciousness *of* our apperceptions). And that would leave us with lesser mental capacities than we appear to have.

**H. Soothing Any Lingering Separability Anxieties.** I think that the above considerations go a long way toward answering any *separability* objections that one might have regarding the present account of Humean consciousness as reflexion. In their most basic form, such objections run something like this: by construing acts of consciousness as *reflexive impressions*, we treat them as *perceptions*,[41] "entities" which Hume has emphatically claimed throughout the *Treatise* to be "separable from each other" (T 79) and to be "consider'd as separately existent...[having] no need of any thing else to support their existence" (T 233). Now, it should be reiterated that on my interpretation of Hume's account of perception, he amalgamates act and object. Therefore, when he states that perceptions can be considered "separately existent" he is in effect saying *perceptions of objects* (as an act/object amalgam) can conceptually or logically be separated from the complex bundle that constitutes the human mind. For example, *feelings of pain*—not unfelt pains—can be separated from the bundle *by the imagination*.

The separability principle is Hume's effort at demarcating the realm of *the logically—and thus imaginatively—possible* from the stance of phenomenological psychology, *not* necessarily the ontologically possible.[42] *That* is intimated by the numerous passages wherein Hume expresses a belief in some sort of mind-body interaction via a causal association of bodily parts and perceptions, and hence a sort of ontological connection between perceptions and bodily parts. For example, he writes at T 211 that "we clearly perceive, that all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits" and at T 248 that "every one may perceive, that the different dispositions of his body change his thoughts and sentiments." Such passages suggest Hume to have felt and perceived a strong causal dependence of perceptions on bodies. Thus, although Hume is seemingly not a materialist,[43] he is clearly no pure phenomenalist either. Regardless, we would do well not to misconstrue his separability principle as necessarily concerning ontology. Hume's methodology in Book I of the *Treatise* is almost purely *phenomenological*. His objective is to "account for our *consciousness* of a natural and interpersonal realm (the world of judgment of T 108) *entirely in terms of private perceptual contents and psychological associative propensities*."[44]

Hume's separability principle thus serves to underscore his belief that we neither perceive nor conceive any *necessary* phenomenological connections among the perceptions that constitute the mind. And, on my interpretation, this includes reflexive acts of consciousness. While consciousnesses are indeed *taken* to be *essentially* consciousnesses *of*, they are *not inherently intentional*; "every impression, external and internal, passions, affections, sensations, pains and pleasures, are originally on the same footing..." (T 190). To be in strict compliance with his separability principle, Hume would perforce need to suppose reflexive ideas of consciousness to be "consider'd as separately existent," which would seem to require an imaginative stretch. Since the reflexive impressions of vivacity and facility which *normally* accompany all our present and actively remembered perceptions[45] can be idea-copied and stored in memory, it is certainly possible in principle for us to recall these feelings alone, and thus to *feel* them in isolation from all other perceptions. The fact is, unlike non-reflexive impressions and ideas which we on occasion seem to perceive pre-reflexively, we never *as a matter of fact* seem to experience the reflexive feelings of vivacity and facility in isolation from other perceptions.[46]

**I. Summary and Reply to Waxman.** I think that we can glean a final insight from the above discussion: on my reading, Hume would clearly need to make a choice about whether to: (1) accept *explicitly* the interpretive story about consciousness as reflexion that I have developed above—and which he himself gestures at in the Appendix and appears to accept somewhat openly in the *Enquiry*—and concede that there might exist some problems regarding

its concordance with his separability principle[47]; *or* (2) view consciousness *not* as a species of *reflexion, contra* much of what his own writing throughout the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* implies, but rather as some *unexplainable mental phenomenon*. If he chooses (1) he primarily has to consider some of the implications of his separability principle. If he chooses (2), he forfeits (*inter alia*) any account of memory (T 106) and higher-order cognitive activity which, as I have suggested, could not be accounted for within Hume's system were vivacity not an impression of reflexion distinct and separable from the perceptions with which it is associated—and, in general, a great deal of the unity and explanatory adequacy of his casual account of perception and consciousness. As I have tried to argue, the choice should be clear.

However, according to Wayne Waxman, the two options for Hume I have just listed comprise a false dichotomy.[48] Waxman has his own interpretation of Hume's theory of consciousness, one which I think merits serious consideration but which, alas, can only be bought at a very high interpretive cost, a cost higher than that of my own interpretive story. Let me explain.

According to Waxman, Hume has a third option, namely that of admitting into his associationist psychology a kind of mental entity distinct from those of impressions and ideas, a form of *affect* immanent to (and hence *inseparable* from) perception-contemplating acts of consciousness. Waxman treats vivacity and facility as two species of such *affect*, claiming that this interpretive move allows him to account for the "affective nature of facility and vivacity without going to the extreme of equating them with impressions of reflexion."[49] In general, Waxman insists upon a sharp distinction between *acts* and *affects* in Hume's system, denying consciousness as such to constitute an act or perception of the mind. Waxman thinks that this act/affect distinction is "all-important to developing an adequate, comprehensive interpretation of Hume,"[50] and that in general Hume's account would be "crippled" without it.

An extended summary of Waxman's own defense of this interpretive maneuver is not possible in the present context, but I think that the general motivation behind his approach is rooted in a concern that by treating Humean consciousness (as I have done above) as involving various species of *impressions of reflexion* one faces some serious *separability* objections, like the ones I considered above and to which I responded in section IH. I suspect that in Waxman's eyes, an approach like mine is, for separability reasons, somewhat of an interpretive dead-end.

However, I think Waxman's interpretive proposal runs into some serious problems of its own, because his account, which hinges upon a distinction between acts and affects which Hume himself never once makes and which posits a third category of mental entity which Hume never once

countenances explicitly, cannot coherently explain (within the constraints of Hume's associationist psychology) the activity of *memory* for Hume, and in general cannot explain how acts of consciousness (e.g., the *je-ne-scai-quoi* feeling of T 106) are susceptible to being idea-copied as Hume explicitly states them to be. If we are to hold that consciousness is not characterizable as a species of Humean perception, then, keeping in mind Hume's dictum that the "mind can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of perception" (T 456), we are forced to conclude that consciousness is simply not explainable given the (minimal) resources of Hume's associationist psychology. We might then follow Waxman's lead by simply adding a third kind of mental entity to Hume's mental ontology, but before doing so we would need to accept the fact that this maneuver in turn would require of us a new account of how such a third kind of mental entity is to interact causally with impressions and ideas, and how idea-copies of such non-perceptual phenomenological affects are to be produced. And, given that Waxman has not provided us with a positive account of these things, I submit that the interpretive cost of his approach seems a bit too dear.

## II. Humean Self-consciousness Explained

**A. Vivacity, Facility, and Humean Self-consciousness.** In the previous sections, I developed and defended Hume's embryonic claim at T 635 that the wellspring of *consciousness* (in the plural) is *reflexion*. I proposed that *vivacity* and *facility*, as two species of reflexive impressions which are simultaneously *phenomenological feelings, actions, qualities,* and thus *perceptions* of the Humean mind, are the likeliest candidates for acts-of-consciousness within Hume's system. They are introspectible feelings which causally follow on the heels of sensory ideas and which can themselves be copied as reflexive ideas that are thereafter capable of being stored by the memory and *represented* as *past* via their association with "pastness" feelings (T 106), feelings that serve solely to differentiate past perceptions from present. As I have suggested above, such "pastness" feelings either comprise a sub-species of vivacity or a distinct species of consciousness in their own right, it being immaterial to my purposes which of these two scenarios is the case.

It is clear that in an important respect, vivacity and facility constitute quite distinct feelings; vivacity, which functions as a *primitive intentional attitude of belief*, a non-voluntary *taking-as-real* by the mind, more properly concerns *individual* idea-objects *in themselves*, while facility (the felt "ease" or "smoothness" of perceptual transitions) arises from certain forms of associational activity of the mind, and thus more properly concerns *successions* of perceptions, *not* the perceptions *apart from* such successions. Of course, vivacity—which is naturally "communicated" by and among the

perceptions of the mind—is intimately related to *memory* (see T 265), and thus to the very *possibility* of succession-consciousness, given that faculty's central role in the constitution of the Humean mind/self. If we treat the vivacity associated with a perception as equivalent to the *degree to which an idea is capable of (by itself) initiating, influencing and/or directing the attention and successive activity of the self*, then it becomes manifest that without vivacity there can be no differentiation between the various modalities of perception and conception, and ergo a quite limited degree of intentionality. On the other hand, without the reflexive impression of *facility*, there can be no *feeling or primitive awareness*[51] of the unified cohesion of the mind's train of distinct perceptions. Facility, as it were, phenomenologically fills in the "cracks" between our successive discrete perceptions. These considerations might reasonably lead one to characterize vivacity as *perception-consciousness* and facility as *succession-consciousness* (but not as *itself* a *succession*). Both must be considered central to the phenomenon of self-consciousness, for without vivacity there is no rock bottom awareness of things at all, and without facility there is no way for a mind to transcend the present moment of consciousness and hence to perceive a succession of perceptions *as* a succession, or in effect, *as* a connected self. *Facility* thus reveals itself as central to the feeling of *self*-consciousness.

Once again, it should be noted that vivacity and facility are *primitive* species of consciousness for Hume. Importantly, his account doesn't exclusively locate consciousness in the *higher-order apperceptions*—e.g., consciousnesses of past consciousnesses *qua* past consciousnesses—which presumably undergird much of *human* thought. His account of consciousness is meant to apply equally to non-human animals.[52] It is the reflexively intentional feelings of vivacity and facility *vis-à-vis* our individual perceptions and successions of perceptions (*qua* successions) respectively which constitute Humean consciousness. *Self-consciousness*, if it is conceptually distinguishable from these two species of consciousness simpliciter, must at the very least involve these feelings as its founding, constitutive acts. It is my goal in the remainder of this section to develop this insight further. However, before more explicitly addressing *self-consciousness*, I need briefly to survey Hume's much discussed conception of *self*. My treatment of Humean self-consciousness flows directly out of my understanding of the Humean self.

**B. Hume and Locke: Two Theories of Self.** Throughout the *Treatise*, the Appendix, and the *Abstract*, Hume steadfastly characterizes the self (or mind) as nothing other than a bundle of successive perceptions or a successive bundle of coexistent perceptions.[53] Given that our acts of consciousness are equivalent to the phenomenological feelings discussed above, it follows that our acts of consciousness are themselves *members* of the bundle; if they were not then they could not subsequently function as intended objects of

higher-order reflexions (e.g., consciousness of memories *qua* past perceptions with certain degrees of vivacity).[54]

Certain commentators have lost sight of this point, and have accordingly suggested that Hume neglects to provide a proper account of reflexive, apperceptional consciousness. For instance, Noxon writes that

> Hume's theory of consciousness, it turns out, can be kept intact only if reinforced by some conception akin to Locke's ideas of reflexion which constitute "the perception of the operations of our own mind"...[since it] is only the memory of one's own acts of consciousness, not of objects of consciousness, that "discovers" one's personal identity.[55]

While Hume's account of consciousness as reflexion is not a terribly easy matter to piece together, I have argued in previous pages that it *can* be made to gel with the remainder of Hume's theory. Noxon is here simply ignoring the intricate account of consciousness that Hume develops in Book I of the *Treatise* and explicitly acknowledges in the Appendix. Hume's account doesn't need to be *reinforced* with some Lockean theory of reflexion; Hume's account already has—in embryonic form—a theory of reflexion. T 106 *in itself* makes this apparent. In fact, simple *reinforcement* of Hume's account with Locke's theory of reflexive consciousness is nonsensical given the incompatibility of the two empiricists' accounts of self and personal identity. Let me explain.

Locke held that "as far as any intelligent being can repeat the *Idea* of any past Action, with the *same* consciousness it had of it at first, and with the *same* consciousness it has of any present Action; so far it is the *same personal self.*"[56] While Hume's account of reflexive consciousness is certainly influenced by Locke's,[57] there is a crucial difference between the two. As George Pappas aptly puts it, Locke held that to "have a reflex act directed to the self is to be aware or conscious that there is a self, but this is something one does without having an idea of self, and thus *without perceiving the self.*"[58] According to Locke, we become *indirectly* aware of our substantival self simply through the necessarily reflexive act of thinking. Yet, such indirect awareness proves inconceivable on *Hume's* account, according to which there cannot be consciousness of anything other than *perceptions*, least of all the *substantival* self which Locke's theory posits. This possibility that the self "consider[s] it self *as it self*...only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking,"[59] is radically inconsistent with Hume's theory, which characterizes as strictly *fictional* all ascriptions of identity (*sameness*) to the succession of *distinct* perceptions which constitute the self. Locke doesn't adequately address the issue of *personal identity* because he simply *assumes* the mind's ability to (correctly)

make *sameness* ascriptions pertaining to its *actually* distinct perceptions. Ultimately, Hume's account of the self as an *ever-changing* successive bundle of distinct yet related perceptions dissolves the Lockean mirage of the substantival self.

Hume repeatedly expresses his inability to perceive any *self* beyond the mere collection of particular perceptions of which he is aware at any given time. He famously writes:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other...I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist.... (T 252)

> When I turn my reflexion on *myself*, I can never perceive this *self* without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive anything but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self. (T 634)

Strictly speaking, there is *no* personal identity or simplicity. The Humean self *at any moment* consists of *numerous* present impressions of sensation, impressions of memory, ideas of recent (past) impressions, and various "levels" of reflexive impressions, and this inventory changes with each passing moment. As was noted briefly above, the Humean explanation of our fictional attribution of identity to the *self* is founded upon the *feeling* of *facility* ("ease of transition"), which accompanies our reflective perception of the self's succession of perceptions and which similarly accompanies our contemplation of literally unchanging objects. Because of the resemblance between the phenomenological feelings in these two instances, we confound the two cases.

But we must note the intricate relationship between *succession* and the self in this context; Hume repeatedly insists that "they are the *successive* perceptions only, that constitute the mind" (T 253, my emphasis; cf. T 277). The self *is* a succession, it doesn't simply perceive itself as a succession. If it were otherwise than a succession of perceptions, it would lack the resources to perceive or be conscious of *any* succession of objects, and thus would lack the resources to confound claims of identity in the manner previously described. Given that "wherever we have no succession of perceptions, we have no notion of time" (T 35) and that the self constitutes a "system of different perceptions...link'd together by the relation of cause and effect," (T 261) it follows that for the *non-successive* self there can be no awareness of self *as such*, since the causal relation necessarily involves the relation of

temporal contiguity. If consciousness were "literally passive (i.e., in "freeze frame"), it would not perceive a train of ideas, and so would be oblivious of any succession...[thus] however faintly, the imagination must remain conscious of ("feel") itself as successively acting to reproduce the same idea if it is to conceive the succession it perceives as an identity."[60]

C. **Why an "Idea of the Self" Could Not Be the Proper Source of Humean Self-consciousness.** I think that the interconnection between *succession* (and thus *time*)[61] and the *self* has important ramifications for Humean self-consciousness. A number of commentators seem to suggest that Humean self-consciousness resides in *an idea of the self*, but none of them adequately characterize such an idea or adequately show how its conception is possible within Hume's system.[62] Of course, Hume himself is at fault here; while he does explain how we come falsely to attribute identity to the self (via resemblance among instances of our phenomenal feelings of facility), he neglects to explain how we might come to entertain and believe the "true idea of the human mind" which involves considering the mind (self) as "a system of different perceptions or different existences which are linked together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, and influence one another" (T 261). I propose that there are several objections regarding any such idea of self which should lead us to *relocate* the source of Humean self-consciousness from some higher order idea of self to the more primitive phenomenological feelings—acts of consciousness/impressions of reflexion—associated with the (illusory) feeling of personal identity.

It appears that the (complex) idea of self, like the idea of time, must itself occupy time; *it takes time to have an idea of self.*[63] Waxman appears to admit such a correlation of the idea of time with the idea of self when he writes that "our idea of duration of existence just *is* the idea of our identical self,"[64] yet sadly, he neglects to develop this insight. How could a *single* idea *adequately* represent the causal system of the self, which is essentially a *succession* of related perceptions? I have previously noted that a succession of perceptions is needed to represent a succession of objects *qua* succession. If an *adequate* idea of self were possible at a single instant of time, then, like all ideas, it would have to function as a copy or representation of some reflexive impression which itself would have to *intentionally* represent (in the manner outlined in section IA above) the bundle in all of its complexity. Hume unfortunately gives little account of the workings of the higher-level reflexivity which would be needed to undergird such a reflexion. His account is here silent; perhaps he simply *assumes* (like many of his commentators after him) that such a level of reflexion can be properly explained via the resources of his system; yet such an explanation—if possible—would certainly prove no mean task.

As I see it, there are at least three main problems here confronting Hume's "true idea" of the self, or any such idea of the self:

(1) It is impossible for there to exist *at time t* a completely *adequate* idea of *the self at time t*; as pointed out previously, ideas are "historical in their orientation," and perforce can represent only (recently) past perceptions. In the case of a higher-order reflexion, the time-lag could be apparent; if we could entertain such ideas of selves, they would have to be ideas of *past* selves. Additionally, were a *complete* idea of self to be possible, it must either *itself* be self-representational or be reflected by a subsequent impression in order to be taken by the mind *as* an *idea* of the self, and these are problematic scenarios for an idea of self to involve.[65] But perhaps the temporal problem here doesn't constitute a major obstacle for the idea of self, as Hume readily admits that "the thought alone finds personal identity, when reflecting on the train of *past* perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other" (T 635, my emphasis). Regardless, it is still far from clear how such an idea is itself possible to entertain and subsequently *believe* in a Humean fashion. This points to a gap in Hume's account that needs filling.

(2) If we take Hume at his word that "the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is *always* intimately present with us" (T 317, my emphasis; cf. T 320, T 354) then it becomes apparent that he is not here referring to the "true idea of the human mind." We certainly don't *always* have *that* rather sophisticated idea in our minds; certain people and perhaps most higher non-human animals (to whom Hume deems his account crucially applicable) *never* have it as one among their successive perceptions. In general, Humean self-consciousness "as it regards our thought or imagination" must reside more in the *phenomenologically felt ease of transition (facility) and vivacity associated intentionally with the constituent perceptions of the successive Humean mind* than in any conceptual awareness of the "true idea of the human mind." I conclude that the "impression of ourselves" which is "always intimately present to us" (T 354) must (at a given time) be none other than a particular reflexive impression of facility or vivacity. Of course, Hume's mentioning of *an* impression *of* our self is somewhat misleading, given that the self "independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing" (T 340). This impression must be a reflexive "consciousness" feeling. I will suggest in the final section of this paper that part of the problem with his reference to self-consciousness in Book II is that it assumes a somewhat different notion of self and personal identity ("personal identity...as it regards our passions" [T 253]) than that targeted in Book I.

(3) If the idea of self is, as I have suggested, analogous to the idea of time in that both are comprised of a *succession* of ideas *related* in various ways (merely temporal contiguity in the case of the idea of time, but contiguity,

resemblance, and causation in the case of the idea of self), then the very *singularity* and thus *identity* of the *idea of self* (*qua* singular idea) becomes a questionable matter. Presumably, like the self that it putatively represents, our *true idea of self* must *itself* be (*falsely*) *felt* to be identical over time, and this is to introduce unseemly reiterative hierarchies of reflexion into Hume's account. *Why not simply locate self-consciousness within the putative "object" of this successive "idea," thus stipulating self-consciousness to be* immanent *to the successive acts of perception and consciousness which make up the self?*

The singular idea of self in this case simply constitutes an instance of a reflexive idea—taken to represent a reflexive impression of facility and/or vivacity—which itself doesn't happen to be represented by *another perception* (although in principle it could be thusly represented). In other words, we might settle for a less than adequate "idea of the human mind" which can exist at an instant, but which accordingly is only capable of taking a reflexive act of consciousness (facility or vivacity) as its intended object. I suggest that given Hume's silence on the workings of the mind at levels of reflexion higher than these second order reflexive ideas, we have few theoretical resources with which to construct an elaborate model of the constitution of the complex "true idea of the human mind."

**D. The Normal Extent of Humean Self-consciousness "as it regards our thought."** The above considerations challenge the view that *self-consciousness* resides solely in an idea of self or in the conception of the "true idea of the human mind." If such an idea is possible at all, it constitutes at best a sufficient—but not a *necessary*—condition for self-consciousness. We must look elsewhere for necessary conditions.

My suggestion is that self-consciousness is best located in the act of feeling personal identity, which Hume nicely characterizes in the Appendix, where he writes:

> If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only *feel* a connexion or determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that the thought alone finds personal identity, when reflecting on the train of past perceptions, that compose the mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other. (T 635)

Memory, the faculty in and through which consciousness simultaneously produces and discovers personal identity, thus reveals itself as a necessary condition for self-consciousness, since without the power of memory to present ideas of perceptions (represented as *past*) "annex'd" to ideas of the particular acts of consciousness (i.e., vivacity) attending them, there could be

no consciousness of self *qua* collection of past *consciousnesses of* perceptions, and indeed no consciousness beyond the present moment at all.

Thus, Humean self-consciousness is *immanent* to the successive experience of reflexively *feeling* the "easy transition" of past perceptions attended by their associated (past) particular reflexive *feelings* of vivacity. At any particular point in time, there will thus be a reflexive impression of facility and a past-perception/past vivacity "annexation" as its intended object. The successive experience of this process whereby consciousnesses of past perceptions qua objects of past consciousnesses are felt to merge into a seamless procession, appears as the likeliest candidate for Humean self-consciousness "as it regards our thought." It comprises the felt unity of reflexive consciousnesses; it thus appears as a necessary and sufficient condition for self-consciousness. This species of self-consciousness is inseparable from the succession of perceptions which successively comprises its "object," the self, that perpetual work-in-progress which doesn't strictly exist within the individual constituent moments of its succession, but which only reveals itself in and through the illusory feeling (in the singular) of personal identity, which is felt to transcend the discrete temporalities of its perceptual objects, but which is in reality itself only a successive construction, an illusion reflexively engendered within the self in response to the perceptions which are at any moment connected to the bundle. Given that the identical self persisting through time is for Hume an illusion, it follows that the activity of self-consciousness must itself be illusory insofar as it feels as if it were constituted by a temporally non-ndiscrete act of consciousness. I submit that this is the normal extent of our self-consciousness, a form of personal identity-awareness which we presumably share with other higher animals.[66]

If one objects that Humean self-consciousness requires this *feeling of personal identity* itself to function further as the intended object of *yet another* reflexion, then I in turn object that this is to demand too much, and to invite a mess of reiterative reflexions. This would be to defer self-consciousness perpetually until some future act of reflexion and would surely involve a "straining of the imagination," a difficult diversion of "the spirits...from their natural course" (T 185). Accordingly, this would turn what is actually the most easy and habitual of mental activities, namely the *irresistible* act of *feeling* personal identity, into an *unnaturally* reflexive diversion. I here throw down the gauntlet.

**E. The Extent of Self-consciousness "as it regards our passions."** Given that I have characterized Humean self-consciousness as the *feeling* of personal identity, and granted that for Hume there are two forms of personal identity, it follows that there are two species of Humean self-consciousness, self-consciousness "as it regards our thought" and self-consciousness "as it regards our passions" (T 253). The former is targeted in Book I of the *Treatise*,

while the latter is considered in Book II. My primary target in this paper has been the former species of Humean self-consciousness, but in this concluding section I hope tentatively to shed some light on how my interpretation of Humean consciousness as reflexion might help us to explain the species of self-consciousness discussed by Hume in Book II.[67]

It becomes evident that there is a discrepancy in Hume's account of self-consciousness in Books I and II when, for example, one compares his statements in Book II that

> '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. (T 317)

with such claims in Book I as:

> It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. *But self or person is not any one impression,* but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference...consequently there is no such idea [of self]." (T 251–252, my emphasis)

There are two possible ways to resolve such discrepancies: either (1) to assume Hume simply to be speaking loosely at T 317 (*and* at T 354 where he writes "the idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us"), and hence to have the same basic view of self in both Books; or (2) to suppose him to be offering a *different* account of self and self-consciousness in Book II.

The motivation for (1) is that Hume is more careful in other passages of Book II (e.g., T 277, T 320, T 329) to underscore that in being conscious of the self we are not conscious of a (simple) self *simpliciter,* but are instead merely conscious of the *particular* perceptions that successively constitute the self.[68] Additionally, he appears to reinvoke his Book I bundle theory of the self in various places throughout Book II, e.g., at T 277, and at T 340, where he writes that "ourself, independent of the perceptions of every other object, is in reality nothing." These considerations show in Book II Hume does not abandon his Book I account of the self *as it regards our thought or imagination.*

However, other passages from Book II should perhaps motivate us to adopt option (2) and hence to suppose Hume to be offering a *different* account of self and self-consciousness in Book II. The subject of Hume's inquiry in Book II appears to be the self as *an amalgam of body and mind;* witness T 303's claim that causes of pride and humility are "the qualities of our *mind and body,* that is *self*" (first emphasis mine) and his mention there of instances in which "external objects acquire [a] particular relation to *ourselves,* and are associated or connected with *us*" (my emphases). When he

writes at T 369 that we "have a lively idea of every thing related to us" and that "all human creatures are related to us by resemblance," he clearly is identifying "us" (and thus "ourselves") *in part* with our *bodies*. This different view of self in Book II is a direct result of its different subject matter, the passions. Hume writes that

> Bodily pains and pleasures are the source of many passions, both when felt and consider'd by the mind; but arise originally in the soul, or in the body, whichever you please to call it; without any preceding thought or perception. A fit of gout produces a long train of passions, as grief, hope, fear; but is *not deriv'd immediately from any affection or idea*. (T 276, my emphasis)

The *body*, insofar as it is in a painful or pleasurable state, thus presents itself as the ultimate causal wellspring of the passions. As the passions can be causally traced to the *body*, the *body* can function as the proper object of their representations. In this manner the passions (as reflexive impressions) constitute particular awarenesses or *consciousnesses* of the body, and if the self is taken to include qualities of *both* mind and body (as T 303 suggests), then the passions furnish some grist for the self-consciousness mill. We simply need to have a reflexive idea of a passion which can accordingly intend the passion *qua* act of consciousness in order to be aware of the passion *as* representational and thus intentional.

Of course, causal references to the body abound in Book I as well. A notable instance occurs at T 248 where Hume suggests that "the idea of cause and effect, when apply'd to the operations of matter" leads to the conclusion that "motion may be, and actually is, the cause of thought and perception" (cf. T 211). While addressing the relationship *commonly* taken to hold between mind and body, Hume notes that "our own body evidently belongs to us; and as several impressions appear exterior to the body, we suppose them also exterior to ourselves," (T 190), only to follow it with the scathing insight that

> properly speaking, 'tis not our body we perceive, when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions, which enter by the senses; so that the ascribing a real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind...difficult to explain.... (T191)

Contrast this with the reflexive *passions*, for whom the *body*, and *not* any mediating impression of sensation, *directly* constitutes the ultimate causal wellspring.

I conclude that in Book II, Hume indeed presents a somewhat different account of the self; in that Book, the self metamorphoses into an amalgam

of body (*qua* source of passions) and mind (*qua* source of *non-passionate* perceptions). Accordingly, the version of self-consciousness developed in Book II *involves the felt unity of the passionate reflexive impressions qua representations of the body.* In effect, personal identity "as it regards our passions" (T 253) involves the *partial* (causal) identification of self with body via the passions, the soul's direct link to the body. Thus, there are two modes of self-consciousness, just as there are two modes of personal identity. In passionate self-consciousness, the "impression of ourselves is always intimately present to us" (T 317) only insofar as our self is constituted by the conjunction of mind and body, and only insofar as we always have some consciousness of body via a passionate reflexive impression. *But given that we aren't* always *in the thralls of a passion, how is it that the "impression of ourselves is always intimately present to us?"* If Hume is referring here to self-consciousness "as it regards our passions," then he is simply overstating the case. We cannot *always* have *passionate self-consciousness*, unless we are to include such long term states as moods within its purview.

Setting this problem aside, I submit that in Book II Hume has traded his purely *phenomenological* project of Book I for the more explicitly ontological project of mapping out the causal relations between mind *and* body, body and *self.* The metamorphosis of self-consciousness in Book II is a result of his different concerns therein. Book II provides in effect a bodily bridge from the primarily first-person phenomenological account of the self in Book I to the account in Book III of the self as inextricable member of a social and moral community of selves construed (*non-phenomenologically*) as amalgams of both bodies and minds. This broad perspective on the *Treatise* at least tentatively reconciles the apparent discrepancies between Hume's views on self-consciousness in Books I and II of that monumental work.

## NOTES

Special thanks to Don Baxter, Wayne Waxman, and an anonymous referee at *Hume Studies* for helpful comments on previous versions of this paper.

1 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). (Hereafter cited as "T" with page numbers inserted parenthetically in the text.) If it be objected that this characterization of consciousness as "nothing but a reflected thought or perception" is hence not Hume's own view, but rather merely that of "most philosophers," I would respond thusly: Whether or not Hume is simply

paraphrasing the view of "most philosophers" or articulating his own view is immaterial here, given Hume's presumption that his own theory of consciousness either incorporates or is consistent with this view. ("The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect.") If he accepts this view as a valid touchstone for his system, then he must at least find it consistent with his account. This point is equally applicable to the assertion that "personal identity arises from consciousness."

2 For example, see James Noxon, "Senses of Identity in Hume's *Treatise*," *Dialogue* 1 (December 1969): 367–384; Wayne Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 41; and Daniel Flage, *David Hume's Theory of Mind* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 168ff.

3 Noxon, 375. However, it must be noted that Hume's "notice" of self-consciousness in Book II is very terse and proves not to be much more helpful than that found implicitly in Book I. Additionally, his treatment of the self in Book II differs subtly from that of Book I, causing his account of self-consciousness as it applies to Book I ("Of the Understanding") to differ somewhat from the account applicable to Book II ("Of the Passions"). Hume remarks on this very point at T 253 where he writes that "we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions...." Noxon acknowledges this distinction and discusses it on 383ff, but his explanation is itself quite sketchy. I present my own views on this matter in the final section of the present paper.

4 It should be noted that Hume uses the terms "mind," "self," "person," and "soul" interchangeably.

5 See also T 172, T 184, T 215.

6 See also T 16, T 275ff.

7 Flage, 153 (my emphasis).

8 I interpret "extraneous denomination" in this context to signify an *external designation*, i.e., a quality applied to an object of perception from *the outside* (by the mind), and not to connote an *irrelevant* denomination. This connotation of irrelevancy seems unnecessary and incongruent given what I perceive to be the intimate connection between representationality, intentionality, the causal relation, reflexion, and phenomenological feelings within Hume's theory of consciousness. I develop this theme throughout the remainder of Section I.

9 See T 73 for a discussion of the *immediacy* of the perception of these two relations in contradistinction to the causal relation.

10 Hume's mention of a "real" perception here is puzzling and potentially problematic. Aren't all perceptions, whether or not they are *taken* to be representational, *real* perceptions?

11 Since Hume's phenomenological study of consciousness requires him to bracket out purely ontological concerns and commitments, he remains in Book I skeptical on the possibility that sensory impressions might be taken to *represent* external objects. But since we can never know objects to exist except via the senses, there is never a case of external objects being *perceived* to be temporally precedent to impressions, and thus in a strict sense, impressions

can't be taken to represent external objects in a way directly analogous to the manner in which ideas are taken to represent impressions.

12 A very interesting example which further supports this point can be found on T 303 amidst Hume's discussion of the *reflexive impressions* (passions) of pride and humility. Therein, he writes that both passions "have the qualities of our mind and body, that is self, for their natural and more immediate causes," thus implying the self to be some sort of psychophysical conglomeration. This topic will be returned to in the final section below.

13 Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, edited by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 13.

14 Unfortunately, some commentators go wrong here in interpreting Hume to be largely concerned in the *Treatise* with consciousness insofar as it bears upon language. See Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991),100-111. See Flage, 42–51 about the propositional/semantic structure of thought; and see also Donald Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 78 concerning the social basis of custom and "common life." See Flage, 52–57 and Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness,* 105–115 for more congenial approaches to the topic of animal reason.

15 Of course, an additional explanation for the long list of vivacity-descriptions is the fact that, as Hume observes, "'tis impossible to explain perfectly this feeling or manner of conception" (T 629). However, I am not convinced that this is the only reason for the extensive list; *the feeling of vivacity appears to play a number of roles in the Humean system,* and thus it might reasonably denote a closely related—yet phenomenologically well nigh indistinguishable—*bundle* of feelings.

16 Given that Hume uses the *singular* indexical in the phrase "idea of *this*" I take it that its antecedent must be "the action of the mind" and not "the objects, of which we were thinking" (which is a plural construction). Thus, I interpret him to be asserting that the memory can produce an idea-copy of actions of the mind such as vivacity ("vigour and firmness").

17 Cf. T 212, T 647, and T 658.

18 But it is here worth re-emphasizing that no entity of the mind is *intrinsically representational*; "every impression, external and internal, passions, affections, sensations, pains and pleasures, are originally on the same footing" (T 190).

19 Hume's insistent claim that "*belief* or *assent*...always attends the memory and senses" (T 86) can only be accounted for by admitting that sensory experiences and memories of *which we are presently aware and of which we actively remember* are the *only* perceptions that can reasonably be said to constitute the mind/self (e.g., "the self...[is] that succession of related ideas and impressions, of *which we have an intimate memory and consciousness*" (T 277) and also T 206 where he suggests that it is a "contradiction...[to] suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind"), so of course we perceive and are conscious of these perceptions. Hume seemingly doesn't consider perceptions of which we have no *reflexive* consciousness to be perceptions at all. But this point is hard to reconcile with his claims about

vivacity at T 265. Furthermore, as I argue in Section IG of the present paper, Hume appears to conflate *perception* with consciousness at times, and construes perception to be an amalgam of the *act* of perceiving and the *object* of perception. The only other escape route at this juncture is to admit that there are different *levels* of reflexive consciousness. Perhaps there is an *initial* level of vivacity-feeling (the *first* reflexive impression of consciousness) which accompanies *all* our sense and memory impressions even when we don't really *feel* conscious of them *qua* intended objects. But it is unclear how this would fit with the rest of Hume's account. Perhaps he is simply overstating the case by using the word "always" in this context.

20 Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 42 (my emphasis). It should be noted that, on my interpretation, it is not additionally an original quality of our *perceiving* the objects of perception. This point is underscored and developed in Section IG of the present paper.

21 This alternative option was suggested to me by Don Baxter.

22 Flage, 182.

23 If beliefs comprised distinct ideas then it seems to follow that the imagination could "separate, unite, mix, and vary them, as it pleases," enabling one to "believe what he pleas'd" (T 624). And this strongly goes against his entire account of natural belief or assent (which is sufficiently primitive to be applicable not only to humans, but also to other higher animals; see T 176–179). He concludes, quite in accordance with my account, that "belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment...that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters." (T 624)

24 Clearly a case of "shaving" belief with Ockham's Razor. But this shave would have to be paid for dearly.

25 I think that Hume's "fourth" objection at T 626 can be treated as a conjunction of (2) and (3) above.

26 Perhaps the principal Humean doctrine that forces him to make this sacrifice is that of the *infallibility of immediate experience*. That this *myth of the given* has been resolutely denied by most philosophers of mind in this century attests to the doctrine's problems. It is certainly one of Hume's most problematic tenets.

27 Flage, 180 (all emphases mine except the first).

28 The present paper is, unfortunately, not the place for an extended discussion of this intriguing observation. See Flage's discussion, 180–182.

29 David Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding* and *concerning the Principles of Morals*, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed. revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 32.

30 Of course, it does not *exclusively* attend associations of *resembling* (or *non*-resembling) perceptions; resemblance among perceptions can *almost* always assist in associating ideas and strengthening their degrees of vivacity and thus the felt associative bonds among them (cf. T 14: "tho' resemblance be necessary to all philosophical relation, it does not follow, that it *always* produces a connexion or association of ideas" [my emphasis].) An essential

feature of the causal relation (and thus *facility*) is that it allows for the possibility of transcending "immediate consciousness" by going beyond concerns of "*identity*, and the *relations* of *time* and *place*; since in none of them the mind can go beyond what is immediately present to the senses." (T 73; see also T 168 where Hume underscores *succession* and *contiguity* as natural relations). And in this its success does not always depend upon the vivacity-strengthening relation of resemblance among perceptions.

31 Keeping in mind that, as Waxman ("Hume's Quandary Concerning Personal Identity," *Hume Studies* 18.2 [1992], 241) points out, Hume's treatment of the source of the idea of necessity in this passage also involves the phenomenological feeling of *vivacity* as a key component. I have simplified discussion of this topic for considerations of brevity.

32 Waxman echoes this point when he writes that "in view of the phenomenological nature of perfect identity, the absence of the feeling characteristic of the smooth passage of thought along a sequence of uniformly *related* ideas would prevent the imagination from confounding such sequences with perfect identity, and so eradicate *all* imperfect identity..." (Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 241).

33 Although it might be held that the passions in effect constitute *another* form of consciousness for Hume in Book II of the *Treatise*, namely *body-consciousness*. However, they do not comprise the species of consciousness needed to undergird his discussion of self-consciousness "as it regards our thought" in Book I. See the final section of this paper for further discussion of these two somewhat distinct species of Humean self-consciousness.

34 There might be more if we rejected vivacity as denoting a *complex* of reflexive impressions and distinguish vivacity as (i) "force" or "assent" from vivacity as (ii) the *pastness* feeling that Hume suggests must accompany the *je-ne-scai-quoi* of T 106. But whether there are more than two species of vivacity is immaterial to the task at hand.

35 If it be objected that this might lead to an infinite reiteration of *consciousnesses of*, I think Hume might respond simply by denying that we often go beyond the first idea of reflexion. Such higher order consciousnesses are not instances of the "more natural conception of the ideas" and would involve the "spirits being diverted from their natural course" (T 185). In other words, while perhaps logically and theoretically possible, higher-order perceptions far beyond *ideas of ideas of reflexion* are simply not within our ken.

36 Even if Hume means "deliberation" or "reason" by "reflexion" in these passages, they nevertheless underscore the causal posteriority of *all* reflexive acts to other perceptions. Perhaps it is in the context of the present passage worth mentioning a noteworthy feature of—and perhaps a problem with—Hume's account: acts of which we have no remembrance or immediate phenomenological consciousness can at best be *theorized* to have been acts at all, but strictly cannot be, given that the world of pre-imaginative and thus pre-reflexive perception is not the world which we phenomenologically experience ("the present situation of the person is always that of the

imagination" [T 430]). More on this below. Additionally, recall that for Hume (T 252), "gaps" in consciousness such as sleep do not *in reality* constitute *interruptions* in an *abiding* consciousness but instead simply constitute *annihilations* of consciousness, inferentially imagined "times" wherein no acts of consciousness occur. Strictly speaking, there is *in reality* no identity of consciousness(es) for Hume (although there are of course the phenomenological *feelings* associated *falsely* with such an imperfect identity).

37 I tend to prefer the latter. Note that Hume's account of perception and consciousness is in general not without its textual conflations and obscurities. One example of these is his conflation (throughout the *Treatise*) of *intentional* objects with *intended* objects which he effects by subsuming both under the term "objects." But this offense, unlike his conflation of perception with consciousness, is somewhat minor.

38 Because *we* (our *selves*) are nothing but collections of particular related perceptions (See T 207, T 252–253, T 634–635).

39 Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 284n6. Compare Hume's discussion in "Of scepticism with regard to the senses," especially T 212–218. Do we ever experience this realm? There may be periods of our lives (e.g., during meditation, intense physical activity, artistic activity) when we might be thought to "experience" this state, that is, we lose our awareness of everything *qua* objects of consciousness. But assuming self-consciousness to *arise* from consciousness, then it becomes hard to *say who this "we" doing the experiencing would be.* If it is the "we" of the phenomenological self—which appears to be Hume's account in Book I—then we can't be said to be experiencing this pre-reflective world; our self has dissipated. Only the "we" of the body (or perhaps the "we" of the psycho-physical conglomeration of mind and body) might be said to "experience" such a realm. But this is not the self of Book I, although it appears to be the self of Book II.

40 See note 11 above.

41 Of course, the problem seems to have been there all along given Hume's definition of perception in the *Abstract* as "whatever can be present to the mind, whether we employ our senses, or are actuated with passion, or exercise our thought and reflection" (T 647). Along these lines, *impressions of reflexion* (like impressions of *sensation*) are to be considered perceptions from the very start.

42 That Hume adopts a stance akin to that of later phenomenologists is made quite apparent by such claims as, "Nothing *appears* requisite to support the existence of a perception" (T 234, my emphasis).

43 Alas, this is not the place for an extended interpretation of Hume's *dualism.* See Flage, 118–125 for a convincing case in favor of interpreting Hume as both a dualist and a non-phenomenalist.

44 Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 114.

45 See note 19 above.

46 Perhaps the irresistible custom of *taking reflexive acts of consciousness to be essentially intentional* hinders proper distinguishing of such phenomenological feelings from sensory perceptions. See T 104 and T 114 on the

possibility of pre-reflexive perceptional "consciousness."

47 A principle which—it should be noted—is not without its own problems. For a considerate acknowledgment of this, see Wade Robison, "In Defense of Hume's Appendix" in *McGill Hume Studies*, edited by David Fate Norton, Nicholas Capaldi, and Wade Robison (San Diego: Austin Hill, 1979), 90.

48 In this section I refer in large measure to a personal communication from Waxman (1998) which takes the form of an unpublished manuscript entitled "Remarks" (The following two quotations are citations from this text.)

49 Waxman (1998), 7.

50 Waxman (1998), 4.

51 It is a "primitive awareness" because, like the rest of the Humean associationist psychology of Book I (and a good deal of Book II—see, for example, T 324–328), it is intended to be applicable to higher animals in general. See T 176–179.

52 Of course, this is a point underscored at length in the *Enquiry* as well as in the *Treatise*.

53 Some examples: In Book I he writes of the self that it is "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" (T 252). In Book II he writes that the self is "that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" (T 277) and "ourself, independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing" (T 340). In the Appendix, he writes "*we have no notion of [self], distinct from the particular perceptions*" (T 635). And, in the *Abstract* he writes "it must be our several particular perceptions, that compose the mind" (T 658).

54 See Nelson Pike, "Hume's Bundle Theory of the Self: A Limited Defense," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 4.2 (April 1967): 159-165, for a nicely elaborated account in accordance with my position on this issue. See Noxon for a contrasting viewpoint. Noxon's claim that "awareness of relations cannot, therefore, take place within the primary consciousness defined by Hume as a 'bundle or collection of different perceptions'" (Noxon, 376) is based upon separability objections. Noxon makes the mistake, like various other commentators, of assuming that it is "absurd" to imagine "relations" as existing "separately" from other perceptions. While this is an intuitively plausible objection, one must realize that for Hume the "relations [of contiguity, causation, etc.] are nothing else but *qualities*, by which the imagination is convey'd from one idea to another" (T 305, my emphasis). Given that such qualities in part constitute the *phenomenological feelings of facility and vivacity*, it becomes a bit easier to reconcile relations in general with the separability principle as it is generally interpreted.

55 Noxon, 379. In all fairness, Noxon does later acknowledge the crucial *je-ne-scai-quoi* passage at T 106, but that passage's intricate connection with the remainder of Hume's account of reflexion in the *Treatise* and the Appendix (as I interpret it) goes completely unacknowledged by Noxon.

56 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 336. (All emphases on "same" are mine).

57 Hume tacitly admits this in the Appendix when he suggests that "most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness...[thus] the present philosophy...has so far a promising aspect" (T 635). Hume surely considered Locke as one among these "philosophers."

58 George Pappas, "Perception of the Self," *Hume Studies* 18.2 (1992), 278 (emphases mine).

59 Locke, 335.

60 Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 210.

61 Assuming time to be indistinguishable from succession, as Hume appears to do at several places in the *Treatise*, such as T 200 where he writes that "time, in a strict sense, implies succession" and T 35 where he writes that "(w)herever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even tho' there be a real succession in the objects" (cf. T 40). Don Baxter, in a stimulating paper, "A Defense of Hume on Identity Through Time," *Hume Studies* 13.2 (November 1987): 323-342, suggests Hume to have access to a variety of time not involving succession, and explains this in part by showing perceptions to occupy *varying* lengths of time. While I find Baxter's observation pertaining to the non-necessarily *momentary* status of perceptions to be textually supportable, I find it hard to reconcile the above passages from the *Treatise* (and others like them) with any notion of *time without succession*.

62 The list of such commentators includes Nelson Pike and James Noxon. See Noxon (367; 381) and Pike (*passim*). Flage appears to be bucking this interpretive trend by problematizing the consistency and adequacy of Hume's idea of the self. See Flage, 145–154.

63 I am here co-optively paraphrasing Michael Costa's observation (in "Hume, Strict Identity, and Time's Vacuum," *Hume Studies* 16.1 [1991]: 1–16) that it "literally takes time to have an idea of time" (3).

64 Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, 243.

65 Flage makes some similar observations on 152–153.

66 Of course, other more complex reflexive acts might take this consciousness as their intended object and thus might involve self-consciousness as their constituent perception, but these would simply supply *sufficient*, not necessary conditions for self-consciousness in the most basic sense here outlined.

67 For an interesting, extended discussion of issues pertaining to Humean self-consciousness "as it regards our passions" see Baier (op. cit.). Since I find Baier's account less helpful regarding the form of self-consciousness targeted by Hume in Book I, and since the latter has been my primary concern in the present work, I have chosen not to discuss Baier's approach.

68 For example, in discussing pride and humility at T 329 he addresses "the self or that identical person, of whose *thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious*" (my emphasis).