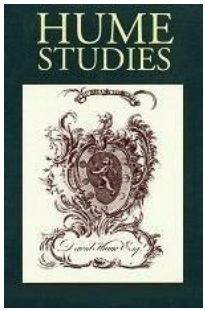

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Perceptions, Minds, and Hume's Self-doubts: Comments on Ainslie's *Hume's True Scepticism*

JONATHAN COTTRELL

In *Hume's True Scepticism*, Donald C. Ainslie offers a highly original, systematic interpretation of *Treatise* Book 1, part 4, and of much else in the *Treatise* besides. Along the way, he provides new solutions to two of the main outstanding problems of Hume scholarship: what is the relationship between Hume's skepticism and his commitment to pursuing a naturalistic science of man? And what "very considerable mistake" about personal identity does Hume mean to report in the Appendix? These are fantastic achievements. I congratulate Ainslie on the book, and on the JHP Book Prize, which I am happy to learn he has won.

To keep things interesting, these comments will focus on three related topics where I am not yet convinced by what Ainslie has to say: 1) the nature of perceptions; 2) Hume's views about minds in the *Treatise* section "Of personal identity"; and 3) Hume's second thoughts about this section in the Appendix.

1. Perceptions

Hume argues that a mind is a "bundle" or (as he says later) a "system" of causally integrated perceptions, or impressions and ideas (T 1.4.6.4, 1.4.6.19; SBN 252, 261).[1] But what is a perception? According to a standard interpretation, an impression is *what we are aware of*, when having a sensation or feeling a passion or sentiment; and an idea is what we are aware of when thinking. For Hume, impressions of sensation would then be particular instances of sensible qualities and particular bodily sensations, for these are what we are aware of, when we have

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sensations (T 1.1.2.1, 1.1.6.1; SBN 7–8, 16). Impressions of reflection would presumably be instances of the qualities that we experience when feeling passions or sentiments. Ideas would be quality-instances that are fainter than, but otherwise exactly similar to, the impressions from which they are copied.

Ainslie gives several arguments against this standard interpretation. One goes like this: if perceptions were *what we are aware of*, when having a sensation, passion, sentiment, or thought—as the standard interpretation says—then a mind would have to be a bundle of perceptions *plus our "awarenesses" of those perceptions*; but a Humean mind is merely a bundle of perceptions; so, the standard interpretation is incorrect (HTS 53–54, 211).[2]

I find this argument unpersuasive. In the *Treatise* section "Of scepticism with regard to the senses," Hume addresses what it is for a mind to "perceive," or be aware of, its perceptions (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 207–208). This passage provides an answer to Ainslie on behalf of the standard interpretation. To see this, we first need some background. Hume claims that we ordinarily "take [our] perceptions to be [our] only objects, and suppose, that the very being, which is intimately present to the mind, is the real body or material existence" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 206). In doing so, we attribute continued existence to something that is, in fact, a perception: "this very perception or object is suppos'd to have a continu'd uninterrupted being, and neither to be annihilated by our absence, nor to be brought into existence by our presence" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207). To say that perceptions have continued existence or "continu'd uninterrupted being" is to say that they "continue to exist, even when they are not perceiv'd" (T 1.4.2.2; SBN 188). When we attribute continued existence to something that is, in fact, a perception, we suppose that it is sometimes perceived, sometimes unperceived: "When we are absent from it, we say it still exists, but that we do not feel, we do not see it. When we are present, we say we feel, or see it" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207). After explaining this, Hume raises several questions, including the one that now concerns us: "what [do] we mean by this *seeing*, and *feeling*, and *perceiving*?" (T 1.4.2.38; SBN 207).

Hume answers this question two paragraphs later. In doing so, he uses the terms "external object," "sensible object" and "perception" interchangeably, because he is still discussing the beliefs of those (the "vulgar") who attribute continued, unperceived existence to things that are, in fact, perceptions:

> External objects are seen, and felt, and become present to the mind; that is, they acquire such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions, as to influence them very considerably in augmenting their number by present reflections and passions, and in storing the memory with ideas. The same continu'd and uninterrupted being may, therefore, be sometimes present to the mind, and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the being itself. An interrupted appearance to the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence. The supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction. (T 1.4.2.40; SBN 207–208)

As I read it, this passage explains what it is for an impression of sensation to be perceived, or to be an object of awareness: *being perceived* consists in *being causally related to other perceptions in a distinctive way* (namely, so as to cause certain kinds of reflections, passions and memory-ideas among them). Presumably, Hume would give similar accounts of what it is for impressions of reflection and ideas to be objects of perception or awareness.

Based on this passage, a proponent of the standard interpretation can answer Ainslie's argument as follows. To say *that a mind or bundle is aware of its perceptions* is just to say *that the causal relations among bundle-members include the distinctive kinds of causal relations that Hume describes in T 1.4.2.40* (SBN 207–08*)*. This does not imply that the mind or bundle contains anything in addition to causally related perceptions. So, contrary to Ainslie's argument, Hume can accept that perceptions are objects of awareness, without committing himself to the view that a mind is a bundle of perceptions plus "awarenesses" of those perceptions.

In place of the standard interpretation, Ainslie proposes that "sensory perceptions"—that is, impressions of sensation and ideas derived from them—have "two inseparable aspects" (HTS 212): an *image-content* and an *act of awareness*.[3] A perception's image-content is *what we are aware of*, in having that perception. "Most primitively," image-contents are "unextended colored or tangible points, or non-spatial smells, tastes, and the like" (HTS 211–12). The other aspect of a perception is the "action of the mind" whereby we are aware of the image-content (HTS 212). These two aspects of a perception are inseparable: an image-content's *esse* is *percipi* (HTS 212n29), so there cannot be an image-content without an act of awareness of it; conversely, there cannot be an act of sensory awareness "without it being the awareness of image-content" (HTS 212). In Ainslie's view, a perception's degree of force and liveliness is a feature of its act-aspect, not of its image-content (HTS 213).

With passions, things are different. Hume notoriously argues that passions are non-representational (T 2.3.3.5; SBN 415). Ainslie infers that passions do not have image-content (HTS 212, 213–14); instead, they are "nothing but different 'flavors' of vivacity" (HTS 213). I am unsure what Ainslie thinks of ideas copied from passions. He distinguishes two different kinds of copying-relation, which produce two different kinds of ideas (HTS 123, 127). The first kind of copying-relation produces a "primary idea," which repeats the image-content of the impression from which it derives (HTS 123). The second kind of copying-relation produces a "secondary idea," whose "content" is the "primary perception," that is, the impression or primary idea, from which it derives (HTS 123). An idea cannot stand in the first kind of copying-relation to a passion, because a passion has no image-content. So, ideas copied from passions must stand to their originals in the second kind of copying-relation: that is, they must be secondary ideas, whose contents are the passions—the "flavors of vivacity"—from which they are copied. Ainslie describes secondary ideas as having "image-contents": the image-content of a secondary idea is the primary perception from which it is copied (HTS 131–32). I infer that an idea copied from a passion has that passion as its image-content.[4]

I see two main problems with this account of Humean perceptions. First, Hume aims to *naturalize* the intentionality (the directedness upon an object) involved in perceiving: that is, he aims to explain it in terms of properties and relations that are found throughout the

natural world (not just in minds) and that are not, individually, peculiar to intentional mental entities.[5] We can see this in T 1.4.2.40 (SBN 207–08), quoted above, where Hume claims that an impression's *being perceived* consists in its *being causally related to other perceptions in a distinctive way* (so as "to influence them very considerably," and so on). Causal relations are found throughout the natural world; they are not peculiar to intentional mental entities. So, in this passage, Hume is trying to naturalize the intentionality involved in perceiving. But the view that Ainslie attributes to Hume conflicts with this goal. On this view, every sensory perception—hence, every simple sensory perception—has an aspect that is an act of perceiving or awareness. Hume does not try to explain the intrinsic nature of simple perceptions in other, more basic terms: they are the fundamental entities in his theory of mind. So, if he accepted the view that Ainslie attributes to him, Hume would have to allow that simple sensory perceptions involve an explanatorily basic kind of intentionality: the directedness of an act of awareness upon an image-content. And if Hume allowed this, then he could not consistently aim to naturalize the intentionality involved in perceiving. Because I think he has this aim, I do not think he accepts the view that Ainslie attributes to him.

The second problem concerns sympathy. Hume says that, when we sympathize with someone, we start with an idea that represents a certain passion. This idea receives an influx of vivacity, which turns it into an impression—a passion resembling the one that it initially represented (T 2.1.11.3–8; SBN 317–20). We have seen evidence that, for Ainslie, an idea of a passion has an image-content: namely, the passion (the "flavor of vivacity") from which it is copied. But a passion itself has no image-content. So, Ainslie will have to say that, when we sympathize, a perception that initially has an image-content (when it is an idea) *ceases* to have an image-content (when it becomes a passion), simply by receiving vivacity. But how can this be? For Ainslie, a perception's degree of vivacity is a feature of its act-aspect, not of its image-content. How can modifying one aspect of a perception (its act-aspect/vivacity) *destroy* its other aspect (its image-content)? I found this upshot of Ainslie's interpretation quite mysterious.[6]

I am therefore skeptical about Ainslie's account of Humean perceptions. However, this account has several virtues that I have not been able to consider here (see, especially, HTS 211–17). I am unsure whether any rival account shares all these virtues. So, even if the problems I have raised here are genuine, it may be that Ainslie's account makes better sense of the texts than any other.

2. Minds

Let us now turn to the *Treatise* section "Of personal identity." According to Ainslie, this section's opening paragraphs attack a metaphysical view held by certain philosophers: the view that a mind has a "real unity," that is, perfect simplicity and perfect identity (HTS 205). Against this view, Hume claims to make "the introspective discovery that the mind is merely a bundle of perceptions," which "means that it has no real unity" (HTS 205). Ainslie then writes: "Accordingly, Hume's explanandum is not the *real* unity of the bundle of perceptions:

there is none. Instead, his explanandum is our [that is, introspecting philosophers'] tendency to *believe* that the mind is unified when it is under observation" (HTS 206). This suggests that, following its opening paragraphs, "Of personal identity" makes no further metaphysical claims about minds, and instead focuses entirely on what I will call the Psychological Question: how do introspecting philosophers come to believe in the unity of their minds? It also suggests that, having discovered that a mind is "merely a bundle of perceptions," Hume does not owe us answers to any further metaphysical questions about minds. If this is what Ainslie thinks, then I believe he is wrong on both counts.

As I read "Of personal identity," its later paragraphs offer a further metaphysical claim about what a mind is. Hume argues that a mind is a system of causally integrated perceptions (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261). As such, a mind is a composite thing: at any given time, it has diverse "co-existent parts" (T 1.4.6.22; SBN 263); over time, it is a "succession of perceptions," that is, something that has diverse temporal parts (T 1.4.2.20; SBN 261).[7] More specifically, a mind is a composite thing whose parts are all its perceptions. Hume makes this especially clear in his "Abstract" of the *Treatise*, where he says that our "several particular perceptions . . . *compose* the mind" (T Abs 28; SBN 658, italics in original); and in the Appendix, where he says "'Tis the composition of these [perceptions], therefore, which forms the self" (T App 15; SBN 634). So, if Ainslie thinks that "Of personal identity" makes no further metaphysical claims about minds, following its opening paragraphs, then I believe he is wrong about this. (Hume sometimes qualifies his metaphysical claims about the mind with phrases like "as far as we can conceive it," or "have [a] notion of it": for example, see T Abs 28 (SBN 657) and T App 19 (SBN 635). For ease of exposition, I will suppress these qualifications, as Hume himself often does.)

Because of his claim that minds are systems composed of perceptions, Hume owes us an answer to a further metaphysical question about minds. To see this, consider my perceptions, that is, the ones in the system that is my mind. Call these perceptions "the *x*s." For Hume, the *x*s compose a mind. Now consider, in contrast, one half of my perceptions (say, the ones that make up the first temporal half of my mental life) and one half of yours (say, the perceptions that make up the second temporal half of your mental life). Call all these perceptions, taken together, "the *y*s." For Hume, the *y*s do not compose a mind: there is no mind or system that includes both the first half of my perceptions and the second half of yours. We can therefore ask: when several perceptions compose a mind, in virtue of what do they do so? For example, in virtue of what do the *x*s compose a mind, the *y*s not? Let us call this the Composition Question. Hume owes us at least a qualified answer to this question: an answer of the form "as far as we can conceive it, the *x*s compose a mind in virtue of. . . ." So, if Ainslie thinks that, having discovered that a mind is a bundle of perceptions, Hume does not owe us answers to any further metaphysical questions about minds, then I believe he is wrong about this.

Later in his book, Ainslie may mean to argue that Hume does not owe us an answer to the Composition Question. He claims that, for Hume, "the bundling of perceptions into minds" is "a brute fact," that is, one with no explanation (HTS 264n42). By "the bundling of perceptions into minds," Ainslie may mean *the composition of a mind by its perceptions*. If so, then he is saying that, when several perceptions compose a mind, this fact about them is "brute"

or inexplicable. In other words, there is nothing *in virtue of which* they compose a mind—they just do, and that's all there is to say.[8] If this were Hume's view, then he would not owe us an answer to the Composition Question: by his lights, this question would have no answer.

However, I do not think Hume can consistently accept that this fact about composition is brute. Composition is a *relation* between the parts and the whole. If it were a brute fact that several perceptions compose a mind, then composition would have to be a basic or fundamental kind of relation, that is, one that is not explained in terms of any further relations. (If composition *were* explained in terms of some further relations—for example, in terms of the parts' being causally integrated—then the fact that several perceptions compose a mind *would not* be brute: it would be explained in terms of the fact that these further relations obtain among the perceptions.) But composition does not appear on Hume's list of the seven basic kinds of "philosophical relations": resemblance, identity, spatiotemporal relations, quantitative relations, qualitative relations, contrariety, and causation (T 1.1.5; SBN 13–15). So, Hume cannot consistently regard the fact that several perceptions compose a mind as brute.[9]

I therefore believe Ainslie is wrong, if he means to say that Hume regards facts about the composition of a mind by perceptions as brute. But I cannot find any other reason, in *Hume's True Scepticism*, to deny that Hume owes us an answer to the Composition Question. And so, I think Ainslie is too quick to conclude that Hume does not owe us answers to any further metaphysical questions about minds, beyond those addressed in the opening paragraphs of the section "Of personal identity."

This opens the possibility that Hume's second thoughts about "Of personal identity" concern his inability to answer the Composition Question satisfactorily—not, as Ainslie claims, his inability to answer the Psychological Question satisfactorily.

3. Hume's Self-Doubts

In the Appendix, Hume claims to see a problem with his account of "the principle of connexion, which binds [all our particular perceptions] together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity," or "the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness" (T App 20; SBN 635–36). As Barry Stroud observes in *Hume* (135), these descriptions are ambiguous. Hume might mean that he cannot satisfactorily explain "what actually unites our successive perceptions into one mind or one consciousness—what actually ties them together to make up one mind." In other words, he might mean that he cannot satisfactorily answer the Composition Question. Alternatively, Hume might mean "that he has no hope of explaining what features of our perceptions and what principles of the mind combine to produce in us the thought or belief that we are individual minds." In other words, he might mean that he cannot satisfactorily answer the Psychological Question.

In keeping with his view that "Of personal identity" focuses on the Psychological Question, Ainslie argues for the latter option. He claims that Hume's second thoughts do not touch his metaphysics of minds (HTS 257). Instead, they concern his answer to the Psychological Question. In Ainslie's view, "Of personal identity" argues that associations among our *ideas*

of our perceptions, or *secondary ideas*, cause us (introspecting philosophers) to attribute unity to the primary perceptions we observe by means of those secondary ideas. The problem is that Hume's approach does not allow him to explain why we believe that our secondary ideas are unified with our primary perceptions. Of course, Hume could posit *tertiary* ideas, that is, ideas of secondary ideas, to explain why we believe that our secondary ideas are unified with our primary perceptions. But this would not solve the problem: it would not explain why we believe that *all* our perceptions are unified together, because it would not explain why we believe that our *tertiary* ideas are so unified.

When Ainslie first presented this interpretation, in his "Hume's Reflections on the Identity and Simplicity of Mind," he met with the following objection:[10] Hume can easily solve the problem that Ainslie raises, by giving up the claim (if he ever made it) that anyone has a belief about *all* his or her perceptions. Hume can say that reflecting on one's primary perceptions by means of secondary ideas leads one to believe that all one's primary perceptions are unified. If one then reflects on one's secondary ideas, by means of tertiary ideas, this will induce the further belief that one's secondary ideas are unified with one's primary perceptions. And so forth. Hume need not say that anyone ever has a belief about *all* his or her perceptions.

Ainslie now makes clear that this objection is off target. Hume *must* say that at least one person has a belief about all his perceptions: namely, *Hume himself*, when he states his own view in "Of personal identity." In giving his answer to the Psychological Question, Hume himself "knows that his mind includes both observed and unobserved perceptions"—that is, both primary perceptions and the secondary ideas that Hume's theory posits—"both of which he takes to be present in the *same mind*" (HTS 255, italics in original). So, Hume now has what Ainslie calls a "new belief in mental unity—not the belief that the observed perceptions are unified, but the belief that the secondary ideas are unified along with the observed perceptions" (HTS 255). The problem is that Hume cannot explain this "new belief in mental unity." He cannot explain why *he himself* believes his secondary (and tertiary, quaternary, and so on) ideas to be unified together with his primary perceptions.

I think this interpretation is unsatisfactory as it stands. In the section "Of personal identity," Hume appeals to associations among secondary ideas in order to explain the belief that our minds have *perfect identity* and *perfect simplicity* (T 1.4.6.6, 1.4.6.22; SBN 253–55, 263). Hume himself does not share this belief. On the contrary, he rejects it. By his lights, it involves an "improper" and "inexact" use of ideas. The ideas of perfect identity and perfect simplicity cannot be derived from a variable, interrupted and composite thing, such as a mind. For Hume, if an idea cannot be derived from an object, then "it can never in any propriety or exactness be apply'd to it" (T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37).[11] So, when we apply the ideas of perfect identity and perfect simplicity to our minds, in order to form the belief that our minds have perfect identity and perfect simplicity, we are using these ideas improperly and inexactly. As Hume puts it, "we attribute identity, *in an improper sense*, to variable or interrupted objects" (T 1.4.6.7; SBN 255, italics added; note how this echoes the language of T 1.2.3.11; SBN 37).

Hume's own beliefs about the mind do not involve applying the ideas of perfect identity and perfect simplicity to it. For him, "the true idea of the human mind" represents a system

of causally integrated perceptions that *lacks* perfect identity and perfect simplicity (T 1.4.6.19, 1.4.6.22; SBN 261, 263). So, Hume does not have the kind of belief in mental unity that he explains in terms of the associations among secondary ideas described in "Of personal identity." So, I see no reason to think that he would wish to explain his own beliefs about the mind in terms of these associations. And so, even if Ainslie is right that Hume could not satisfactorily explain his own beliefs about the mind in terms of these associations, I see no reason to think that Hume would regard this as a problem.

If this argument is correct, it shows that there is a lacuna in Ainslie's interpretation, as presented in *Hume's True Scepticism*. Ainslie owes us a reason to think that Hume would wish to explain his own beliefs about the mind in terms of the associations described in "Of personal identity," even though these beliefs do not involve the "improper" and "inexact" applications of ideas that he explains in terms of these associations.

Whether or not Hume's answer to the Psychological Question is problematic in the way Ainslie says, I do not think this can be the only problem that Hume means to raise in the Appendix. In paragraph 10 of the Appendix, Hume announces that he will "present the arguments on both sides," starting with those that led him "to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being" (T App 10; SBN 633). That is, he will start with arguments for a metaphysical claim: the claim that a mind lacks strict and proper (or *perfect*) identity and simplicity. The next nine paragraphs, 11–19, then present arguments in favor of this metaphysical claim. It is left to paragraphs 20 and 21—those that contain Hume's second thoughts—to present the promised other "side." So, these two paragraphs must contain an argument *against* Hume's metaphysical claim that a mind lacks strict and proper identity and simplicity. If they presented a purely psychological argument, with no implications for Hume's metaphysics of mind, then they would not constitute another "side" to the nine metaphysically-focused paragraphs that precede them.[12]

I therefore believe that Hume's second thoughts arose because he cannot satisfactorily answer the Composition Question. Ainslie would classify this proposal as a "bundling interpretation" (HTS 262–65). He rejects such interpretations on the grounds that "Hume seems to treat it as a brute fact that when we reflect, we observe a limited set of perceptions" (HTS 264). I find this puzzling: as an objection to the kind of interpretation I favor, it seems to be a non-sequitur. The "brute fact" that Ainslie mentions here concerns *introspection* (or "reflection"), not *composition*. Even if Ainslie is right that Hume considers this fact about introspection "brute," I cannot see why this is a problem for the view that Hume's second thoughts concern his inability to answer the Composition Question. In a note added to the same paragraph on page 264, Ainslie says that Hume "take[s] the bundling of perceptions into minds as a brute fact" (HTS 264n42). As discussed in section 2, this claim might mean that Hume regards *the composition of a mind by its perceptions* as a brute fact. If so, then he would think the Composition Question needs no answer. But I have argued that Hume cannot consistently regard this fact about composition as brute (section 2). So, if this is Ainslie's objection to my preferred kind of interpretation, then I think it fails.

However, I am not sure that Ainslie has this kind of interpretation clearly in view. His category of "bundling interpretations" seems to include both what we might call *introspection interpretations*, on which Hume's second thoughts concern his inability to explain the fact that each mind's introspective view is limited to its own perceptions; and what we might call *composition interpretations*, on which Hume's second thoughts concern his inability to explain the composition of a mind by its perceptions. Perhaps Ainslie has refuted introspection interpretations, but—for the reasons given above—I do not think he has refuted composition interpretations.

In any case, I do not think Ainslie need be hostile to composition interpretations as such. My own composition interpretation of the Appendix is indebted to Ainslie's interpretation for its structure.[13] Briefly, I have argued that Hume's problem is a conflict between his metaphysics of mind and his view of the part-whole relation. According to Hume, a mind is a composite thing: it is a whole, whose parts are all its perceptions. But composition is ideal, not real: our minds provide the glue that binds parts into a whole; and, in order for a mind to do this, it must contain a further perception (or perceptions) of the parts that are to be bound. Consequently, a mind cannot bind *all* its perceptions into a whole, as Hume's metaphysics of mind requires: in order to do so, it must, *per impossibile*, contain a further perception (or perceptions) of them. This interpretation has the same structure as Ainslie's: according to both him and me, Hume fails to explain a feature of *all* a mind's perceptions because—in order to explain this feature—his account posits a further perception, or perceptions, to which that account does not extend. So, perhaps Ainslie and I can agree that Hume's second thoughts concern *both* the psychology *and* the metaphysics presented in "Of personal identity."

NOTES

1 References to "T" are to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Norton and Norton, followed by Book, part, section and, where appropriate, paragraph number (references to paragraphs of the Appendix to the *Treatise* and of Hume's "Abstract of a Book Lately Published" are preceded by "App" and "Abs," respectively). Each of these citations is followed by the corresponding page numbers in Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch, set off by "SBN."

2 References to "HTS" are to Ainslie, *Hume's True Scepticism*, followed by page number.

3 Adapted versions of this paragraph and the one following it appear in my forthcoming work, "Representation and Copying in Hume's *Treatise* and Later Works." I thank the editors of *Hume Studies* for their permission to re-use this material there.

4 Once, Ainslie seems to deny this: he says that ideas copied from passions "are not imagistic" (HTS 59n25). (I thank Hsueh Qu for pointing this out to me.) But I do not think Ainslie means to deny that these ideas "portray" passions and in this sense have "image-content" (HTS 132). When he says that these ideas "are not imagistic," I presume he means that they are not images in some

stronger, more demanding sense of "image": for example, that they are not *sensory* (visual, tactile, gustatory, and so on) images.

5 For fuller and more nuanced discussions of what "naturalism" can mean in philosophy, and of Hume's naturalism, see Garrett, "Hume's Naturalistic Theory of Representation."

6 I develop the argument of this paragraph more fully in Cottrell, "Representation and Copying in Hume's *Treatise* and Later Works."

7 For helpful discussion of Hume's concept of a "succession," see Baxter, *Hume's Difficulty*, ch. 2 and 3.

8 I am unsure whether Ainslie means that Hume regards the composition of a mind by its perceptions as "brute" or inexplicable. Ainslie seems to treat the following claims as equivalent: 1) it is a brute fact that perceptions are bundled into minds (HTS 246n42); and 2) it is a brute fact that, when we reflect, we observe a limited set of perceptions (HTS 246). Claim (2) is about *introspection* (or "reflection"), not about *composition*. So, claim (2) does not seem to mean that the composition of a mind by its perceptions is brute. If (1) is equivalent to (2), then presumably (1) does not mean that the composition of a mind by its perceptions is brute, either.

9 Some scholars may deny that Hume regards composition as a relation between parts and whole. For Hume, they may say, talking of "a system" is not a way of talking about one whole composed by many perceptions; instead, it is just a convenient way of talking about the many perceptions (for example, see Baxter, 25–26). But there would still be a further metaphysical question to which Hume owes us an answer. Consider my perceptions again. Even if these perceptions do not compose a whole, they are nonetheless related to each other in a distinctive way; let us say they are *co-mental*. In contrast, none of my perceptions is related to any of your perceptions in this distinctive way: none of my perceptions is co-mental with any of yours. Hume therefore owes us an answer to the Co-Mentality Question: When several perceptions are co-mental, in virtue of what are they so? Hume cannot consistently say that facts about co-mentality are "brute" or inexplicable, because *co-mentality* does not appear on his list of the seven basic kinds of relation. So, facts about co-mentality must be explained by facts about further relations. And so, such facts cannot be brute. Readers who deny that Hume regards composition as a relation can substitute the Co-Mentality Question for the Composition Question throughout my discussion.

10 One often encounters this objection in conversation. For published versions, see Ellis, "The Contents of Hume's Appendix and the Source of His Despair," 212–13; and Penelhum, "Hume, Identity, and Selfhood," in *Themes in Hume: The Self, the Will, Religion*, 117–19 and 125.

11 In what sense is it "improper" or "inexact" to apply an idea to an object from which it cannot be derived? It is hard to determine Hume's answer to this question. (For discussion, see Cottrell, "A Puzzle about Fictions in the *Treatise*.") I try to avoid taking a stand on this issue by saying that Hume *rejects* the belief that one's mind has perfect identity and simplicity. Perhaps he rejects it because he regards it as *false*; but perhaps he rejects it because he regards it as *unjustified* or *incoherent*, or in some other way defective.

12 For a fuller presentation of this argument, see Cottrell, "Minds, Composition, and Hume's Skepticism in the Appendix," 535–43.

13 Cottrell, "Minds, Composition, and Hume's Skepticism in the Appendix."

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