

What Did Hume Have in Mind – on impressions and ideas

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- (i) *the simple view* - the mind is occupied by perceptions and perceptions divide into impressions and ideas according to the level of their force and vivacity

I. problems with the simple view

- (1) recollections are „somewhat betwixt an impression and an idea“ - T 1.1.3.1
- (2) „ideas of memory ... are equivalent to impressions“ - T 1.3.4.1
- (3) unmotivated shifting between „impressions of memory“ - T 1.3.5.1 (also T 1.3.6.6; T 1.3.10.9; and T 1.4.2.43) and “ideas of memory” (T 1.3.5.3-6)
- (4) „these impressions or ideas of memory“ - T 1.3.9.3
- (5) “in sleep, in a fever, in madness, /.../ , our ideas may approach to our impressions” - T 1.1.1.1
- (6) „The effect, then, of belief is to raise up a simple idea to an equality with our impressions, and bestow on it a like influence on the passions. This effect it can only have by making an idea approach an impression in force and vivacity.“ - T 1.3.10.3
- (7) „... it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas.“ - T 1.1.1.1 (also T 3.1.2.1)

II. alternative criteria

(ii) being correlative to a particular mental faculty/function

- (8) “and under this name /impressions/ I comprehend all our *sensations, passions and emotions*, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in *thinking and reasoning* ...” - T 1.1.1.3 (also T 1.1.7.5; T 1.3.1.7; T 1.3.7.5; T 2.1.11.7)

(iii) resistance to free manipulation

- (9) “all simple ideas may be separated by the imagination, and may be united again in what form it please” - T 1.1.4.1

(iv) genealogy

where do they come from?

(v) veridicality

do they bring truth?

(vi) impenetrability versus blending (T. Demeter, 2014)

(10) “Ideas never admit of a total union, but are endow’d with a kind of impenetrability, by which they exclude each other, and are capable of forming a compound by their conjunction, not by their mixture. On the other hand, impressions and passions are susceptible of an entire union and like colours, may be blended so perfectly together, that each of them may lose itself, and contribute only to vary that uniform impression, which arises from the whole.” (T 2.2.6.1)

III. Interrelations, hierarchy?

- memory explained (iii + v *vs.* iv)
- delirium explained (ii + v *vs.* iii + iv)

IV. Conclusions

- the simple view is not correct (if based on a conception of force and vivacity as something primitive)
 - the six criteria and their interrelations deserve attention
 - did Hume ever think the distinctions made on the basis of the six criteria are coextensive?
 - mature Hume makes force and vivacity a label attached to the truly primitive phenomenon called belief (from the Appendix on, with the Abstract already on the way)
- (11) “An idea assented to feels different from a fictitious idea/.../: And this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior force, or vivacity, or solidity, or firmness, or steadiness. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of the mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. /.../ But its true and proper name is belief” - T 1.3.7.7. (inserted from the Appendix) (also Abstract 22; and EU 5.12)
- the role of Henry Home
 - multicriterialism and pluralism in general