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**TIME AND THE SELF: A RE-EXAMINATION OF HUME'S ACCOUNT OF
PERSONAL IDENTITY**

JON CHARLES MILLER



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0-612-76616-0

**TIME AND THE SELF: A RE-EXAMINATION OF HUME'S ACCOUNT OF
PERSONAL IDENTITY.**

Jon C. Miller

ABSTRACT

According to Hume, all true ideas must have distinct preceding impressions. Since there is no distinct impression of the self, Hume states the self is merely a succession of perceptions. Similarly, Hume states that time, as the idea of succession, does not derive from a distinct impression, but is simply the "manner" (succession) in which perceptions appear. However, since Hume says that we perceive the manner, we must perceive *some type* of impression for succession, which means that Hume paradoxically asserts that we can distinguish succession as the manner, yet this ability to distinguish the manner from the perceptions does not mean succession itself is a distinct impression. Hume's problem then is to show convincingly how it is possible to somehow isolate succession from the perceptions in succession so as to notice the manner, yet still be able to answer what then is succeeding. Although Hume fails to solve this Succession Puzzle, a solution can be found within his philosophical principles.

This thesis tries to show that Hume does not recognize the different structures between time and space, and confuses time as both succession and duration. Hume does this even though it is evident that in his philosophy duration is a fiction and succession is a primordial relation, evidenced in his "Copy Principle," which stipulates that all ideas have their corresponding preceding impressions. Additionally Hume's analysis of time also shows that temporal parts

(perceptions within the succession) do not themselves have temporal length, so that perceptions are non-temporal. Moreover there are different levels of awareness of time depending on the workings of the memory and imagination. Also the *particular* idea of time is tenseless (where the before and after perceptions of the tenseless succession are neither instantaneous nor events) and the nominally *abstract* idea of time is tensed. Furthermore, memory constructs the “arrow of time” as it discovers and applies succession onto the tenseless perceptions, and this direction of time is evident in both the Copy Principle and in the movement from the particular to the nominally abstract ideas of time.

This thesis tries to show that, since time is actually the self, the self exists within all the realms of tensed time, yet is more favourably placed as the future. Consequently, since time and the self are one and the same, the question of personal identity is meaningless due to the fact that there can be no self *at a time* nor *over time*.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analysis of Hume's account of personal identity in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, and his subsequent dissatisfaction with it. This thesis will argue that the problem revolves around an apparent puzzle involving succession and the perceptions that are within succession. Unfortunately, by overlooking important areas of his own analysis Hume does not discover the solution to this puzzle. However, I hope to show that his own principles provide a quite radical answer to his predicament. My final conclusion is that (1) the self is time and, thus, (2) the traditional question of personal identity has no real meaning; and that (3) the self exists mainly as the future.

In Chapter One, I present the Succession Puzzle, and propose a solution to it. I show that Hume has trouble explaining his concept of time. He wishes to say that time is not an impression, but is the *manner* as to how various perceptions appear. Yet, if the manner (i.e., succession) can be distinguished from the perceptions, then it would seem that succession is distinctly perceived. Hume needs to show how time, as succession, can be distinguished from the perceptions within any succession, while also showing that succession itself is not a distinct perception. As I show, Hume fails to arrive at a solution to this Succession Puzzle. However, through a careful analysis of his *Treatise*, I propose a solution that is derived from his own principles.

Robert McRae has alerted us to an important disanalogy between Hume's conceptions of time and space. Both time and space are analysed together in Book One of the *Treatise*; yet Hume

fails to notice that there is an important structural difference between them, in that although time and space both have *parts*, the parts of space are *uncountable* and yet *measurable*, whereas the parts of time are *immeasurable* while also being *countable*. Not seeing this structural difference, Hume becomes confused so that he describes time as both succession and duration. As a result, he fails to see the answer to the Succession Puzzle. That answer, as I intend to show, derives from combining the results of time's structure with the operation of Hume's Copy Principle (which states that all impressions produce their idea copies, and which is essentially the *retentive* aspect of memory; or the ability to carry forward past experiences whether we are aware of them or not), and Hume's Separability Principle (which states that the imagination has the ability to separate all distinct perceptions). Through this interplay between the memory and the imagination, succession can be regarded as both separate and inseparable from the perceptions, depending upon what stage of the process of awareness one wishes to focus.

After proposing this solution, I compare how McTaggart and Hume view the nature of the 'parts' of the self, and also deal with Thomas Reid's well-known objection to Hume's account of memory. Also, I show how Hume explains why we have a notion of the self and its identity. I next criticize an argument by Donald Baxter concerning the supposed temporal length of individual perceptions, yet end up by endorsing his important claim concerning the complex nature of time and its different rates of successions. This latter claim is crucial for explaining the notion of change in Humean time in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Two, I take the results garnered in the previous chapter and combine them with Donald Livingston's analysis of Humean time, from which we learn that Hume's notion of time

has both a tenseless and a tensed aspect that coincides respectively with Hume's notion of the particular (individual) and abstract (general) ideas of time respectively. However, I argue against Livingston's claim that the former aspect of time is externally real and the latter, fictionally subjective, and claim instead that *both* aspects of time -- the particular tenseless idea of time and the abstract tensed idea of time -- are subjectively real.

From the above result I then elaborate on the connection between time and the self and, moreover, explain why the self defies introspection. By combining the Humean notions of time and self, I submit that the concept of personal identity is misguided. Since the self is synonymous with time, there can be no self that exists *at* a time (synchronic), nor *over* time (diachronic). Yet there is a self that exists *as* time.

I next relate the above results to Derek Parfit's neo-Humean claims concerning personal identity. I show that Parfit is correct to dismiss the notion of personal identity, but that his own position does not sufficiently take into account the temporal nature of psychological states. For although Parfit is correct to claim that there is no self that exists invariably through time, there is an invariable self (invariable succession) that does exist *as* time against a non-temporal external reality. Furthermore, although Parfit establishes that there is an asymmetrical relationship between ourselves and the immediate future, I argue, contrary to his own explanation of this relationship, that this asymmetry exists because the temporal self, as the present and the past, desires completeness with itself, or desires that it be the future. This hypothesis does not mean that there are three selves, but merely that the one self, as time, exists as all three realms of tensed time (its abstract self), but is asymmetrically situated as to the future realm of tensed time.

Following this discussion of Parfit, I focus on Kant, for admittedly my reading of Hume is somewhat Kantian. However, I prefer to say that Kant is more of a Humean than has been previously thought that Hume is a Kantian. I show how Hume's notion of the self as time provides a superior explanation to that of Kant's analysis as to why there is an intuited notion of time: not only does Hume's analysis bring more detail into the process than Kant does, but Hume removes the ambiguity in Kant's analysis of the mind's initial encounter with perceptions. Hume can explain this process without having to import *a priori* notions of time.

In Chapter Three, I focus on some problems in McTaggart's notion of time, particularly in his analysis of change. In opposition to McTaggart's claim that change appears *only* in the A series or tensed realm of time, I show that Humean time has a special nature of change in that there are different or changing rates of succession (although the rates of succession are not *timed* but are rates inherent to time itself). However, I also point out that this does not change succession into non-succession, thereby explaining how there is an invariable self (as time) that nonetheless incorporates change. I also show that, with Bertrand Russell's neo-Humean analysis of memory, we can be confident in knowing that our simple ideas are indeed copies of their preceding impressions. Russell's notion that there is a "feeling of pastness" about ostensible memory is really the past being applied onto the retained veridical perceptions.

In Chapter Four, I take the results of the previous three chapters and apply them to a close analysis of Hume's section in the Treatise entitled "Of Personal Identity." I show that the problems that he has concerning the Bundle Theory are a direct result of his inability to solve the Succession Puzzle. I also show how his notion of the self and its parts fundamentally differs

from McTaggart's notion of the self, in that how each philosopher views the nature of perceptions entails how each views the nature of the self. I also show that it is Hume's failure which forces him to acknowledge his failure in regards to personal identity in the Appendix to the Treatise.

I wish to thank David Raynor for supervising this thesis and Akira Kume for his helpful criticisms of an earlier paper on these themes.

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August, 2002

CHAPTER 1

THE SUCCESSION PUZZLE

I

In A Treatise of Human Nature,¹ Hume states that “from the succession of ideas and impressions we form the idea of time” (Treatise I, II, III, 35).² However, this conclusion is somewhat problematic. For, according to Hume: “The idea of time is not deriv’d from a particular impression mix’d up with others, and plainly distinguishable from them, but arises altogether from the manner, in which impressions appear to the mind” (Treatise I, II, III, 36). Consequently, since time does not appear “as any primary distinct impression, [it] can plainly be nothing but different ideas, or impressions, or objects dispos’d in a certain manner, that is, succeeding each other” (Treatise I, II, III, 37). Thus it seems that succession is somehow both inseparable from the perceptions that make up the succession, and yet, although not “*plainly* distinguishable,” or “*primary* distinct,” is nevertheless vaguely distinguishable as the “manner” in which they “appear to the mind.” But how is it possible to distinguish the “manner,” or succession of perceptions, from the perceptions themselves, while simultaneously claiming that succession is not in some way “distinct” from the perceptions? Given this apparent puzzle,

¹ Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. All parenthetical references to the *Treatise* show book number, part, section, and page number in that order.

² However, it should also be noted that for Hume, “the idea of time, being deriv’d from the succession of our perceptions of every kind, ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensation, will afford us an instance of an abstract idea” (Treatise I, II, III, 34-35). Thus there are really two ideas of time for Hume. In chapter one I will deal only with the *particular* idea of time. In chapter two I will then combine this analysis with the *abstract* idea of time.

Hume struggles to find the appropriate language to use in his analysis of time. When he declares that it is “impossible to shew the impression . . . [for] the idea of time” (Treatise I, II, V, 65), he does not necessarily mean that there is no impression of time. Similarly, as we have seen, when he says that the “idea of time is not deriv’d from a particular impression mix’d up with others, and plainly distinguishable from them” (Treatise I, II, III, 36), he only means to deny that there is an impression of time that is “plainly distinguishable” from the perceptions, not that such an impression of time cannot be distinguished at all. Consequently, although Hume is not able to “shew” how time is an impression, this does not lead him to completely dismiss time as a genuine impression. The idea of time, although not “plainly distinguishable,” is nonetheless in some way distinguishable as succession. Since “every idea, that is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination; and as every idea, that is separable by the imagination, may be conceiv’d to be separately existent” (Treatise I, II, V, 54),³ succession can also “be conceiv’d to be separately existent.” Unfortunately, Hume gives no clear explanation as to how succession can be separate from the perceptions, while also remaining inseparable. Nonetheless, I believe that an answer to this Succession Puzzle is to be found within the Treatise.

In Book One of the Treatise Hume’s analysis of time (Treatise I, II, I-IV, 26-53, and I, IV, II, 195-220) is largely intertwined with his analysis of space, and it has been observed that he “is very dependent for his account of time upon its analogy with space.”⁴ So it will be instructive to look at the analogy between them. Hume says:

. . . the capacity of the mind is not infinite; consequently no idea of extension or duration consists of an infinite number of parts or inferior ideas, but of a

³ The Separability Principle.

⁴ McRae, Robert. “The Import of Hume’s Theory of Time,” Hume Studies, 6 (Nov. 1980), p. 122.

finite number, and these simple and indivisible: 'Tis therefore possible for space and time to exist conformable to this idea: And if it be possible, 'tis certain they actually do exist conformable to it; since their infinite divisibility is utterly impossible and contradictory.

(Treatise I, II, IV, 39)

Thus Hume makes a connection between space and time by way of the common problem of infinite divisibility.⁵ However, he also makes a crucial distinction between space and time:

. . . space or extension consists of a number of co-existent parts dispos'd in a certain order, and capable of being at once present to the sight or feeling. On the contrary, time or succession, tho' it consists likewise of parts, never presents to us more than one at once; nor is it possible for any two of them ever to be co-existent.

(Treatise II, III, VII, 429)

This "certain order" of co-existent parts of space is also fundamentally a succession for even the co-existent perceptions (impressions and ideas) of space are subject to the Copy Principle, which stipulates that "impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas" (Treatise I, I, I, 5) and that "all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas" (Treatise I, I, I, 3). Thus space is really a co-existence built within a succession (time). However only time is pure succession. In response to Hume's distinction between space and time, McRae observes that a "point [or unit of space] is indivisible by virtue of having no extension . . . [However, time] is indivisible by virtue of having within it no successiveness. It is,

⁵ Hume's argument against infinite divisibility is "that the capacity of the mind is limited, and can never attain a full and adequate conception of infinity . . . 'Tis also obvious, that whatever is capable of being divided *in infinitum*, must consist of an infinite number of parts, and that 'tis impossible to set any bounds to the number of parts, without setting bounds at the same time to the division. It requires scarce any induction to conclude from hence, that the *idea*, which we form of any finite quality, is not infinitely divisible . . ." (Treatise, I, II, I, 26-27)

for Hume. succession, not the duration of philosophers and the vulgar, which is the analogue of extension.”⁶ McRae’s conclusion is based upon Hume’s well-known illustration:

Five notes play’d on a flute give us the impression and idea of time; tho’ time be not a sixth impression, which presents itself to the hearing or any other of the senses. Nor is it a sixth impression, which the mind by reflection finds in itself . . . But here it only takes notice of the *manner*, in which the different sounds make their appearance; and that it may afterwards consider without considering these particular sounds, but may conjoin it with any other objects.
(Treatise I. II, III, 36-37)⁷

In commenting upon this example, McRae remarks:

. . . suppose that the notation for the five notes indicates, in this order, two half notes, a quarter note, and two eighth notes . . . As heard, each of the five notes is equally a perfect and indivisible moment in Hume’s time theory for none contains any succession within itself. Succession applies only to the notes together. It is by a fiction or falsehood that we say that the first two notes are each sustained for twice as long as the third will be and four times as long as each of the fourth and fifth notes will be. The measurable continuum of extension is real for Hume. The measurable continuum of duration is not. It is a fiction.

Consequently, the “parts [of time] are not measurable but only countable, like the five notes on the flute. Only fictitious duration is continuous and measurable.”⁸ Thus in Hume’s analogy there is “a marked phenomenological difference between the two [space and time], namely that in extension the indivisible units are indiscernible, but in succession they are discernible and necessarily so.”⁹ However, there is a slight oversight here both in Hume’s analogy and McRae’s analysis of it. According to Hume’s empiricist principles, “impressions always take the

⁶ McRae, p. 122.

⁷ This quotation further illustrates that Hume believes succession can somehow be distinct from the perceptions, in that the mind “only takes notice of the *manner*, in which the different sounds make their appearance; and that it may afterwards consider [this manner] without considering these particular sounds.”

⁸ I take McRae’s use of the term ‘countable’ not to imply that at this immediate level of awareness there is the concept of number, but merely that the perceptions are *capable* of being counted or would be countable if the mind possessed the concept of numbers.

⁹ McRae, pp. 122-123.

precedence of their correspondent ideas” (Treatise I, I, I, 5), so that “all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas” (Treatise I, I, I, 3). Therefore all perceptions come in impression/idea pairs, where an impression always precedes its counterpart idea. Thus even a single note of the flute is in succession. Let us suppose that each of the five notes is of a different musical tone, so that each note is a distinct impression leading to its counterpart idea. If the first note is an e-major, I receive the succession of the impression of e-major moving to the idea of e-major. And if the second note is c-minor, I also receive the succession of the impression of c-minor moving to the idea of c-minor, etc. Consequently, succession is not only present in the successive notes of the flute, but is also inherent in the Copy Principle, according to which the impression of the note precedes the idea of the note. Thus the fictional duration that McRae says that we apply onto the notes themselves, in fact, masks another succession of two perceptions, an impression and its immediately following idea. McRae is still correct in his observation that individual perceptions do not have successiveness within them. But the *parts* of time that both Hume and McRae speak of are not simply the individual flute notes they are also the individual impressions and ideas. However, it would seem that Hume overlooks this basic fact derived from his own Copy Principle, and consequently is worried as to how to explain the supposed duration that we fictionally apply onto each flute note.¹⁰ For unfortunately, as McRae points out, in Hume “we find no distinction between space and extension, nor between time and duration,”¹¹ and consequently this conflation (which Hume makes of succession and duration) does not allow him to find the solution he seeks

¹⁰ This oversight by Hume is also evident when he analyzes the whirling movement of a burning piece of coal (Treatise I, II, III, 35). See below p. 25.

¹¹ McRae, p. 120.

to the Succession Puzzle. This is because, at bottom, Hume's analogy between space and time is really "a disanalogy of considerable significance" due to their different structures. Thus, as McRae also points out, space and time are fundamentally different in that time's parts are *countable* but not *measurable*.¹² Yet, what is capable of being counted is not just the individual notes but the individual perceptions as well.

However, it may be objected that, if the parts of time are the individual perceptions and not the individual notes, then the parts of time are not really any different from the parts of space in that both are indeterminably indivisible and thus can only be counted but not measured. However, the use of the terms "countable" and "measurable" are not those of the vulgar, but of philosophers. The definitions of "countable" and "measurable" have to be seen in relation to the other fundamental difference between space and time that McRae reminds us of, namely that space has co-existent parts and time has successive parts. This dissimilarity accounts for the major difference between the countability and measurability of time and space. Because temporal parts only arrive into the mind in a succession or one *at a time*, they can only be counted but not measured. However, since space presents to us its indivisible co-existent parts all at once, they appear as a complex impression or a complex of simple impressions. For example, the nature of the complex impression leads Hume to make an exception to his rule that "*all our ideas and impressions are resembling*" (Treatise I, I, I, 3).

. . . many of our complex ideas never had impressions, that correspond to them, and that many of our complex impressions never are exactly copied into ideas . . . I have seen *Paris*; but shall I affirm I can form such an idea of that city, as will perfectly represent all its streets and houses in their real and just proportions?

¹² Ibid. p. 122.

(Treatise I, I, I, 3)

Thus, space *can* have a *measurable* extension in the sense that we can observe the complex impression all at once (Paris) although we have cannot *count* the individual impressions (houses, streets) that make up the complex impression. Since Hume does not see this important disanalogy between space and time, he erroneously believes that the parts of time (perceptions), like the parts of space, are measurable. From this he appears to believe that temporal parts themselves must have some kind of measurable duration, for the parts themselves cannot derive from succession or else, on pain of contradiction, they would be infinite. Therefore, this oversight on Hume's part leads him to the following dilemma: either time is fictional duration, or time has infinite parts. Hence Hume thought it is "impossible to shew the impression" (Treatise I, II, V, 65) of time, for he thought that temporal parts were measurable, which in turn would require treating time as duration instead of succession in order to explain how temporal parts endure. In light of McRae's analysis of the confusion that Hume makes between succession, duration, and the different constitutions of space and time, this seems a likely possibility. Consequently, it is now possible to explain how succession can be logically separated from the perceptions within the succession. We must combine the above results with the roles played by the memory and imagination.

Here G. F. Stout is helpful in distinguishing two senses of memory: retentiveness and reminiscence:

[Retentive memory is at issue when] whether we know it or not, the result of the bygone process of individual experience persists and is carried forward, as occasion requires, into subsequent experience. In memory as reminiscence,

on the other hand, what we are cognisant of, vaguely or definitely, is previous occurrence of a bygone experience itself as belonging to our past history.¹³

For Hume, there are also these two functions of memory evident in the Treatise. For even though in some parts of the Treatise, Hume seems to state that there is only one function memory in that for example, he asks in the section “Of Personal Identity,” “For what is the memory but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of the past perceptions?” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 260). However, this statement must be seen in light of others that Hume makes concerning the memory. Primarily are the definitions Hume makes concerning the memory at the beginning of the Treatise. Here Hume clearly shows that the memory is more than just the accessing of “past perceptions” or in other words the reminiscent aspect of memory. Hume states that the Copy Principle is an operation of a different function of the memory. Hume says,

An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or other. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impression of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflexion, because derived from it. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which perhaps in their turn give rise to other impressions.

(Treatise I, I, II, 8)

Clearly, this copying that is done by the memory¹⁴ is not reminiscence, but retentiveness, this retentiveness being the very essence of the Copy Principle and thus of succession. This is why

¹³ Stout, G. F. *Mind and Matter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931, p. 217. It should also be noted that although Stout’s is usually taken to be an original position on the aspects of memory, there is earlier scholarship outlining these distinctions. For example, see Henri Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* (1896), New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 78. See also Russell’s analysis of Bergsonian memory in *The Philosophy of Bergson* (1914), Reprint, Folcroft Library Edition, London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1971, pp. 7-9.

¹⁴ The fact that Hume describes the copying function as performed by both the memory *and* the imagination must not mislead us. For Hume, the imagination is the all-encompassing faculty of the mind and thus in one sense, includes the memory, yet there are nevertheless, clear differences between the memory and the imagination: the

Hume not only claims that there are two aspects of the memory, but clearly shows that it is the retentive aspect and not the reminiscent aspect which is paramount. Hume says,

'Tis evident, that the memory preserves the original form, in which its objects were presented, and that where-ever we depart from it in recollecting any thing, it proceeds from some defect or imperfection in that faculty. An historian may, perhaps, for the more convenient carrying on of his narration, relate an event before another, to which it was in fact posterior; relate an event before another, to which it was in fact posterior; but then he takes notice of this disorder, if he be exact; and by that means replaces the idea in its due position. 'Tis the same case in our recollection of those places and persons, with which we were formerly acquainted. The chief exercise of the memory is not to preserve the simple ideas, but their order and position.

(Treatise I, I, III, 9)

Therefore, the chief function of the memory is to preserve the order of ideas, this order, being of course, successional. Thus it is the retentive aspect of memory that, preserving the order in which the perceptions are made aware of, which then allows for the reminiscent aspect of memory to be able to reminisce upon them, and be able to correct itself provided there be no defect in the retentive function. However, neither the memory as retentive nor the memory as reminiscent (henceforth referred to as memory^{RET} and memory^{REM} respectively) is able to *separate* the individual ideas, for this is the exclusive function of the imagination. As Hume emphasizes: "Where-ever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily produce a separation" (Treatise I, I, III, 10); and, similarly, "wherever objects are different, they are distinguishable and separable by the imagination" (Treatise I, II, IV, 40); because "every idea, that is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination . . . [hence] every idea, that is separable by the imagination, may be conceiv'd to be separately existent" (Treatise I, II, V, 54).

memory's exclusive function as the Copy Principle, and the imagination's exclusive function as the Separability Principle.

Consequently, since the nature of time is such that it has *countable*, but not *measurable*, parts (as in perceptions that need to be scrutinized and individualized), the memory^{RET} is able to pass on the information of pure succession to the imagination, because all that the memory^{RET} is made *fully* aware of is the successions, and it is only *limitedly* aware of the perceptions within the succession. It is this information of succession, along with the perceptions themselves, that is received by the imagination before it separates the distinct perceptions within the succession. Thus the roles that both the memory^{RET} and the imagination play are crucial to understanding the nature of time as succession. Since neither aspect of the memory, retentiveness nor reminiscence, can separate distinct perceptions within any succession, the memory^{RET} merely acknowledges that the perceptions are in succession, and does so at a lower degree of awareness than is done by the imagination. The memory^{RET} only sees the parts of any succession as countable perceptions in a succession of before and after. Thus the successive perceptions are not properly *individualized* and classified within the succession until they move from the memory to the imagination. For it is only then, with the imagination, that a fuller distinction is made between the perceptions due to the imagination's function as the Separability Principle. What occurs then is that a fiction of duration is applied onto the perceptions by the imagination in order to explain why there is an apparent temporal lapse of the perceptions. For although the imagination initially receives the impression of succession from the memory, once the imagination has hold of the data, and registers all the fully individualized perceptions within succession, the succession itself appears to be inseparable from the perceptions in the

succession.¹⁵ Consequently, the initial encounter with any succession is of a separate impression from the actual perceptions. This is because what the memory^{RET} actually registers is not properly divided into actual concrete perceptions until the imagination works upon the succession of perceptions. Thus, at one level, that of the memory's^{RET} initial encounter, the succession is distinct from the perceptions within the succession while also essentially remaining a succession of perceptions. Therefore, it is possible for succession to be both separate and seemingly inseparable from the perceptions depending on what stage of the process one focuses on between the memory^{RET} and imagination. Hence we now have an answer to Hume's Succession Puzzle derived solely from principles found within the Treatise.

II

Hume states that:

ALL the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*; and under this name 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.

(Treatise I, I, I. 1)

As a result, it may be objected that, if impressions have more “force and violence” than ideas, then does this mean that the perceptions that arrive first into the mind (impressions) are also more

¹⁵ The actual reason as to why succession seems inseparable after the imagination has separated the distinct perceptions, is due to the simultaneous action by the imagination to create a tensed idea of time, thereby making succession mainly as the unknowable future. See chapters 2 and 3 for more detail on this phenomenon.

distinct than their counterpart ideas? The answer is “no.” because Hume seems in this passage to confuse the difference between degrees of *intensity* and degrees of *distinctness*. The easiest way to see that there is a difference between degrees of distinction and degrees of vivacity is to return to Hume’s example of the flute. Hearing the different notes one can easily separate the impressions of the notes played at the same volume. Thus they are in one way, fundamentally distinct. Of course, it is also possible that the volumes can change and thus one note will be more *intense* than another, but this difference in intensity is not required in order for one to see how the notes are already separated by the imagination. This confusion on Hume’s part between the difference that exists between degrees of distinction, which is the perceptions, and degrees of force, which is the qualities applied to those perceptions, contrasts with Hume’s indication that there is indeed a difference between distinction and vivacity: “Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. [However] The foregoing conclusion is not founded on any particular degree of vivacity. It therefore cannot be affected by any variation in that particular” (Treatise I, I, VII, 19). Therefore, if the ‘degree’ of vivacity is not what truly distinguishes impressions from ideas -- noticeably Hume does not rule out the possibility that an idea could become *more* vivacious than an impression --then the underlying distinction between them is merely that they are different. Additionally, there are passages towards the end Book One of the Treatise where Hume shows that he acknowledges the difference between degrees of distinctness and degrees of vivacity:

Experience is a principle, which instructs me in the several conjunctions of objects for the past. Habit is another principle, which determines me to expect the same for the future; and both of them conspiring to operate upon the imagination, make me form certain ideas in a more intense and lively manner,

than others, which are not attended with the same advantages. Without this quality, by which the mind enlivens some ideas beyond others (which seemingly is so trivial, and so little founded on reason) we cou'd never assent to any argument, nor carry our view beyond those few objects, which are present to our senses. Nay, even to these objects we cou'd never attribute any existence, but what was dependent on the senses; and must comprehend them entirely in that succession of perceptions, which constitutes our self or person. Nay farther, even with relation to that succession, we cou'd only admit of those perceptions, which are immediately present to our consciousness, nor cou'd those lively images, with which the memory presents us, be ever receiv'd as true pictures of past perceptions. The memory, senses, and understanding are, therefore, all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas.

(Treatise I. IV, VII, 265)

Thus Hume's concern here surrounding the imagination's ability through habit and experience to make some perceptions seem more vivacious and livelier is a different and equally necessary aspect of the imagination as is its function as the Separability Principle. After the perceptions have been separated by the imagination, it applies degrees of vivacity onto them, which explains why they seem livelier when remembered by the memory^{REM} than conjured up in a fantasy. Thus, as far as the memory^{REM} is concerned, Hume is correct to say that its function is founded on the imagination. But this is not so for the memory^{RET}, which, as we have seen, *precedes* both operations of the imagination.

However, as we have already seen, Hume does not always see the difference between degrees of distinction and degrees of vivacity. For example, he also states that:

We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea; and this it may do after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea; or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty, by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called the MEMORY, and the other the IMAGINATION. 'Tis evident at first sight, that

the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination, and that the former faculty paints its objects in more distinct colours, than any which are employ'd by the latter. When we remember any past event, the idea of it flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner; whereas in the imagination the perception is faint and languid, and cannot without difficulty be preserv'd by the mind stedly and uniform for any considerable time. Here then is a sensible difference betwixt one species of ideas and another.

(Treatise I. I. III. 8-9)

Now one can see immediately that Hume is confusing the vivacious impression with the less vivacious, or entirely languid, idea, and his oversight or confusion on Hume's part was zeroed in on by Thomas Reid, who writes:

. . .in defining what he [Hume] takes memory to be, he takes for granted that kind of memory which he rejects. For can we find by experience, that an impression, after its first appearance to the mind, makes a second, and a third, with different degrees of strength and vivacity, if we have not so distinct a remembrance of its first appearance, as, enables us to know it, upon its second and third, notwithstanding that, in the interval, it has undergone a considerable change?¹⁶

Reid sees the difference between the “distinct . . . remembrance of its [the perception's] first appearance” to the memory^{RET} with the “different degrees of strength and vivacity” of the perception's when recalled by the memory^{REM}. Hume should have realized that neither perception can be retained unless by the memory^{RET}. However, removing the confusion that Reid highlights, we can still see what Hume means: the imagination has the ability to separate perceptions and to apply degrees of intensity onto the perceptions; yet, when reminiscing on those perceptions, the memory^{REM} accesses those perceptions of the memory^{RET} that have been already been processed by the functions of the imagination. According to Hume, these

¹⁶ Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, (1785), New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1971, p. 348.

perceptions recalled by the memory^{REM} can either be what he confusingly calls an idea of the memory or an idea of the imagination. We can see, however, that what Hume describes in the passage is that a *memory* idea is the memory^{REM} of a vivacious *impression* that has been retained by the memory^{RET}. Yet an imagination idea is the memory^{REM} of an *idea* that has been retained by the memory^{RET}. The reason for their different degrees of vivacity is that the former is a remembered^{REM} memory^{RET} impression, while the latter is a remembered^{REM} memory^{RET} idea.

This difference (which Hume apparently sometimes does and sometimes doesn't show concerning the difference between distinction and vivacity) also helps to explain his response to a well-known exception to the Copy Principle: the missing shade of blue problem:

There is however one contradictory phaenomenon, which may prove, that 'tis not absolutely impossible for ideas to go before their correspondent impressions. I believe it will readily be allow'd, that the several distinct ideas of colours, which enter by the eyes, or those of sounds, which are convey'd by the hearing, are really different from each other, tho' at the same time resembling. Now if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of the different shades of the same colour, that each of them produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest.

(Treatise I, I, I, 5-6)

We can immediately see that Hume's reasoning here is incorrect, for he is confusing degrees of distinction with degrees of vivacity. This confusion leads Hume to formulate the following thought experiment:

Let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one [that has not been experienced], be plac'd before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest; 'tis plain, that he will perceive a blank, where that shade is wanting . . . Now I ask, whether 'tis possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, tho' it had never been conveyed to him by his senses?

(Treatise I, I, I, 6)

Hume's answer to this question is an implied affirmation, yet he tries to diminish this anomaly by saying that it "is so particular and singular, that 'tis scarce worth our observing" (Treatise I, I, I. 6). Hume's error is that shades of a colour involve degrees of vivacity rather than degrees of distinction. The colour blue is a distinct impression, as is the note of a flute. For example, if I see a blue car and a red car, I can separate the distinctness of each colour as true distinctions. However, Hume sets up the problem as one of varying *shades*, which is more in line not with degrees of distinction, but with degrees of vivacity, of the sort that is found in the descending volumes of a musical note. Hence, the correct solution is to realize that the different shades of blue have had degrees of vivacity applied onto them by the imagination. The imagination fills in the gap, *not* with a non-experienced distinct idea of that missing shade of blue, but with a degree of vivacity.

A further problem that troubles Hume is related to all the other problems outlined so far in this chapter, namely the mind's ability to comprehend identity out of diversity:

We have a distinct idea of an object, that remains invariable and uninterrupted thro' a suppos'd variation of time; and this idea we call that of *identity* or *sameness*. We have also a distinct idea of several different objects existing in succession, and connected together by a close relation; and this to an accurate view affords as perfect a notion of *diversity*, as if there was no manner of relation among the objects. But tho' these two ideas of identity, and a succession of related objects be in themselves perfectly distinct, and even contrary, yet 'tis certain, that in our common way of thinking they are generally confounded with each other. 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, nor is there much more effort of thought requir'd in the latter case than in the former. 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. This resemblance is the cause of the confusion and mistake.

and makes us substitute the notion of identity, instead of that of related objects.

(Treatise I, IV, VI, 253-254)¹⁷

First, we can immediately see here that Hume places the *object* over against an objective time order: the object is said to be “invariable and uninterrupted thro’ a suppos’d variation of time.” However, as we have already seen, time is succession itself. Time is *not* a permanent background flow against which objects are seen to travel along a variation of time, whether objects appear to remain the same, or appear as a succession of objects. Time is succession. Thus the object is always a collection of successive perceptions if it is to be perceived temporally. However, although Hume makes the mistake of assuming an objective time to place the object against, he is nonetheless generally correct in his assessment of the confusion between the feelings of identity and diversity. For the relation that Hume refers to is of course succession. Thus it is the relation of succession, not just resemblance, that leads one to make the *mistake* that there is a continuing object along with an objective time order within which it exists.¹⁸ However, the word “mistake” must not mislead us into viewing the relation of succession as giving us a sense of identity that is *wrong* or *false*. For if the mind did not form identities of objects based on the relation of succession, then life would be almost impossible to

¹⁷ In this passage Hume also explains how the *passive* awareness of the perceptions evolves into the *action* by the imagination, in that both occurrences are “almost the same to the feeling . . . [but the relation of] resemblance is the cause of the confusion and mistake.” The bundle of perceptions is able to ‘act’ because of the relation of resemblance. However, this action by the imagination is also where the ‘mistake’ of seeing identity within diversity is formed. Thus, there are really two ways to see how Hume explains the fundamental question as to how do a bundle of perceptions, perceive. First, either the ‘act’ itself is a mere fiction created by a mistake, which would mean the mind is never actually active but is forever passive with the mistaken illusion that there is mental *action*. Or, secondly, that the *action* of the imagination is real, yet since this activity is founded on a mistake, the results of this real action are still mistakes.

¹⁸ It is also shown how causation helps to create the ‘mistake’ of a continuing object. See below footnote 107, and pp. 71-72.

conceptualize. We would have to register all the distinct perceptions of an object as indistinct objects, making it impossible to apply language to objects.

Thus Hume clarifies his claim that we confuse the diversity of the perceptions with the identity of the succession by stating that the succession, along with resemblance, is what makes the different perceptions seem to be the same. In other words, because the perceptions resemble each other, the relation of succession is applied to the perceptions, which then makes identity possible. Time becomes the “disguise” Hume is referring to above, given that external reality is non-temporal. Consequently, time *hides* the diversity of the perceptions, yet we would not be aware of the perceptions unless we incorporated time onto them. Succession is both a *disguise* and an *unmasking* of the non-temporal, which, in turn, would make it a necessary “mistake.” For identity is succession, and diversity is non-temporality. Our awareness of diversity presupposes that it has become temporal. Diverse perceptions enter into the mind while simultaneously succession is incorporated onto them by the memory^{RET}. Once limitedly made aware by the memory^{RET}, the perceptions lose their diversity, since that diversity is based on non-temporality. However, we are able, through “reflexion,” to realize that, although the perceptions lead us into believing in invariable external objects, we can also recognize those perceptions as the non-temporal parts that constitute the structure of the primordial succession inherent in the Copy Principle. Thus, there is no proper diversity within time since the individual and diverse nature of the perceptions is purely non-temporal. It is thus apparent that we must see the diversity of the succession of perceptions as creating a temporal identity. It is, therefore, not a *mistake* in the common use of the word, but is a necessary process.

This understanding of the temporal “mistake” is perhaps best captured by W. J. Mander’s analysis of the similar process of awareness in McTaggart’s philosophy. Mander rightly claims that “Calling some phenomenon ‘unreal’ [as McTaggart does for time] doesn’t make it go away. It remains as something that at least appears to be the case, and since appearances exist just as much as anything else does it still requires incorporation into the ultimate scheme of things.”¹⁹ A similar view of the *existence* of the mistake or the unreal is to be found in Hume’s analysis. Indeed, McTaggart’s analysis as to how we acquire this *necessary* error in turn, illuminates Hume’s version as to how we create a temporal identity out of distinct objects. For McTaggart, “tries to show that error, where it occurs, must be temporal.”²⁰ According to McTaggart:

If we take a line a foot long, we can divide it into twelve parts, each an inch long. And these will contain all its content, and be a set of parts of it. But we can also find a series of parts in a foot which should be respectively one inch, two inches, three inches, and so on, up to eleven inches; and going on with the series, we should get a twelfth member, which was not a part, but the whole foot. Now here the parts would be members of a series which contained the whole content of the foot, and containing nothing else besides that content, but yet was not a set of parts of the foot, since all the terms of the series, except the last, might be subtracted, and yet the whole would be made up. Part of the content, in this series, would be taken twelve times over, part eleven times over, and so on.²¹

Accordingly, “as such a series, its terms all either include or are included by each other, [however] this does not prevent them from being each different and separate entities. They are

¹⁹ W. J. Mander, “McTaggart on Error and Time.” *The Modern Schoolman*, 75 (1998): pp. 157-169. p. 157.

²⁰ Mander, p. 160.

²¹ John McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*. Ed. C. D. Broad. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968. Henceforth, all references to *NOE* show McTaggart’s section number followed by the page number. Sec. 558. pp. 234-235.

numerically distinct existences. However, this is not a character which the series can recognise itself as having."²² The problem is that:

The terms in the inclusion series are all fragments of the perception . . . and their real relation to each other is inclusive -- there are no two of them of which one is not a part. The question then arises whether it is possible that they should be separate perceptions, if they perceived themselves as having this relation to the other terms in the series. And I think this is not possible. In order to be a separate perception from the others, it would have to appear to itself as excluding the others -- as having no content in common with them. But in fact, as we have just said, it has content in common with each of them. It therefore perceives itself as it is not, in this respect at least.²³

Because the perceptions misperceive themselves, we *create* a temporality. However, McTaggart is quick to point out that this illusory time is nevertheless based on a misperceived reality. This reality being the C series, or natural order of objects, which, in itself, is a non-temporal series:

It is possible that, whenever we have an illusory experience of a time-series, we are observing a real series, and that all that is illusory is the appearance that it is a time-series. Such a series, but under certain conditions appears to us to be one -- may be called a *C* series . . . For when we consider how an illusion of time can come about, it is very difficult to suppose, either that all the elements in the experience are illusory, or that the element of the serial nature is so. And it is by no means so difficult to account for the facts if we suppose that there is an existent *C* series. In this case the illusion consists only in our applying the *A* series to it, and in the consequent appearance of the *C* series as a *B* series, the relation, whatever it may be, which holds between the terms of the *C* series, appearing as a relation of earlier and later.²⁴

We can see similarities between McTaggart's and Hume's explanations as to how we create a temporal identity onto the diverse succession of perceptions. The Humean memory^{RET} is not able to distinguish the distinct perceptions fully. The separation of these distinct perceptions has to wait until the imagination enters the process of awareness. McTaggart's view is that the

²² Mander, p. 163.

²³ McTaggart, *NOE*, Sec. 579, pp. 248-249.

²⁴ McTaggart, *NOE*, Sec. 347, p. 30.

intensive qualities of the perceptions forces those very perceptions to not recognize the “numerical distinctness” of the terms and so “perceives itself as it is not,” and this is similar to Hume’s theory inasmuch as how there is a confusion regarding the degrees of distinctness in the perceptions. However, McTaggart’s view of the perceptions as having different degrees of intensity and force, such as “a light that grows brighter or a sound that grows louder,”²⁵ is to confuse the different degrees of distinctness with the different degrees of vivacity. So in *this* respect there is a fundamental difference between Hume and McTaggart on this issue, even though *prima facie* there seems to be a strong similarity between them. In McTaggart’s case, the mistake can be seen as a nuisance rather than a blessing, so that he is then justified in saying that temporality is nothing but a mistake that needs to be dealt with. For Hume, on the other hand, the mistake is not really a mistake at all, since it is a *necessary* function for us to exist among a world of continued mind-independent objects.

As we saw above, Mander alerts us to the fact that McTaggart’s overlapping perceptions are nevertheless “numerically distinct existences. However, this is not a character which the *series* can recognise itself as having.”²⁶ As a consequence, the perceptions are misrepresented as being temporal, but this error is based upon the non-temporal order of the C series. Since Hume does not have a comparable notion of a timeless C series, there must be some important difference between McTaggart’s and Hume’s versions of the “temporal mistake.”

The major difference is that Hume rightly claims that there is no reason why separate perceptions cannot be regarded as existing apart from the self, whereas McTaggart does not

²⁵ Mander, p. 161.

²⁶ My emphasis.

believe that we can ever say that the overlapping perceptions can be regarded as existing apart from the self.²⁷ Here, then, is where the major difference between them lies: McTaggart believes that the perceptions are indistinct because of a blurred intensity that makes them *seem* countable and distinct, without being *seen* as fully separate from their combined inclusiveness; whereas Hume assumes that the perceptions are not fully distinguished as distinct perceptions, *not* because they have a blurred intensity, but because the imagination has not separated them. They are still at the stage when they are within the process of the tenseless successional memory^{RET}: the impressions have a higher degree of vivacity than their counterpart ideas, but nowhere does Hume claim that they are intensively *inclusive*. Rather, he implies that they are made to seem more vivid by the imagination only *after* having been separated by the Separability Principle. We can now better understand why Hume believes that certain perceptions are made to seem more vivid through experience and habit, for these impressions and ideas have been first -- either immediately through experience, or later from habit -- separated and *then* acted upon by the imagination, to seem more vivid and lively.

Hence it is evident that succession plays an important role for both McTaggart and Hume, though each takes a different view on the importance and ramifications of how this temporality is generated. Nevertheless, for both philosophers there is a difference in how they approach the creation of time and its subsequent “reality” or “unreality.” And there is a much greater difference between them concerning the nature of the self and its “parts.”²⁸

²⁷ See a more detailed discussion of this in chapter four.

²⁸ See chapter four for a further discussion on this comparison between Hume and McTaggart.

However, it might still be objected that time is not simply succession but duration as well. For example, Donald Baxter believes that when we talk about a succession of perceptions we naturally “assume that there is only a single succession of perceptions in the imagination, just as there is only one reel of film in the camera.”²⁹ And he asks us why the mind cannot be a place where “various successions coexist, successions occurring at relatively different rates so that relatively more steadfast perceptions coexist with relatively less steadfast ones.”³⁰ Essentially what Baxter is arguing is that, because the mind is not a movie camera with one reel of film, there is instead within it “a complex of simple times – a complex of coexisting successions.”³¹ The importance of this for Baxter is that he believes that there is no reason to assume that these different successions are flowing at the same rate, for within each succession there may be individual perceptions that last longer than the perceptions in other successions. According to Baxter, this would create a sort of overlap, where some perceptions would seem to remain as enduring objects co-existing with a succession.³²

Baxter’s argument rests entirely on the assumption that individual perceptions possess temporal lengths. But to ask how long a perception lasts is to apply duration to our perceptions, for, as we have already seen, we cannot apply succession within the perception. If we were to conclude that somehow each perception within the succession also had a succession of parts within it, so that the perceptions can somehow *endure*, we would be forced to conclude that time is made up of an infinite number of parts. For one could apply this procedure indefinitely. Thus

²⁹ Donald Baxter, “Hume on Steadfast Objects and Time.” *Hume Studies*. 27 (2001), p. 133.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 133.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 140.

³² *Ibid.* p. 136.

perceptions are the parts of time, but they do not themselves exist *in time*, for they do not contain any succession within them. Although Baxter anticipates this criticism, his attempt to meet it is unconvincing. He claims that, even if “lengthy perceptions are not necessarily successions of perceptions . . . surely they are successions of some sort of temporal parts. Thus they have a duration.”³³ But this is unconvincing, because, *if* there is a temporal “succession of some sort of temporal parts” that is different from a succession of perceptions, it would still lead to the problem of *something* enduring, and thus overlook the immeasurable aspect of temporal parts. Moreover, there would again be the problem of infinitely divisible time, which, as we have seen, Hume rightly rejects.

To answer the question as to how long any individual perception lasts, we must conclude that, unless we wish to alter completely Hume’s definition of time as succession, perceptions themselves cannot have any temporal length. Nonetheless Baxter’s idea of simple and complex time is still interesting. It seems plausible that the nature of sense perception might be as complex as Baxter outlines it, so that we are not like a movie projector with one reel of film running through us, but instead resemble a collection of many disparate successions of perceptions. However, when Baxter mentions that these disparate successions might appear at different rates, it is not the so-called length of the individual perceptions that is relevant (for, as we have seen, perceptions do not endure, duration being merely a fiction applied to the perceptions by the imagination), but rather the actual speed of the successions. On the surface this may seem to amount to the same thing. But there is an important difference. Perceptions

³³ Ibid. p. 132.

themselves have no temporal duration, since time is succession; yet it is possible that different series of successive perceptions can move at different speeds without the fictional length of perceptions being a condition of that speed.

The mistake that Baxter makes is in implying that time exists as an external flow outside of the mind, where perceptions would then have something in the background to be measured against. However, in defence of Baxter's interpretation, Hume himself appears to make this same mistake:

If you wheel about a burning coal with rapidity, it will present to the senses an image of a circle of fire; nor will there seem to be any interval of time betwixt its revolutions; merely because 'tis impossible for our perceptions to succeed each other with the same rapidity, that motion may be communicated to external objects. [Thus] Whenever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even tho' there be a real succession in the [external world of] objects.

(Treatise I, II, III, 35)³⁴

Thus, remarkably, Hume not only reverts to viewing time contradictorily as both the successions of the wheel and the interval of time "betwixt its revolutions" (i.e. duration), but in so doing he apparently overlooks his own analysis of time as being not just of a succession of perceptions, but as an inherent succession between impressions and ideas witnessed within the Copy Principle. It seems that Hume himself does not always recognize the primordial succession of the Copy Principle, and thus the primordial and all-encompassing nature of time that he presents in the Treatise. We can point out to Hume that the "circle of fire" is still in the succession of impressions of fire to idea of fire, and so is still temporal in nature. Furthermore, since this succession takes place within the mind, the temporal nature of the "circle of fire" is subjective.

³⁴ See footnote 10.

Consequently, bringing into the discussion the existence of an external objective time overlooks the primordial nature of the subjective succession of perceptions. Therefore, just because the Baxterian successions appear at different rates, this does not mean that they are being measured against a background of objective time.

Time is a succession of perceptions, yet this does not require us to acknowledge anything except a nature for time that is within the mind. Thus although there may well be a Baxterian complex time of successions existing at different rates, the successions of perceptions are not to be measured against a non-existent background time. The successions themselves constitute time. The way the rate of successions is measured is not by an outside time clocking the speed of the successions, but by the speed at which the memory and imagination are accessing the data. Since we know that it is the memory^{RET} that first encounters the successions, and that the successions can be sensed differently by the five senses (sight, touch, sound, smell, sight), it is plausible that the memory accesses the different types of sense perceptions in succession at different rates, it is also possible that the rate of succession fluctuates due to the memory^{RET} accessing the original tenseless succession of perceptions (B series).³⁵ However, the speed of the succession has to be seen as a rate that is inherent to time, not external to time as if succession itself can be *timed*.³⁶

³⁵ See chapter three for more on the B series of tenseless time and to the rates of succession in regards to the memory^{RET}.

³⁶ It is this oversight that is one of Hume's greatest errors. He concedes that, when sleeping, a person's "perceptions succeed each other with greater or less rapidity" (*Treatise* I, II, III, 35). However, like Baxter, he views these different rates of succession as somehow being *timed*, which brings in the false notion of duration in order to explain the different rates of successions. For example, Hume states that the different rates of succession make it appear as if "the same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination" (*Treatise* I, II, III, 35). This view of different rates of succession, especially in reference to dreaming, is also evident in Berkeley's notebooks, where he observes that "In some dreams succession of ideas swifter than at other times" (Berkeley, *Philosophical Works*. Ed. M. Ayers,

SUMMARY

Sensory impressions are received and retained by the memory^{RET}. This retaining is itself a kind of counting, not that there is a concept of number, but rather that the memory^{RET} is able to acknowledge that the perceptions are indivisible, and thus have some degree of difference from one another. Furthermore, this *counting* is essentially a copying of the impression into a mirror idea, which creates an exact replica (idea). Although the two perceptions are indistinct, the memory^{RET} can still count the process, so that the impression and idea have a rudimentary separateness that is really only their numerical order. However, the copying itself is a succession, hence the counting and copying is also the application of a succession. This succession is essentially the memory^{RET} itself, and is in turn able to retain itself and hence copy this impression of itself onto a particular idea of succession. The wish to achieve a fuller separation of all these perceptions, and the need for a further focusing on them, forces the imagination to apply the separability principle. The role of the imagination is first and foremost to understand its perceptions. It does this, first, by registering that there is a succession of countable perceptions. However, since the impression and the particular idea of succession are really the function of the memory^{RET} retaining itself, there is a higher degree of separation between the impression and the idea of succession. Thus the imagination first receives a

note #39). Berkeley makes the same mistake by referring to different rates as happening at different *times*. Perhaps this confusion leads Berkeley to discard a more important observation which he makes: "What if succession of ideas were swifter, what if slower?" ("Notebook B," note #16). I believe that Hume's similar confusion over this phenomenon of different rates of succession and his subsequent omission to pursue its full importance is based on Berkeley's earlier troubles concerning time and rates of successions.

somewhat distinct impression and idea of succession. It then separates these completely, and immediately afterwards applies a degree of vivacity onto the impression to show how the impressions are not just countable, but are even more distinct from one another. However, the action of separating the succession is a unique case, for the succession is that which relates the perceptions together. When the imagination first separates the impressions and ideas and applies a degree of vivacity onto them, the distinct idea and impression of succession seems no longer to be inseparable from the perceptions in succession, so that we are able to distinguish the *manner* of the perceptions, whereas earlier in the process there was a distinct impression and particular idea of time. Once this is completed, the other aspect of the memory^{REM}, is able to recall both the impressions and ideas retained by the memory^{RET}; but, since this memory^{REM} function comes *after* the processes of separation and the application of vivacity to the perceptions, the memory^{REM} is able to know by comparing the impression with its idea, that the idea is indeed the copy of its preceding impression. However, the memory^{REM} is able to recall neither the distinct impression of time, nor the idea of time, because both are now intermingled with the perceptions. Finally, after a set of habitual experiences, the imagination can apply a higher degree of vivacity onto certain impressions *and* ideas. However, *this* action by the imagination, which is slightly different from the other type of applying vivacity (which merely shows how the impression and idea are separate), can only be done after a *tensed* idea of time has evolved. How tenseless time evolves into tensed time will be discussed in the next chapter.

1. Succession as the idea of time illustrates an apparent puzzle: If succession were to be removed from the perceptions in succession, then there would be nothing in succession.
2. Hume does not recognize the differences that exist between the constructions of space and time in that time has parts that are countable but not measurable whereas space has parts that are measurable but not countable. Consequently Hume confuses succession with duration.
3. Hume sometimes confuses two operations of the imagination: its ability to separate all perceptions, and its ability to apply a degree of vivacity to perceptions.
4. It is impossible to escape the universality of succession since it is a primordial relation present in the Copy Principle, which itself is the foundation of Hume's empiricism.
5. Temporal parts (perceptions within the succession) do not themselves have temporal length.
6. Hume's theory of time points towards a subjective reality for time. However, due to his apparent misreading of his data, he often contradictorily postulates an objective external existence for time.
7. The answer to the Succession Puzzle emerges through combining the above analysis of time with the recognition that there are different degrees of awareness within experience, as is evident in the various roles of the memory and imagination.
8. Successions occur at different rates.

CHAPTER 2

TENSED AND TENSELESS TIME

According to Hume, “the idea of time, being deriv’d from the succession of our perceptions of every kind, ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensation, will afford us an instance of an abstract idea” (Treatise I. II. III. 34-35). According to Donald Livingston, this succession yields only the tenseless *particular* idea of time, of perceptions moving in a succession of before and after, this particular idea of time subsequently reflected upon by the imagination in order to create a tensed *abstract* idea of time bringing with it dimensions of a past, present, and future.³⁷

In this connection Livingston makes three claims about Humean time:

1. Time is the order of objects in succession where the objects and the order are internally connected. Time, so conceived, is a structure of the physical world, is tenseless, and exists independently of the mind.
2. Tensed time presupposes tenseless time and in addition the self . . . [and] Since tensed time presupposes the self, it is mind-dependent.
3. Tensed time is the self’s awareness or idea of its position in tenseless time.³⁸

Much of his interpretation is based upon the following passage: “[Since] every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be consider’d as separately existent; it evidently follows, that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking

³⁷ Donald W. Livingston. *Hume’s Philosophy of Common Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1984. pp. 115-117.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 126. I have edited Livingston’s words and put them into point form for easier observation.

being” (Treatise I, IV, II, 207).³⁹ From this, Livingston concludes that perceptions can exist separately “from the mind” as a tenseless succession in the physical world.⁴⁰ However, the above quoted sentence from Hume needs clarification, and, once that is done, it does not support Livingston’s interpretation.

Hume is trying to show how perceptions can be separate from the mind. Though it is true that every perception is distinct, and that the imagination can separate all distinct perceptions, they must not then, be in succession and so must be non-temporal entities. Consequently, we need not conclude that there is a Livingstonian temporality that “is a structure of the physical world, is tenseless, and exists independently of the mind”⁴¹; because tenseless time, like tensed time, is simply the subjective nature of the mind as a succession of perceptions. Perceptions can exist apart from the mind (or a succession of perceptions), but this does not necessarily mean that they can exist *temporally* separate from the mind.

Livingston also claims that the “direction of time is not a tensed property, not a direction from past to future. It is, rather, a structure inseparable from the “manner” in which untensed temporal objects are disposed, that is, it is internal to the notion of succession itself.”⁴² Therefore, since it is the memory^{RET} that is first made aware of the succession of perceptions, it must be the memory

³⁹ Ibid. p. 119. H. H. Price concludes that Hume believed “that ‘perceptions’ cannot occur except as members of ‘bundles’ . . . [therefore] it is logically possible that some of these bundles might be very small indeed . . . because a bundle, by definition, must have at least two members.” (“Professor Ayer on the Problem of Knowledge.” Mind, (1958): pp. 461-462). However, Hume clearly states that if a “particular perception” exists separate from the mind, it does so only by “breaking off *all* its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions” (Treatise I, IV, II, 207[my emphasis]). Such an isolated perception “breaks off” from being in succession (or any other relation that might connect the bundle). So though there may be many individual perceptions that exist separate from the self, it would be totally incorrect to characterize them as *bundles*. See footnote 96.

⁴⁰ Livingston. pp. 119-120.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 126.

⁴² Ibid. p. 122.

that constructs the direction of time. Thus the direction of time becomes incorporated into the perceptions as they are received, rather than existing as a mysterious structure within an external world of tenseless time as Livingston erroneously believes.⁴³ Therefore, the memory adds the directional structure of succession to the incoming data simply by remembering what perceptions are arriving into the mind; for, logically, if the memory^{RET} did *not* do this, then all perceptions would appear merely as random blinks. Indeed, this direction is subsequently observed in the successional movement from the memory to the imagination and also from the particular idea to the abstract term to which it is applied,⁴⁴ which are evidently successions with a clear one-way movement. Hence, when Livingston says that “the imagination follows the “arrow” of tenseless time, [so] we tend to think of events after now as *qualitatively* different from events prior to now. The former we call the future, the latter past,”⁴⁵ it is more correct to say that the imagination uses the template of succession provided by the memory^{RET} to arrange the ideas into a tensed past, present and future.⁴⁶ Thus tensed time, the abstract idea of time as a past succeeding towards a future, is essentially the imagination reflecting on the memory^{RET}. This is essentially what Livingston takes to be what Hume means when he states that, “Hume is trying to show how a property of the fancy determines our ideas of past and future. Past and future are understandable

⁴³ Ibid. p. 126.

⁴⁴ Hume says “that general or abstract ideas are nothing but individual ones taken in a certain light” (*Treatise* I, III, XIV, 161). Thus a one way movement from the individual particular ideas to their being “taken in a certain light,” or considered abstractly.

⁴⁵ Livingston. p. 123.

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 122-123.

only through *ideas of reflection*.⁴⁷ However, contrary to Livingston, the direction from which the perceptions are determined is not external but is internal and mind-dependent.

Let us now consider Livingston's final claim, namely that tensed time is *subjective* because it is the self's awareness of itself in external tenseless time. Livingston indeed claims, that for Hume, *if* "there were no self, there would be no tensed time."⁴⁸ This interpretation is supported by Hume's remarks that the "idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us" (Treatise II, II, IV, 354); and that "there is a continual succession of perceptions in our mind; so that the idea of time . . . [is] for ever present with us" (Treatise I, II, V, 65). Hume here connects the self and time: both are "intimately present" or "present with us." As Livingston asks: "What do we mean when we say that something is happening *now*? This question cannot be answered without reference to Hume's theory of the self." For Livingston, the self is directly intertwined with the tensed idea of time, and it is easy to see why he mistakenly believes that there is a mind-independent tenseless time, and that the self is its tensed position within this objective external time.

Livingston's interpretation is partly based on Hume's statement that "Ourself, independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing. For which reason we must turn our view to external objects" (Treatise II, II, II, 340). From this Livingston claims that there must be an external temporal world from which the self gets its existence.⁴⁹ But though Hume certainly states that there may be external objects, it would be premature to conclude, as Livingston does, that the succession of those objects is also external.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 123.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 118.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 117.

According to Livingston:

The self, for Hume, is not a set of private mental images; the self is essentially related to a public world, and so the idea of the self entails reference to a public world . . . Any state of awareness for Hume, then, involves reference to a self internally related to public objects which are ordered by the untensed idea of time . . . [However] The idea of tenseless time does not logically require any reference to the self. Consequently, if there were no self, the idea of tenseless time could still be instantiated.⁵⁰

From all of which Livingston concludes that tenseless succession “is a structure of the physical world.”⁵¹ But even if the “self is essentially related to a public world,” it does not follow that *succession* is part of that external world. Livingston mistakenly thinks that it does follow because he erroneously believes that perceptions can exist not only independently of the mind, but, more importantly, *in time*.

I shall argue that it is more plausible to claim that there are not *two* ideas of time -- one subjective and the other objective -- but that *both* ideas of time, the tensed and tenseless, are subjective. Livingston errs in splitting time into two different *types*, rather than two different *aspects* of time. We have already seen that he alerts us to the fact that Hume considers tenseless and tensed time as particular and abstract ideas respectively.⁵² Since we know that Hume does not consider particular and abstract ideas to be separate concepts but rather “that general or abstract ideas are nothing but individual ones taken in a certain light” (Treatise I, III, XIV, 161),⁵³ it is more plausible to believe that for Hume the tenseless and tensed ideas of time are not

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 117-118.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 126.

⁵² Ibid. p. 115.

⁵³ This “certain light” being nominal. Hume says, “A great philosopher [Berkeley] . . . has asserted, that all general [abstract] ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them. As I look upon this

two separate objective and subjective temporal realms. Livingston's own analysis of tensed time points to an internal subjective nature for time, it is more plausible to consider both tenseless and tensed time to be the self's position in relation to a non-temporal universe. This is opposed to Livingston's assumption that for Hume there are two types of time: a fictional subjective tensed time, and a *real* external mind-independent time filled with external objects in succession, from which selves derive their existence.

We have seen that Hume postulates a tensed idea of time, and connects it to the self in that both are "intimately present." Nonetheless, Livingston is half correct. For although he does not consider tenseless time as being subjective (as in a self which exists at a lower degree of awareness), the self also involves this tensed idea, since it is the imagination that creates abstract ideas. According to Hume, "A particular idea becomes general by being annex'd to a general term; that is, to a term, which from a customary conjunction has a relation to many other particular ideas, and readily recalls them in the imagination" (Treatise I, I, VII, 22). The self creates an abstract tensed time in which to position itself.

Hume observes that a strange phenomenon arises:

[The] present situation of the person is always that of the imagination, and that 'tis from thence we proceed to the conception of any distant object. When the object is past, the progression of the thought in passing to it from the present is contrary to nature, as proceeding from one point of time to that which is preceding, and from that to another preceding, in opposition to the natural course of the succession. On the other hand, when we turn our thought to a future object, our fancy flows along the stream of time, and arrives at the object by an order, which seems most natural, passing always from one point of time to that which is immediately posterior to it. This *easy* progression of

to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters. I shall here endeavour to confirm it by some arguments, which I hope will put it beyond all doubt and controversy" (Treatise I, I, VII, 17).

ideas favours the imagination, and makes it conceive its object in a stronger and fuller light, than when we are continually oppos'd in our passage, and are oblig'd to overcome the difficulties arising from the natural propensity of the fancy. A small degree of distance in the past has, therefore, a greater effect, in interrupting and weakening the conception, than a much greater in the future.

(Treatise II, III, VII, 430-431)

Hume shows that the imagination conceives of the future more easily than the past. The “fancy flows” towards the future following the direction of time, yet must flow in “opposition to the natural course of the succession” when dealing with the past. Livingston claims that this means that the imagination, “is essentially future-referring: any object we perceive or think about is going to be viewed in the light of some idea of what follows it in relation to some idea of *our* future.”⁵⁴ This connection between the imagination and the future is important. The future is part of the abstract tensed idea of time. The tensed idea of time is created by the imagination using the template of succession that is formed by the memory^{RET}. Consequently, the memory^{RET} sets up a condition that allows the imagination to be more connected to one aspect of tensed time (the future) than to other aspects of tensed time (the present and past). Yet even though there is this asymmetry of temporal connection between the imagination and the past, present, and future, as we observe in the following passage, it seems that Hume is not just connecting the self to the present, but is situating the self *as* the present.⁵⁵ According to Hume:

When from the present instant we consider two points of time equally distant in the future and in the past, 'tis evident, that, abstractedly consider'd, their relation to the present is almost equal. For as the future will *sometime* be present, so the past was *once* present. If we cou'd, therefore, remove this quality of the imagination, an equal distance in the past and in the future, wou'd have a similar influence. Nor is this only true, when the fancy remains fix'd, and from the present instant surveys the future and the past; but also

⁵⁴ Livingston. p. 124.

⁵⁵ See also the quotations by Hume above, p. 33.

when it changes its situation, and places us in different periods of time. For as on the one hand, in supposing ourselves existent in a point of time interpos'd betwixt the present instant and the future object, we find the future object approach to us, and the past retire, and become more distant: so on the other hand, in supposing ourselves existent in a point of time interpos'd betwixt the present and the past, the past approaches to us, and the future becomes more distant. But from the property of the fancy above-mention'd we rather chuse to fix our thought on the point of time interpos'd betwixt the present and the future, than on that betwixt the present and the past. We advance, rather than retard our existence; and following what seems the natural succession of time, proceed from past to present, and from present to future. By which means we conceive the future as flowing every moment nearer us, and the past as retiring. An equal distance, therefore, in the past and in the future, has not the same effect on the imagination; and that because we consider the one as continually encreasing, and the other as continually diminishing. The fancy anticipates the course of things, and surveys the object in that condition, to which it tends, as well as in that, which is regarded as the present.

(Treatise II, III, VII, 431-432)

This passage is important for several reasons. Initially it sounds as if Hume is saying that the imagination is in the present and that, due to the way tensed time flows, “the future will *sometime* be present, so the past was *once* present,” so that time creates a “quality” of the imagination. This quality enables the future to seem closer to the imagination, so that, if it were possible to remove this quality, the past and the future would seem to be an equal distance apart. However, Hume calls this a “quality” of the imagination, not a fiction, as one might expect him to say. He might seem to be concluding that there actually is an equal distance between the past and the future and it is only this temporal aspect of tensed time that provides an illusion that the future is closer than the past. However, I believe it is because Hume does not see this inequality between the past and the future as an illusion or an error that he uses the word “quality.” It is only if we *could* “remove this quality of the imagination” that all might seem equal. However, it is clear from Hume’s tone that he believes that it is not possible for us to do this. So to speculate on what

tensed time might be like without this unequal aspect of tensed time is gratuitous. Indeed such speculation would involve a contradiction for we need the tensed realm of time in order to speculate. One must be grounded in a tensed realm in order to be able to refer to the tensed realm. Thus we cannot ask questions about the future and the past unless we are already aware of these tensed aspects and we cannot be aware of them unless we are within tensed time. We can therefore conclude from this that we can never know if the past and the future really are at equal distances from the present.

Furthermore, the aforementioned passage alerts us to something profound. Hume says that we have the ability not only to remain “fix'd, and from the present instant . . . [the imagination] surveys the future and the past” but that the imagination “changes its situation, and places us in different periods of time” (Treatise II, III, VII, 431). Thus we are mobile within the tensed realm in that we can “place” ourselves within different realms of tensed time. We can place ourselves “betwixt the present and the past.” or, as we seem to prefer, “betwixt the present and the future” (Treatise II, III, VII, 431). This ability to “place” ourselves in (as) different realms of tensed time should not come as much of a shock, for why shouldn't the imagination have the ability to exist as all the realms of tensed time? For *all* of tensed time comes complete in the package of the abstract idea of time, that is created by the imagination. Thus it is highly probable that the imagination *is* the past, present, *and* future, and that it is only because of the direction of time that we prefer to think of ourselves only *within* the present. It seems probable that not only does the imagination exist as all three tensed realms, but it is somehow more favoured towards the future. I believe that this bias provides an answer as to why Hume famously declares: “For my

part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 252). This is now quite understandable, since introspection happens in the tensed realm of the present when we reflect on the past. However, if the bulk of the self exists as the future, the self must remain hidden from introspection. This is all intelligible if the self is synonymous with time as succession, and furthermore it exists mainly hidden from introspection as the future.⁵⁶

This conclusion that the self has an asymmetrical relationship as the realms of tensed time sounds similar to Parfit’s analysis of moral philosophy in Reasons and Persons.⁵⁷ Echoing Hume’s realization that “we conceive [of] the future as flowing every moment nearer us, and the past as retiring. An equal distance, therefore, in the past and in the future, has not the same effect on the imagination” (Treatise II, III, VII, 431-432), Parfit also recognizes that we have an asymmetrical relationship with time, and largely focuses on what he sees as the asymmetry between the near and distant future.⁵⁸ For him, this asymmetry is founded on his belief in “psychological connectedness”⁵⁹ within minds. The “psychological connectedness” he refers to

⁵⁶ This also relates to H. J. Paton’s concern “that there is a difference between awareness of change in time, and the change in time of which there is awareness. In brief, it makes the assumption of a difference between the knowing and the known.” “Self-Identity,” Mind, 38 (1929) p. 314. However, Paton errs in placing the self against an objective flow of time. Nonetheless, since the self is now shown to exist mainly as the unknowable future, Paton’s analysis can be seen as partly correct, for we cannot *know* the self (introspect the self), though we can still have a self as knower via the memory^{RET} combining succession onto the knowable perceptions. This also explains why succession seems inseparable from the perceptions after the imagination simultaneously creates tensed time. See the discussion of the Succession Puzzle in the previous chapter.

⁵⁷ Derek Parfit. Reasons and Persons. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 313.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 206.

is essentially the ability to remember past events and to anticipate and fulfill future ones.⁶⁰ In his interesting take on the Lockean concept of identity,⁶¹ Parfit claims that the personal identity one feels, comes not through a continuation of an invariable self, but through this “psychological connectedness” with the past and the future. In other words, for Parfit, the existence of persons “just consists in facts concerning the existence of their bodies and experiences . . . a person’s existence through time involves just physical and psychological continuity and connectedness.”⁶² Parfit’s reductionism consists in his insistence “that this ‘inner’ aspect of personal persistence should be understood in terms of relations between psychological states and events that are intelligible independently of personal identity.”⁶³ However, similar to Parfit, the Humean self can also be described as an inner working of psychological states, yet, as I will show with the analysis of Kant, because of the intricacies of the Succession Puzzle, the self, exists before the individual perceptions or psychological states are distinctly separated. As Simon Blackburn reminds us:

It is often said that Parfit’s theory of persons is an update of Hume. It is a sophisticated version of a ‘bundle’ theory. Then it is said that, like Hume’s theory, it is vulnerable to a Kantian refutation. The usual idea is that Kant’s refutation undercuts the ‘atomistic’ basis in the particular self-standing perceptions that make up the primitive ontology of Hume. Equally, an update would undercut the basis of psychological states such as quasi-remembering, that, with relations of continuity and connectedness, and together with physical states of body at a time, make up that of Parfit. Understanding the basis means showing that Hume or Parfit get the priorities wrong. The

⁶⁰ David Haugen, “Personal Identity and Concern for the Future.” *Philosophia*: 24 (1995), p. 482.

⁶¹ Locke first proposed that personal identity consists in “a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times”, Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (1690). Ed. John W. Yolton. London: J. M. Dent, 1996. p. 180.

⁶² Haugen, p. 482.

⁶³ John McDowell. “Reductionism and the First Person.” *Reading Parfit*. Ed. Jonathan Dancy. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1997. p. 230

individual person or self precedes the individual experience or mental state or perception that it possesses.⁶⁴

But, this reading of Hume is not what I am developing and defending. In my judgement, the Humean self, though still a Bundle Theory, has a considerable similarity with the Kantian model. Nevertheless the Humean model is superior to both Parfit's and Kant's models: not only does it undercut the Parfitian model; it also provides an explanation of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception.

Unfortunately, Parfit's solution postulates an objective time to place the person against. In defence of Parfit, he does spend considerable effort analyzing the possibility that "time's passage is an illusion" yet he only considers it from an objective viewpoint. Thus Parfit claims that if "time's passage is an illusion . . . it would not be irrational to *lack* the bias towards the future."⁶⁵ Yet he is not considering a subjective reality for time in place of the objective "illusion." Since Parfit does not see the self *as* time, he does not only see that the self precedes the psychological states but also that the self exists as the tensed realms of the future and the past. Thus although the person does seem to have a stronger connectedness to the near than to the more distant future,⁶⁶ it is because the near brings the self closer to its future self, not because the Parfitian person is only viewing from the present the possible ramifications of near and distant future events. The self desires itself (it desires completion and wholeness with itself) and thus the near

⁶⁴ Blackburn's concern is that the "distance, if there is one, between them [Parfit and Kant] is constrained at each end: Parfit being not quite so Humean, and Kant not nearly so Cartesian." My reading shows Hume to be more Kantian (or Kant is more Humean) than previously thought, which might close the gap that Blackburn presumes to exist between Parfit and Kant. See Simon Blackburn, "Has Kant Refuted Parfit?" *Reading Parfit*. Ed. Jonathan Dancy. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1997, p. 184.

⁶⁵ Parfit, p. 185.

⁶⁶ Which is where Parfit sees the asymmetry. Parfit's main thesis in *Reasons and Persons* is that a bias towards the near undermines the "Self-interest theory." Thus Parfit recognizes this affinity for the immediate future in Hume. See especially *Reasons and Persons*, p. 159.

is stronger than the distant future. This is apparent in Hume, when he declares that we prefer to place ourselves “betwixt the present and the future” (Treatise II, III, VII, 431). This “betwixt” area is the near rather than distant future. However, although Hume’s temporal asymmetry is very similar to a Parfitian asymmetry in that both show the self *favoured* between the near and distant future, Hume’s reason for the asymmetry is not the same as that offered by Parfit.

Kant observes that all “presentations [perceptions] . . . belong to inner sense . . . whether they are produced through the influence of external things or through inner causes.”⁶⁷ For the most part this coincides with Hume’s distinction between sensuous and reflexive impressions (Treatise I, I, II, 7-8).⁶⁸ Kant also states that “all our cognitions are yet subject ultimately to the formal condition of inner sense, i.e., to time. [For] In time [succession] they must one and all be ordered.” This last observation provides an explanation as to how the Humean memory^{RET} combines the perceptions of “all our cognitions,” i.e., impressions and ideas, into a succession of perceptions. But although Kant is correct in stating that “the mind . . . [must] in the sequence of impressions following one another distinguish time,” he is incorrect when he asserts that this action is necessary because, “any presentation [perception] *as contained in one instant*, can never

⁶⁷ Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. W. Pluhar. Unified edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 1996. All references to Kant are from the *CPR* and show Kantian edition and page number followed by the Pluhar page number. A99, p. 153

⁶⁸ “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, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or other. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces a the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflexion, because derived from it. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which perhaps in their turn give rise to other impressions and ideas. So that the impressions of reflexion are only antecedent to their correspondent ideas; but posterior to those of sensation, and deriv’d from them” (Treatise I, I, II, 7-8).

be anything but absolute unity.”⁶⁹ For, as we have seen in chapter one, the distinctness of the absolute unity of the initial perception is in fact not fully distinguished in its initial presentation to the mind. At such an early stage perceptions are only capable of being counted, not measured. Moreover, all perceptions are in pairs of impressions and ideas, this initial operation of the memory^{RET} yields only primordial successions which are not fully distinguished as distinct impressions and ideas, for this is the job of the imagination.⁷⁰

So though Kant sounds plausible when he states that perceptions “must first be gone through and gathered together. [And] This act I call the *synthesis of apprehension*.”⁷¹ he seems implausibly to assume that the initial perceptions are originally fully distinct entities that are *then* synthesised. It would indeed seem that his “synthesis of apprehension” is an operation of the self, operating as the memory^{RET}. But given this faculty’s limited ability, at this stage the only fully distinct impression is time (succession). Thus, the self must exist as this temporality in order to apprehend simultaneously the non-temporal perceptions of the external world. This is close to what Kant understands by the “transcendental unity of apperception.”⁷² But Humean time better explains why Kantian time is the basic intuition (feeling) that exists as the perceptions are received. For the Humean operation of the self combining itself (as succession) onto the initial perceptions makes sense of Kant’s claim that this synthesis between time (succession) and

⁶⁹ Kant, A99, p. 153.

⁷⁰ It may be objected that, if the memory^{RET} is not able to fully distinguish the individual impressions, then how is it able to copy them to make ideas? The answer is that it is precisely because the memory^{RET} is not able to fully separate them that they are copied. The copying of the impressions is not done for an arbitrary reason, but rather is an attempt by the memory^{RET} to focus on the impressions more strongly. That is why the imagination receives the copies (ideas) to separate from each other and also separate them from their preceding impressions.

⁷¹ Kant, A99, p. 153.

⁷² Kant, A108, p. 159.

the perceptions “must be performed [not just empirically but]⁷³ also a priori . . . [or else] not have a priori the presentations of either space or time. For these presentations can be produced only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility offers in its original receptivity.”⁷⁴ However, although the synthesis is in fact empirical, it *seems* also to be a priori, because the creation of the succession is simultaneous with the reception of the perceptions. This succession is empirically dependent upon the perceptions, yet is due to the structure of Humean time. One might say that there is an a priori *feeling*; for it is not that the succession itself has existed *temporally* before the arrival of the perceptions. To suppose this would be impossible, for it would involve having a distinct succession with nothing succeeding.⁷⁵

The self, as succession, can intuit (or possess an a priori *feeling*) of itself, but this is not how Kant would picture it, as is evident from his explanation of the “synthesis of reproduction”:

Now, obviously, if I want to draw a line in thought, or to think the time from one noon to the next, or even just to present a certain number, then I must, first of all, necessarily apprehend in thought one of these manifold presentations [perceptions] after the other. But if I always lost from my thoughts the preceding presentations (the first parts of the line, the preceding parts of the time, or the sequential units) and did not reproduce them as I proceeded to the following ones, then there could never arise a whole presentation; nor could there arise any of the mentioned thoughts -- indeed, not even the purest and most basic presentations of space and time. Hence the synthesis of apprehension is linked inseparably with the synthesis of reproduction.⁷⁶

⁷³ Editor’s inclusion.

⁷⁴ Kant, A99-100, pp. 153-154.

⁷⁵ Which of course is a different case than that which is explained in chapter one concerning the Succession Puzzle. Succession (time) can only exist distinctly in the initial operation of the memory^{RET}, which turns out to be succession itself, for the counting and Copying is successional. Yet this originally distinct succession that is passed onto the imagination is only possible if there are perceptions within the succession. If there were no perceptions, there would be no succession, even if in the intricate process that occurs between the memory and imagination in chapter one, there does appear a briefly yet fully distinct impression of succession.

⁷⁶ Kant, A102, p. 155.

Here Kant's "synthesis of reproduction" is akin to Hume's Copy Principle. Kant is in effect implying that the synthesis of apprehension (the self as succession) is inseparable from the synthesis of reproduction (the Copy Principle). Yet he does not realize that their inseparability is due to the fact that they are the same thing: the successional self is the temporal memory^{RET}.⁷⁷

Unfortunately Kant uses tensed objective time in order to explain the existence of the Copy Principle. But the memory^{RET} is a tenseless operation, not a tensed one. His confusion over using the tenseless Copy Principle to explain the remembering of the tensed succession, so that one can "think of time from one noon to the next," is a good clue as to why he misunderstands the temporal process of the self. Kant views the synthesis of time as not merely the combination of tenseless succession with the perceptions, but as the synthesis of *tensed* time. This is confirmed by Ernst Cassirer, who claims that it is only through the combination of the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction that "the present can be added to the past, the past preserved in the present, and both thought jointly."⁷⁸ So Kant believes that the original application of temporality onto the perceptions is tensed, and assumes that it is only *after* this tensed temporal synthesis occurs that there results a unitary consciousness to combine the manifold in the "recognition in a concept." An "abiding and unchanging 'I'"⁷⁹ is then revealed to have been constantly present as the transcendental unity of apperception. What Kant misses is that the self, as the memory^{RET}, is able to exist tensed as the past through the creation of the tensed abstract idea of time but also tenselessly *before* the past. He overlooks the fact that there

⁷⁷ In other words, the memory^{RET} is the self as the tenseless succession or consciousness, whereas the nominal abstract idea of time is self-consciousness.

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer. *Kant's Life and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, p. 196.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 197.

is a succession intuited through the interplay of the memory and imagination, and that the self has the ability to exist before it conceives of the past, or before it exists as a *tensed* self. For this reason, the Humean self becomes unknowable, since the tensed nominal self exists mainly as the unknowable future. Thus it is the temporal intuition of the tensed self that, before the past, allows for the seemingly intuited tenseless succession to appear simultaneously with the original reception of perceptions. The very nature of tenseless succession is intuitive.

Consequently, this way of viewing the matter, derived solely from the Treatise, helps to clear up some of the ambiguity in Kant's analysis where he calls the operation both empirical and a priori, with temporality somehow intuitively existing prior to the perceptions, while also paradoxically only coming into existence with the reception of perceptions. Instead, as Hume would have it, the succession of perceptions is purely empirical. But due to the unique nature of succession, its tenseless form automatically has the nature of intuitiveness within it, since it intuits its tensed evolution. This tenseless intuition of succession does not have to exist *a priori*, but exists as an intuited succession, simultaneously combining itself with the perceptions, without existing before the perceptions as a basic Kantian *a priori* intuition.

Let us consider Kant's explanation:

If, in counting, I were to forget that the units, now hovering before my mind, were added up by me little by little, then I would not cognize the amount's being produced through this successive addition of one [unit] to another; nor, therefore, would I cognize the number. For this number's concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of synthesis.

The very word *concept* could on its own lead us to this observation. For this *one* consciousness is what unites in one presentation what is manifold, intuited little by little, and then also reproduced. Often this consciousness may be only faint, so that we do not [notice it] in the act itself, i.e., do not connect it directly with the presentation's production, but [notice it] only in

the act's effect. Yet, despite these differences, a consciousness must always be encountered, even if it lacks striking clarity; without this consciousness, concepts, and along with them cognition of objects, are quite impossible.⁸⁰

Kant erroneously views the original application of time as the synthesis of a tensed time, but we can now correct his notion. While he is correct to maintain that consciousness must always be present for there to be knowledge, the distinctness or "clarity" of the self or consciousness *does* matter. Kant claims that this consciousness exists "even if it lacks striking clarity"; yet it is precisely the recognition of the self's complete distinctness and clarity that is of importance here. Kant wishes to posit an indistinct consciousness that combines the manifold of experience as it is successively intuited. Yet for this to occur, succession itself must exist as a simultaneously distinctly intuiting successive self, not just as a "faint" or unclear indistinct consciousness.

We find in Hume a better explanation as to how time operates than is put forward by Kant. For Hume the self exists tenselessly and invariably as succession, distinctly from the perceptions while also remaining indistinct due to the process between the imagination (Separability Principle) and the retentive and reminiscent aspects of memory. Through this interplay between the imagination and memory, the succession precedes the tensed abstract notion of time, and thus our concept of the past exists *as* time, rather than *in* time. Therefore, the self, as the distinct impression of succession acquired originally from the tenseless succession of perceptions grasped by the memory^{RET}, is able to exist *as* the past, but also, due to the complexity of Humean time, *before* the past. It is in this way that the self, although existing prior to the tensed realm of time as intuitively distinct succession, can also precede the tensed pastness of itself as the

⁸⁰ Kant, A103-104, p. 156. Words in square brackets have been supplied by the editor.

memory^{RET}, and thereby be able to *intuit* itself as succession, and, consequently, *successively* intuit the manifold of perceptions, which are always in succession.⁸¹

This is not how Kant describes the situation, for he is not able to convincingly explain how time is able to intuit the manifold of perceptions as a succession. Kant merely states that this *must* be what happens in order for there to be knowledge of objects. Ernst Cassirer has remarked that the Humean appears to offer “an adequate explanation of the concept of the self by calling the self a loose structure of psychic entities, a mere “bundle of perceptions,” [but] that explanation rests on an extremely crude and incomplete analysis.”⁸² But this is a misreading of Hume. Hume does not see the self as a “loose structure of psychic entities.” On the contrary, for Hume the self is always a *well-ordered* succession of perceptions. And far from being “an extremely crude and incomplete analysis,” Hume provides a more intricate and superior explanation as to how there is an invariable self than that which is to be found in Kant. Why, then, has the superiority of Hume’s explanation not been noticed? The fault lies partly in the fact that Hume’s data reveal an intricate relation concerning time as the self; yet, not being able to solve the inherent Succession Puzzle. Hume does not state his temporal theory of consciousness correctly. Unfortunately, this leads to unfair criticisms by scholars such as Cassirer, who has

⁸¹ This operation of the mind further explains why Hume earlier mentions how strangely, “When the object is past, the progression of the thought in passing to it from the present is contrary to nature, as proceeding from one point of time to that which is preceding, and from that to another preceding, in opposition to the natural course of the succession” (*Treatise* II, III, VII, 430). Thus when the self, although existing prior to the tensed realm of time as intuitively distinct succession, can also precede the tensed pastness of itself as the memory^{RET} and thus be able to *intuit* itself, the self simultaneously, moves “in opposition to the natural course of the succession.” However, this isolated case where time reverses direction as part of the process of awareness, does not counter the direction of time, for all other operations of the self move in the correct direction, i.e., impression to idea, particular to abstract, memory to imagination, untensed time to tensed time. Most movements are in a particular direction, which we vulgarly register as the external flow of time.

⁸² Cassirer, p. 197.

Kant taking credit for notions of the self and time that are already present in Hume. What Kant missed is the fact that his transcendental unity of apperception is in fact succession as it moves from being a temporally tenseless distinct impression to being a future-referring indistinct tensed idea.

SUMMARY

1. Tenseless succession is the particular idea of time, and tensed succession is the abstract idea of time.
2. Perceptions themselves are non-temporal.
3. The memory^{RET} constructs the arrow of time.
4. The self exists as all the realms of the tensed abstract idea of time, but is more favourably placed as the future.
5. Introspection of the self (succession/time) is impossible, for only the past and present can be known. The major part of the tensed nominal self exists as the future.
6. The near is more important to us than the distant future due to the self's desire for completeness.
7. Personal Identity is a meaningless question because *if* the self is time, there can be no self *at a time* nor enduring *over time*.
8. The Humean analysis of time and the self leads to a superior explanation for the intuitional nature of time than the one that is put forward by Kant.

CHAPTER 3

TEMPORAL SERIES

I

From our discussion of Livingston's analysis in the previous chapter, it should be obvious that his account of Humean time has similarities with both McTaggart's and Russell's theories of time.

McTaggart claims that we normally perceive time as both an A series and a B series. These distinctions he defines respectively as a past, present, and future (A series), and as the notion of earlier and later (B series). He also states that the A series and the B series differ in that the moments of the B series are permanent, whereas those of the A series are not. His explanation is that if "M is ever earlier than N, it is always earlier. But an event, which is now present, was future and will be past."⁸³ Thus McTaggart believes that change only takes place in the A series, for events in time change from being future, to present, to past.⁸⁴ The change inherent in the A series is thus the crucial aspect that time must have in order to exist because, for McTaggart, time is synonymous with change.⁸⁵

In briefly discussing McTaggart's theory of time, I follow D. H. Mellor's claim that "McTaggart's first great contribution to the philosophy of time was to show how many of the

⁸³ John McTaggart. *Philosophical Studies*. (1934). Ed. S. V. Keeling. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1966. p. 111.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 114-115.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 112-113.

most important questions about time are really questions about his two series.” According to Mellor, “even if McTaggart’s own objection to the flow of time is still disputed, no one disputes his distinction between the A- and the B- series.”⁸⁶ It is only McTaggart’s “first great contribution” that I wish to relate to the interpretation of Humean time developed so far in this thesis, without engaging much with McTaggart’s controversial conclusion that time is “unreal.”

Let us briefly consider a criticism of McTaggart’s celebrated argument. C. D. Broad has objected that when McTaggart claims that the B series does not involve change, he does not seem to recognize that the *events* within the B series are tenseless:

[The] notion of change is perfectly capable of being expressed in the language of the *B* series by saying that events in the *B* series *differ* from one another in various ways . . . To express the notion of change, we are therefore *not* forced to say that events change. Nor, therefore, are we forced into referring to the *A* series, into saying that events change (in the only way in which we can plausibly say this) in respect to pastness, presentness, and futurity.⁸⁷

Similarly, there is tenseless change in Humean time because the tenseless succession of perceptions (B series) is still a succession of before and after perceptions, although the order of M, N, O, P (which for McTaggart, is supplied from the C series)⁸⁸ does not change.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ D. H. Mellor, “The Time of Our Lives” in Anthony O’Hear, ed., *Philosophy at the Millennium*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 45 and 47.

⁸⁷ C. D. Broad, “Time.” *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. 12, Ed. James Hastings, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921, p. 128.

⁸⁸ It is difficult to agree with McTaggart’s claim that perceptions in the B series are not ordered until they are combined with the C series: for how can perceptions in the B series be called earlier and later if they are not *already* in succession? And how can there be earlier and later perceptions unless the B series has some inherent direction? McTaggart wishes us to believe that the direction of time is found only in the A series, since it is characterized as the past moving towards the future. However, surely the move from earlier to later is also a definite direction of some kind. McTaggart unnecessarily complicates things by entirely separating the succession of earlier and later perceptions from the direction of time. It is more plausible to suppose that both the A series and the B series have a direction; for, as in Humean time, tensed time only receives a direction after it has developed out of tenseless time. So the A series gets its direction from the B series.

Nevertheless, as the mind perceives the tenseless succession, change occurs inasmuch as the memory^{RET} must first remember M, then remember N, then remember O, etc. However, this temporal change is *not* tensed. The mind does not apply the A series notion of M, N, O, P as *moving* through a past *towards* a future, for these concepts do not exist until the abstract idea of time has been created.

This scenario should be contrasted with another, which involves both Cambridge changes and actual changes.⁹⁰ For a Cambridge change, “An object *O* is said to ‘change’ . . . if and only if there are two propositions about *O*, differing only in that one mentions an earlier and the other a later time, and one is true, the other false.” A Cambridge change is only a temporal change of an object between time *t*’ and time *t*. However, in actual change, something *actually* changes. Consider Peter Geach’s example: “If Theaetetus grows and becomes taller than Socrates, Socrates has *eo ipso* undergone a Cambridge change, since Socrates was taller than Theaetetus at time *t*’ but not at time *t*; but it was Theaetetus who *actually* changed.” This means that “Any object that undergoes actual change is subject to Cambridge change; and if there were no actual change of anything there would be no Cambridge change, and that means: no change at all. But it seems clear that not every subject of Cambridge change undergoes actual change.”⁹¹ For example, the death of Hume itself does not change, even though it can be described as an event changing from present to past, to a further past, using the myth of temporal passage. Note,

⁸⁹ One could say that succession is always succession and never stops being succession, and only in this sense is it changeless time. The classic argument for changeless time is Shoemaker’s thought experiment. See Sydney Shoemaker, “Time without Change.” *The Journal of Philosophy*. 66 (1969), pp. 363-381.

⁹⁰ Geach, Peter. *Truth, Love and Immortality: An Introduction to McTaggart’s Philosophy*. Berkeley, USA: University of California Press., 1979, pp. 89-103. For Geach, McTaggart’s A series change is essentially Cambridge change because “it was nowise peculiar to McTaggart, but the common property of the Cambridge philosophers at that time.” p. 91.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 90-92.

however, that these two types of change are still based *within* a tensed time framework. Whereas for Hume the memory^{RET} perceives the B-series within tenseless time, nonetheless there is still an *actual* change. The rates of succession *actually* change due to the receiving of the perceptions. For Humean time, there is change in that, although the B series of perceptions M, N, O, P, does not change, nevertheless the rate of succession of the perceptions as they are received by the memory^{RET} undergoes change. However, although the succession undergoes *actual* change, this does not mean that the succession changes into non-succession, only that the succession *changes* inasmuch as the rate of succession fluctuates.

Yet, it may be asked, where then is the Cambridge change? For Geach claims that an “object that undergoes actual change is subject to Cambridge change.” However, since Geach uses physical time to base his examples on, it does not seem clear how there can be a Cambridge change involved with *Humean* time; for the tensed realm of the A series, wherein both Geach and McTaggart regard Cambridge changes as taking place, is only nominal in Humean time, so that for Hume there is no object ‘Cambridge changing’ in a physical time from t to t' . Nevertheless, one can still countenance Cambridge changes in Humean time. As Broad shows in his disagreement with McTaggart, there are ways of linguistically expressing a change in the B series simply by stating that two terms differ.⁹² In Humean time there is an *actual* change in the rates of succession of the B series because the rates *actually* change due to the memory^{RET} counting the B series of M, N, O, P; the terms of the B series ‘Cambridge change’ in relation to this action of counting. For example, M is counted *earlier* than N is counted, thus the relation is

⁹² Broad, *ERE*, p. 128.

said to be ‘M is earlier than N’; yet, as N is counted, one can say that ‘N is *later* than M,’ so that the relation between M and N ‘Cambridge changes’ from M being viewed as earlier than N, to N being viewed as later than M, due to the act of counting where the memory^{RET} acts as a reference point. This subtle difference in how relations between perceptions in the B series Cambridge *change*, is a result of the direction of time, in that there is a forward movement that results in a Cambridge *changing* perspective of the relation between the perceptions as they are received by the memory^{RET}. This change is enough to satisfy the criteria for Cambridge change, since, although it is not an *actual* change in the series (for example, M, N, O, P, does not *actually* change to become P, M, O, N, etc.) there is nevertheless a Cambridge change that relates to how the perceptions in the B series are viewed by the memory^{RET}. Thus Humean time does not contradict Geach’s distinctions between actual and Cambridge changes, but rather adds a different dimension to the phenomena of change.

Yet it may be objected that, if one views succession as synonymous with change, how can we “intelligibly talk of a change itself as changing or not changing?”⁹³ The answer is that there *is* a difference between succession, which denotes a relation of changing perceptions, and *actual* change, which describes the fluctuating rates of that succession. But though succession can be viewed as a succession of changing things, succession itself does not change *in* time, for succession *is* time.

Interestingly, McTaggart briefly admits that:

It is possible, however, that this [A series of time] is merely subjective. It may be the case that the distinction introduced among positions in time by the

⁹³ Broad, *ERE*, p. 126.

A series -- the distinction of past, present, and future -- is simply a constant illusion of our minds, and that the real nature of time only contains the distinction of the B series -- the distinction of earlier and later. In that case we could not *perceive* time as it really is, but we might be able to *think* of it as it really is.

Unfortunately, however, McTaggart only considers this possibility as being a constant “illusion.” It would be interesting to know what theory he might have arrived at had he pursued this line of enquiry. Unfortunately he all too quickly dismisses this idea as “untenable, because . . . the A series is essential to the nature of time, and . . . any difficulty in the way of regarding the A series as real is equally a difficulty in the way of regarding time as real.”⁹⁴ Though McTaggart dismisses any thought of subjective time, he attempts to show how the A series does not exist in the objective sense. His claim is similar to Livingston’s claim that the A series, or tensed time, is a mind-dependent abstract idea, while the B series is mind-independent. It is curious as to why McTaggart, after arguing that the A series does not exist objectively, does not conclude that it exists subjectively. He appears to consider only two possibilities: either time is objectively real or it is a subjective illusion. For this reason McTaggart never considers the possibility that there might be a *real* subjective time, though his analysis points in this direction.

So, in comparison with Humean time, we can see an alternative reading of McTaggartian time. His A series corresponds to Humean abstract time, and his B series to particular times. The major difference between Hume and McTaggart is that the latter does not see how change is inherent in the B series, so he incorrectly emphasises the temporal passage of Cambridge change (A series) as being required for the existence of the B series; whereas in Hume it is the *actual*

⁹⁴ McTaggart, *PS*, p. 112.

change of the rate of succession in the B series that provides for the subsequent creation of the A series. Once one takes away McTaggart's mistaken emphasis on the A series, it is not difficult to see how the B series is more fundamental. The B series is perceptions arriving into the mind as a succession of before and after; the A series is only created later, when multiple particular ideas of time are reflected upon.

Now, it may be objected that the A and B series have another important difference. Russell claims that:

Broadly speaking, two pairs of relations have to be considered, namely, (a) sensation and memory, which give time-relations between object and subject, (b) simultaneity and succession, which give time-relations among objects. It is of the utmost importance not to confuse time-relations of subject and object with time-relations of object and object; in fact, many of the worst difficulties in the psychology and metaphysics of time have arisen from this confusion. It will be seen that past, present, and future arise from time-relations of subject and object, while earlier and later arise from time-relations of object and object. In a world in which there was no experience there would be no past, present, and future, but there might well be earlier and later. Let us give the name of *mental time* to the time which arises through relations of subject and object, and the name *physical time* to the time which arises through relations of object and object.⁹⁵

Though Russell is correct in regarding the relation between perceptions as being in tenseless succession, he makes the mistake of regarding the subject as somehow *separate* from this succession. So he can then speak of the "time-relation" between subject and object (self relating to perceptions) and the "time-relation" between objects (perceptions relating to other perceptions). What Russell apparently does not consider is that the tenseless successional

⁹⁵ Bertrand Russell, "On the Experience of Time," The Monist, 25 (1915), p. 212.

relation between the perceptions is itself the memory^{RET}, and thus part of the self,⁹⁶ for the self exists as consciousness, initially as the memory^{RET}, and then evolves into *tensed* self-consciousness through the abstract idea of time.⁹⁷ Once this is realized, Russell's distinction between *mental time* and *physical time* falls apart. If *physical time* is succession, then *mental time* is Russell's attempt to show a relation that exists between succession and the perceptions. However, this *mental relation* is better described as a non-temporal connection. If one wishes to view a relation between succession and the perceptions, it would first have to be conceded that this relation is not a successional relation, and thus is not temporal. Secondly, one would have to solve the Humean Succession Puzzle, as Russell does not even attempt to do. Otherwise, one cannot see how the relation of succession can be separated from the objects (perceptions) within succession, while also being inseparable. Once one sees how Hume must answer the Succession Puzzle, one quickly realizes that Russell's *mental time* is really a false relation. For succession is separate from the perceptions, while also being inseparable, depending upon which stage of the temporal process one focuses on. So Russell's claim that the A series of time is the relation between subject and object is incorrect. Rather, as in Humean time, the A series is the B series *abstractly considered*; or, in other words, the A series is the nominal application of succession created after we have experienced multitudes of particular successions.

⁹⁶ H. H. Price makes the same observation concerning memory^{RET} (habit memory) in his critique of A. J. Ayer's analysis of Hume: "It seems to me that the real difficulty in Hume's analysis of personal identity . . . [is] finding a relation to link the members of the bundle together. The two relations he himself mentions, resemblance and causation, are hardly sufficient for the task. The only promising suggestion seems to be that the link is provided -- somehow -- by memory . . . Perhaps we might try to get out of the difficulty by bringing in 'habit memory' [memory^{RET}] as well as recollection [memory^{REM}]." p. 462. An important difference between Price's suggestion and the one put forward in this thesis, is that Price does not seem to recognize that the question as to what relation there is between the perceptions, and the guess as to what relation there is between the perceptions and the bundle, are really two different questions. See footnote 39.

⁹⁷ See the discussion of Livingston in chapter two.

We can now see how Livingston's interpretation of Humean time likely results from two important errors in temporal theory. First, McTaggart is correct when he claims that time is both in an A series and a B series, but is incorrect when he claims that change only exists in the A series, and that time is only real if it is objective. Second, Russell is correct because, unlike McTaggart, he correctly emphasizes the B series, but is incorrect when defining the subject as something entirely different from perceptions in succession, and in placing the B series as something objective. He maintains that "In a world in which there was no experience there would be no past, present, and future, but there might well be earlier and later." I am speculating that this combination might naturally have led Livingston to claim that there is a tensed A series and a tenseless B series (McTaggart) in Humean time, and that the B series is objectively *real*, whereas only the tensed A series is mind-dependent (Russell). However, we can now see that, although Livingston is correct in maintaining that Humean time has both a tenseless B series of time (particular idea of time) and a tensed A series of time (abstract idea of time), and in emphasizing the B series (Russell), both series are in fact mind-dependent because for Hume the self *is* succession.

II

As we saw in chapter one, Hume says that "when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea" (Treatise I, I, III, 8). In response to this statement, Reid counters that:

If experience informs us [that the idea is a copy of a past impression], it certainly deceives us; for the thing [knowing the past impression] is impossible, and the author [Hume] shews it to be so. Impressions and ideas are fleeting perishable things, which have no existence, but when we are conscious of them. If an impression could make a second and third appearance to the mind, it must have a continued existence during the interval of these appearances, which Mr Hume acknowledges to be a gross absurdity. It seems then, that we find, by experience, a thing which is impossible. We are imposed upon by our experience, and made to believe contradictions.⁹⁸

Essentially, Reid asks how Hume can know that an impression is the prototype of an idea if he claims that we cannot know the past impression. Sydney Shoemaker puts Reid's objection into a clear challenge to Hume:

[If] we find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea" [Treatise I, I, III, 8], the problem is that "To say that we "find by experience" that there is such a relationship between impressions and their subsequent ideas can *only* mean, according to Reid, that we remember that our impressions are frequently followed by ideas which resemble them. But this would involve having memory knowledge of the past that is not inferred from or grounded on *present* ideas.⁹⁹

There are really two things to say here. First, there is consensus that Hume does seem to deny that this function of the memory is possible. However, it should be kept in mind that he states many things in the Treatise that turn out to be conclusions affected by his inability to solve the Succession Puzzle. Second, if we focus only on Reid's main charge, then all that has to be shown is how Humean memory works, which would also show that we can have knowledge of the past that is not 'grounded on present ideas.' There is, in a very unique way, a connection to the past through the experiences retained by the memory^{RET} that avoids Reid's objection.

⁹⁸ Reid, pp. 348-349.

⁹⁹ Sydney Shoemaker, "Memory," in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, p. 268. My emphasis.

In Humean time the memory does not create the *tensed* idea of the *past*. This idea is created by the imagination as part of the abstract idea of time. The imagination creates this idea by reflecting on many particular successions, while also registering that these same perceptions are also being retained by the memory^{RET}. Note, however, that Reid's argument refers to the ability of the memory^{REM}. Here Stout is once again helpful, in emphasizing that the memory has two different aspects -- retentiveness and reminiscence -- and in suggesting that: "retentiveness may be completely or almost completely separated from reminiscence. But the inverse is not true. There is no reminiscence without retentiveness; otherwise there would be knowledge entirely independent of experience."¹⁰⁰ Memory^{RET} can exist without memory^{REM}; yet the inverse is impossible. Now, we have seen that it is the memory^{RET} that initially deals with the tenseless succession of perceptions in Humean time. So memory^{RET} exists *before* we possess the notion of the past, since the memory^{RET} operates with the tenseless particular idea of time that exists before the abstract idea of the past is constructed. Thus when we say that something "was," we need the memory^{RET} to tell us the *content* of what "was" in the past, but in addition we need the imagination to provide us with a concept of the past within which to place the retained experience. In other words, we cannot have tensed words unless we have a nominally tensed realm of time within which to place them, and this tensed realm is provided by the imagination, not the memory, because it is the imagination that creates the *abstract* idea of time. The concept of the past is provided by the imagination, whereas the *contents* of this past are retained by the

¹⁰⁰ Stout, p. 218.

memory^{RET}. In this way, we can see that the content (memory^{RET} impressions¹⁰¹ and ideas) are neither *founded* on the past nor present, but are merely retained by the memory^{RET} in tenseless time. Although the memory^{REM} must access content from the memory^{RET} by way of the imagination, these tenseless perceptions do not have the tensed realm of the abstract idea of time applied onto them until they are accessed by the memory^{REM}. Thus when the memory^{REM} accesses the content of the memory^{RET}, this does not mean that the action of the memory^{REM} is grounded on a *present idea*. Rather, what is remembered is grounded on what is retained by the tenseless memory^{RET}. The memory^{REM} merely accesses the content retained in the memory^{RET}, but there need not be a present idea to ground the memory^{REM}. Indeed it is rather that, as the memory^{REM} accesses the perceptions, a past and present is then applied onto them so that they can be viewed in their proper order and we can know that one precedes the other, for when we remember something the idea is present while the memory^{RET} impression has a “pastness” quality to it. Thus at the beginning of the process of remembering (memory^{REM}), that access of the memory^{REM} need not be *grounded* on anything, but may seem to be grounded once the now tensed perceptions ‘reappear.’ Therefore, this operation of the Humean memory counters Stout’s claim that:

Failure to distinguish clearly between retentiveness and reminiscence leads to the view that in remembering the past as such what we are directly cognisant of is only a revival, reproduction or memory-image of the bygone experience, and not that experience itself as it actually occurred . . . The most striking

¹⁰¹ It may be objected that the memory^{RET} impression comes after the original sensory impression, and so in order to know that the idea is truly the copy we would have to *know* the veridical impression. However, although the problem when stated in these terms is not solved by Hume, the objection put forward by Reid concerning memory being grounded on present images, *can* be shown to be incorrect in that the memory^{RET} image is not a tensed entity until the imagination applies a tense to it. This way it can be said that the memory^{RET} image, although itself still a copy of the veridical impression, is not itself grounded on the present.

illustration is found in Hume . . . He substitutes the term ‘thought’ for ‘idea’ as if they were synonymous. He thus covertly implies that in perceiving an idea we not only perceive what is in fact a copy of an impression, but also think of it [the idea] as being a copy, and therefore think not merely of the copy but of the original [impression].¹⁰²

I am here arguing that Hume’s conception of memory is different from what Stout understands it to be, and am challenging Stout’s claim (and Reid’s) that Hume’s theory does not show how we can know that the idea is the copy of the preceding impression without the process of remembering being grounded on a present idea. For, although Hume does not *use* the terms “retentive” and “reminiscence,” he not only implicitly distinguishes these two aspects of memory, but requires that we do so.

Russell’s main mistake¹⁰³ is in placing the issue of memory within an objective external notion of physical time. By so doing he concludes that, “The difficulty . . . arises through the fact that the sensation which an image is supposed to copy is in the past when the image exists, and can therefore only be known by memory, while, on the other hand, memory of past sensations seems only possible by means of present images.”¹⁰⁴ Russell is repeating Reid’s criticism of Hume’s Copy Principle. But we have seen that, for Hume, the impression is retained by the memory^{RET} so that both the memory^{RET} impression and its copy (idea) are simultaneously available to the imagination for separation.¹⁰⁵ In this way both the past and the present are

¹⁰² Stout, p. 218.

¹⁰³ “This analysis of memory is probably extremely faulty, but I do not know how to improve it.” Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, 9th edition. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968, p. 187.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 158-159.

¹⁰⁵ The impressions and ideas need only be in succession when originally received by the memory^{RET}. Afterwards both can be *simultaneously* accessible to the imagination because in order for the imagination to be able to reflect on multitudes of successions when creating the abstract idea of time, logically then, the imagination must be able to have an overall view of the successions. Moreover, the memory^{REM} also has the ability to reflect on the impressions

incorporated onto the perceptions of the memory^{RET} when they are accessed by the memory^{REM}. So, although Russell says that “the reference to the past lies in the belief-feeling [about the past], not in the content believed,”¹⁰⁶ we can see that his error lies in placing this scenario within an external time. But this error can be corrected. In the corrected version, this “feeling of pastness” can be seen for what it is, namely, the application of the past onto the retained perceptions. So, in a way, Russell is correct in that his ‘belief-feeling’ about the past is not based upon the content (perceptions), but rather upon the process of applying a past onto the retained perceptions.

SUMMARY

1. The B series in Humean time involves *actual* change in regard to the *rates* of succession within the memory^{RET}, and *Cambridge* change in regard to the relations between the perceptions of the B series.
2. The memory^{RET} receives the succession of perceptions *before* the creation of the idea of the past, which is only subsequently applied onto both the memory^{RET} impressions and the copied ideas. This means that both the memory^{RET} impression and its idea can be accessed *directly* by the memory^{REM} without the function of remembering itself being grounded on a present idea.

and ideas simultaneously in order to compare *present* ideas to *past* impressions. Therefore, only the memory^{RET} is restricted in viewing the perceptions as a complex of *successions* of perceptions.

¹⁰⁶ Russell, *AOM*, p. 186.

CHAPTER 4

THE BUNDLE THEORY OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

In the section of the Treatise entitled “Of Personal Identity” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 251-263), Hume states:

[If there is a self] It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. But the self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro’ the whole course of our lives; since the self is suppos’d to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv’d; and consequently there is no such idea.

(Treatise I, IV, VI, 251-252)

Consequently, Hume concludes that “the rest of mankind . . . are 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” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 252 [my emphasis]). The present chapter will examine Hume’s ‘Bundle Theory’ of the self. In chapter one we have already examined his explanation as to how we ‘mistake’ diversity for identity. This ‘mistake’ is based upon a relation of resemblance between perceptions within a succession of perceptions,¹⁰⁷ and

¹⁰⁷ Causation also helps lead to the ‘mistake’ of identity. Hume says, “We readily suppose an object may continue individually the same, tho’ several times absent from and present to the senses; and ascribe to it an identity, notwithstanding the interruption of the perception, whenever we conclude, that if we had kept our eye or hand constantly upon it, it wou’d have convey’d an invariable and uninterrupted perception. But this conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connexion of *cause and effect*; nor can we otherwise have any security, that the object is not chang’d upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses. Whenever we discover such a perfect resemblance, we consider, whether it be common in that species of objects; whether possibly or probably any cause cou’d operate in producing the change and resemblance; and according as we determine concerning these causes and effects, we form our judgment

leads us to suppose that ideas continue to exist when unperceived. The same process *creates* a notion of a unified diachronic self.

It will be convenient to consider McTaggart's objection to Hume's Bundle Theory of the self, for although his critique was written in 1927, the majority of later critiques against the Bundle Theory follow along McTaggart's line of thought. He says that there needs to be a special type of relation in order for the Bundle Theory to work:

. . . it is by no means every group of mental states which is a bundle in Hume's sense of the word, that is to say, an aggregate of mental states which form a self. For any two mental states form a group by themselves. . . . All these groups are not bundles . . . [and] no one supposes -- neither Hume nor anyone else -- that they belong to the same self. They are therefore not in the same bundle. But, since every group is not a bundle, we say nothing definite when we say that two mental states are in the same bundle, unless we are able to distinguish bundles from other groups. How is this to be done? Can we distinguish them by saying that the members of bundles have relations to one another which the members of groups which are not bundles do not have? But what would such relations be?¹⁰⁸

McTaggart subsequently examines several relations, concluding that he has shown that *none* of these relations can satisfy the requirement.¹⁰⁹ McTaggart asks:

For what is meant by saying that the perceptions which exist form different 'bundles or collections'? It does not mean that those which form the same bundle are connected in space with one another more closely than they are with those in other bundles, for Hume does not regard the perceptions as being in space. Nor can it be that they are connected more closely in time, or by resemblance. For, if there is really a bundle wherever there is, on the ordinary theory, a self, then

concerning the identity of the object" (Treatise I, III, II, 74). For more on how we *determine* identity, see above pp. 16-22.

¹⁰⁸ McTaggart, *NOE*, Sec. 389, p. 71.

¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, as Laird notes, McTaggart "also argues that the stages in each self *correspond*, and that corresponding stages in different C series are "as really simultaneous" as, say, the taste and smell of an orange appear to be. Since Dr. McTaggart believes in pre-existence and immortality for all the selves throughout what is called time, he is very ready to accept this conclusion, but I cannot think that the arguments he adduces in its favour are at all strong." See John Laird, "Critical Notice of J. McT. E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*," Mind, 37 (1928): p. 228.

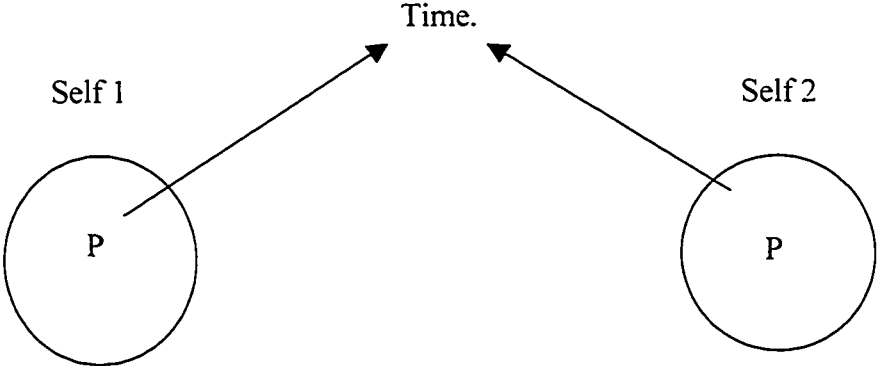
similar and simultaneous perceptions are found in different bundles, and dissimilar and non-simultaneous sensations in the same bundle. It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the contents of each bundle must be determined to be parts of that bundle by their relation to, or inclusion in, some reality which is not any one of the contents, nor the aggregate of these taken as a plurality, but is something as ultimate as, say, one of the contents. If we reach this, we have reached the self.¹¹⁰

However, McTaggart does not consider that perceptions in different bundles (i.e., different selves) *can* be viewed as temporally contiguous to each other *if* one does not view their temporal contiguity as simultaneous occurrences happening against a background of objective time, but instead as contiguous from within the perspective of each individual self/temporality. Consider the diagrams on the following page:

¹¹⁰ McTaggart, *PS*, p. 83.

Diagram A.

Perceptions in *objective* time



P = perception.



Diagram B.

Perceptions in *subjective* time



What this means is that in diagram A, temporal simultaneity requires a background of objective time in order to state that two perceptions are happening simultaneously. However, in diagram B, the perceptions are not happening *in* time, but *as* time. Thus, in diagram B, from the perspective of Self 1, the perception in Self 2 is contiguous with the perception in Self 1, *as per* the subjective time of Self 1. Likewise, from the perspective of Self 2, the perception of Self 1 can also be said to be contiguous to the perception of Self 2, *as per* the subjective time of Self 2. This means that the contiguity between the perceptions of Self 1 and Self 2 are viewed as being contiguous, not according to a relation with a background objective temporality, but from within each individual selves' subjective temporality. Consequently, even if Self 1 and Self 2 have their own temporalities, the temporal contiguity is between perceptions from the viewpoints of the different subjective perspectives. This type of temporal contiguity is something that McTaggart does not consider when denouncing the possibility that there can be a relation between perceptions in different bundles (selves).

Thus, if perceptions, as Hume surmises, are able to exist separate from the self (succession), then perceptions can be seen only in relations *other* than succession, as was shown in the earlier discussion of Price's suggestion concerning mini-bundles.¹¹¹ If we now suppose that the Baxterian complex of successions of perceptions (tenseless self) has gone through the process of receiving perceptions in successions, then, according to the solution to the Succession Puzzle that we gave in chapter one, the succession both is *and* is not separate from the perceptions, depending upon which stage of the process one wants to focus. Thus there is a *logical* way that

¹¹¹ See above p. 31, footnote 39.

the perceptions can be separate from the relation they are within; for at the *tenseless* level there can be perceptions that are separate from succession, or, in other words, separate from the particular self.

We can now see the difficulty this process plays in the section “Of Personal Identity:” once perceptions are separated from the relation that makes them earlier and later perceptions, they can be *logically* assumed as separate from succession. What troubles both Hume and McTaggart about the Bundle Theory of the self is: What is the *relation* that exists *between* the perceptions and successions, the latter being itself a relation? This question is answered once we see that the relation, although logical, does not actually exist in the sense that the process happens *in* time, for the process *is* time. Consequently, the stages of the process are logical but, in themselves, cannot be viewed against a temporal background viewing this stage as earlier and the next stage as later etc. We *can* logically show how succession/bundle can be separate from its parts/perceptions, but we cannot see it outside of its logical framework because the succession both *is* and *is not* separate from the perceptions. For this reason, to believe that there is a relation between the succession and its perceptions in succession is to misunderstand the process of awareness within the Succession Puzzle, which does not happen in time, but *is* time. However, as shown, there is nevertheless a way that perceptions of different selves can be said to relate to one another through perspective-based temporal contiguity.

McTaggart states “that it is impossible for one self to be part of another self, or for two selves to have any common part.”¹¹² His reasoning for this is as follows:

¹¹² McTaggart, *PS*, p. 282.

It is inconceivable that a thought, a sensation, a volition, or an emotion should exist outside of a self. And it is inconceivable that the same thought, sensation, volition, or emotion which was once part of my mind could ever be part of somebody else's. The self, we must say, is a complex, but not a compound. It has parts, but it is not built up out of them. For, while it [the self] depends on them, they depend just as much on it. The self, therefore, cannot cease by the separation of its parts. For its parts only exist as united in it, and therefore could not separate from it.¹¹³

McTaggart does not see that the solution to the question he poses at the top of page 64 comes when the Succession Puzzle is solved. For it is with the Succession Puzzle that we see how the self as tenseless succession can *logically* be seen to be separate from the “parts” of the Bundle, yet is *also* inseparable. Indeed, McTaggart's notion of the self has been regarded as very similar to a Bundle Theory.¹¹⁴

Hume's eventual answer to this same question is that the perceptions in a bundle are related by resemblance and causation: “'tis evident we must confine ourselves to resemblance and causation” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 260). As for resemblance, Hume states that, since many perceptions fundamentally resemble each other, “the placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object” (Treatise I, IV, VI, 261). This answer is in line with how we develop the mistake of a continuing object along with an objective time order within which it exists. On this issue it is granted that the imagination confuses the *resembling* perceptions in succession to posit an illusory invariable object. However, this is a different question than the one Hume seeks to answer concerning the Bundle Theory. There Hume is not

¹¹³ McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, (1906) NY: Greenwood Press, 1968, pp. 108-109.

¹¹⁴ “It is obvious that McTaggart's own theory of the self is, in certain respects, very much more like the Bundle Theory than many other theories on this subject.” C. D. Broad, *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*, Vol. II, Part I, New York: Octagon Books, 1976, pp. 180-181.

asking merely where identity comes from, but instead how does the real relation of succession relate to the perceptions that logically can be viewed as separate from succession. The answer to this question is not satisfied by resemblance, because, in the process of awareness that takes place between the succession and the perceptions, the succession does *not* resemble the perceptions. For when the succession is distinct, the perceptions are not, and when the perceptions are distinct, the relation of succession no longer seems separable.

On the issue of the relation of causation, Hume claims that:

Had we no memory, we never shou'd have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person. But having once acquir'd this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. For how few of our past actions are there, of which we have any memory? Who can tell me, for instance, what were his thoughts and actions on the first of *January* 1715, the 11th of *March* 1719, and the 3^d of *August* 1733? Or will he affirm, because he has entirely forgot the incidents of these days, that the present self is not the same person with the self of that time; and by that means overturn all the most establish'd notions of personal identity? In this view, therefore, memory does not so much *produce* as *discover* personal identity, by shewing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions. 'Twill be incumbent on those, who affirm that memory produces entirely our personal identity, to give a reason why we can thus extend our identity beyond our memory.

(Treatise I, IV, VI, 261-262)

Hume's remark here is probably a reaction to contemporary discussion as to how memory is crucial to an understanding of personal identity. For example, Locke states that:

. . . since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that that makes everyone to be what he calls *self*, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things: in this alone consists *personal identity*, i.e. the sameness of a rational being. And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that *person*: it is the

same *self* now it was then, and it is by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done.¹¹⁵

We can see that Locke's solution depends solely upon the part of "consciousness" that we can identify as the memory^{REM}. Locke's argument allows for the famous criticism by Joseph Butler:

But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet to say, that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say, that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action, but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity.¹¹⁶

Thus, Hume's remarks concerning causation and memory are not meant to comply with the Lockean memory^{REM} as that which constitutes personal identity, but rather to show how the memory^{RET} interprets a causal relation between the idea and impression pairs in order to read an identity into the distinct perceptions. Hume's explanation is more in line with Butler's critique of Locke, *if* one interprets remembering as memory^{RET}, not as memory^{REM}. For, as we have seen, memory^{RET} is the identity of the self as succession, but this personal identity is not an identity *through* time nor *in* time, but an identity *as* time. Consequently, Hume, unlike Locke, can avoid the circularity that would be evident if one states the memory^{REM} *constitutes* personal identity.

In hindsight we can see that what is really bothering Hume in the section of the Treatise entitled "Of Personal Identity" (Treatise I, IV, VI, 251-263) is his failure to solve the Succession

¹¹⁵ Locke, pp. 180-181.

¹¹⁶ "Of Personal Identity" (1736) as quoted in Terence Penelhum, *Butler*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 132. Penelhum's interpretation of this passage is that "As the reference to 'consciousness of personal identity' makes clear, remembering here presupposes personal identity because personal identity is *part of what is remembered*. So when I remember doing something in the past, part of that experience is my remembering that I am the agent who did it." p. 133.

Puzzle so that he can then show how the relation of succession constitutes “our self, or person” as the tenseless succession of our particular idea of time.

I now wish to present my own explanation of the strange remarks Hume makes in the Appendix to the Treatise.¹¹⁷ According to Hume:

In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences.*”

(Treatise Appendix, 636)

Now it has been noted by others that what Hume is claiming as inconsistent are quite obviously consistent. As Norman Kemp Smith has observed:

So far from the two being inconsistent, the second is a corollary to the first: it states no more than what at once follows from the very special sense in which Hume uses the term ‘distinct’ . . . Hume must have meant that the two principles cannot be rendered consistent with what has yet to be allowed as actually occurring, namely, the awareness of personal identity.¹¹⁸

But we cannot rest with that observation. What is bothering Hume is, first, the Succession Puzzle, and second, how the Succession Puzzle contributes to solving the Bundle Theory Problem. The first of the two principles is the Separability Principle, and the second principle concerns both how the perceptions are connected to each other, and to what they in turn are connected to. In other words, the second principle restates Hume’s questions regarding the Bundle Theory Problem of what relates the self to its separate parts. From the analysis done in this thesis we not only have an answer to give Hume, but can provide an answer using his own

¹¹⁷ I do not intend to go through the mountain of theories that have been proposed to explain Hume’s statements in the Appendix to the Treatise. First, to do so would mean having to go beyond the confines of this thesis, and second, I believe my solution is unique enough to avoid discussing the results of other theories.

¹¹⁸ Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines*, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1966, p. 558.

principles. Because there are different degrees of awareness, and hence different degrees of distinction, it is true that “*all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences.*” However, these distinct perceptions fluctuate between being fully distinct and less distinct. For at the immediate level of awareness, the perceptions in succession are less distinct than succession itself, yet after the imagination separates the perceptions and creates the abstract idea of time, the perceptions become fully distinct while the relation of succession now seems somewhat indistinct due to its function as tensed time and as its partial existence as the future. Thus, there can logically be a distinct perception of succession as a distinct existence for time.

The second principle is more centred on Hume’s inability to solve the Bundle Theory Problem. Yet we can also see that he highlights it because he is unable to solve the Succession Puzzle. For Hume is unable to show how there is a ‘connexion’ or, in other words, a relation that exists *between* a distinct succession and its distinct perceptions. We can now clarify Hume’s worries in the Appendix.

Hume’s first principle: “*all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences.*”

Explanation: The impression and idea of time is succession, and logically can be fully distinguished from the perceptions that are in succession as a distinct impression/idea of time/self. And *after* the perceptions are separated by the imagination, the perceptions are also fully distinct.

Hume’s second principle: “*that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences.*”

Explanation: The tenseless self, as the memory^{RET}, does not *relate* with its distinct perceptions. Thus, at the tenseless level, we cannot *perceive a real connexion*, as in a connecting *relation* between the distinct succession and its distinct parts (perceptions).

SUMMARY

1. The Bundle Theory of Personal Identity is solved through the answer to the Succession Puzzle.
2. The particular idea of time is the tenseless self, while the nominal abstract idea of tensed time is the self-consciousness. Thus the ordinary question of personal identity is irrelevant and meaningless, since the self neither exists *at a time* (synchronic) nor *over time* (diachronic). Moreover, the Self is invariable in that the tenseless succession can change, but still remain invariable *as* succession.
3. Hume's second thoughts in the Appendix concern his inability to solve the Succession Puzzle, and consequently the Bundle Theory Problem.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I believe the existence of the Humean self (as time) can be explained in the following stages (however, these *stages* are logical only, and cannot be seen as against a background river of time):

1. Let us assume that there is an external world.
2. This initial sensation is of a complex impression (a complex of single co-existing impressions) that is measurable (as it is extended) but is not countable, in that we cannot, at first, count the co-existent parts or simple impressions of which it is composed.
3. We remember^{RET} this complex impression by copying it into a complex idea. This two-stage process results in a *succession* of a complex impression followed by a complex idea. This initial succession is tenseless and indeed is nothing but Hume's Copy Principle.
4. The complex *idea* is neither a clear nor an exact representation of the complex *impression*. This need for exactitude subsequently forces the memory^{RET} to try to separate the individual impressions within the complex impression. This attempt is only partially successful. Nevertheless, this process enables the perceptions (now impressions and ideas) to be seen as countable (before and after) but not measurable.
5. This leads to the mind applying a Separability Principle. This principle is not the function of the memory^{RET} but is the chief function of the imagination.

6. However, with the initial appearance of the Separability Principle, the most fully distinguishable existent is *logically* though not *actually* the succession itself. Consequently, this creates a simultaneous action from both the imagination and the memory^{RET}. The memory^{RET}, as the tenseless succession inherent in the Copy Principle, having been acknowledged by the Separability Principle of the imagination as the most distinct existent, forces the memory^{RET} to then acknowledge itself as an *impression* of itself i.e., as an impression of tenseless succession. This impression of the memory^{RET} is then copied by itself into an idea of itself in an attempt to completely distinguish itself as itself.
7. Not surprisingly, the memory^{RET} only partially succeeds in separating the impression of itself from the idea of itself by using the Copy Principle. The Separability Principle is required to fully separate the impression and idea of tenseless succession. At this stage there exists the memory^{RET} *as* the tenseless succession *and* both the impression and idea *of* that tenseless succession, thereby making the memory^{RET} both a perceiver of the perceptions, and a perception itself. This shows how the perception can perceive itself.
8. After the fully distinct impression and idea of tenseless succession exist, the imagination realizes that not only is there a distinct succession, but there is also a multitude of not yet fully distinct perceptions that are tenselessly succeeding. Matter-of-factly the imagination separates all the perceptions in tenseless succession to make the countable perceptions fully distinct existents. Part of this separating process is the application of different levels of force onto those distinct perceptions in such a way as that the

impression seems more forceful than its counterpart idea. However, this operation of the Separability Principle also makes the tenseless succession of the perceptions now seem inseparable from those perceptions. Thus we appear to lose the distinctness of the impression and idea of tenseless succession in order to have distinct perceptions of the objects. This answers the problem of the Succession Puzzle, namely, how it is possible for succession to be both distinguishable as the *manner* in which perceptions appear, and yet also be seemingly inseparable as well. The solution is that both can be true depending upon what stage of the process of awareness one wishes to focus.

9. The very process of awareness itself is in succession. The movement from the external object, to impressions of those objects, and then finally to the imagination fully separating the impressions and ideas of those objects, is all done in successive stages. Thus the tenseless succession (memory^{RET}) that is first applied onto the perceptions, also establishes a chief relation in which the awareness of itself is to be accomplished. In this way the tenseless succession generates a perception of itself, as well as playing a role in the successional process that makes this possible.
10. Consequently, we can also say that since the memory^{RET} (succession, Copy Principle) and the imagination (Separability Principle) are faculties or principles of the self, the self is both a bundle of perceptions and a perceiver of itself.
11. With the realization that the self exists both as a bundle of perceptions and, as the governing function of the process of its own perception, the imagination allows the idea of all the tenseless successions to evolve intuitively into a nominally tensed abstract idea

of time. This movement from a stage of tenselessness to a stage of nominally tensed succession is itself also a succession. But it is a unique succession, in that it is a succession between a perception and an abstracted nominal application of itself as a perception. It is the uniqueness of this succession from which the imagination creates the idea of the past. The term 'past' defines a realm of tensed temporality, so must be associated with the tensed abstract idea of time. The idea of tensed time and the idea of the past go together.

12. It is evident that what is before the past cannot also be referred to as being *in the past*. Since the tensed realm of time is a nominally abstract idea, it gets its sense of direction from the tenseless succession for there is nowhere else from which it would come. The movement from the tenseless idea to the abstracted idea is itself a tenseless succession of before and after. Thus what is before the past is a *beforeness*. However, since this beforeness is temporal, there can be no 'before the beforeness.' To ask what comes before the immediate reception of perceptions is to apply a temporality to where there is no time. There is no before the beforeness of the tenseless succession of perceptions, there is only an eternal timelessness. Since the idea of the past evolves from the beforeness of the succession between the particular and the nominally abstract ideas of time, we must deal with this unique type of beforeness by developing a nominal past to explain it.
13. This nominal abstraction of the self as succession, allows for the self to exist as a duality of both a self and self-consciousness. The self *as* tenseless succession (time) becomes the

nominal succession of tensed time, and self-consciousness is viewed as that which is *in* tensed time. Thus the self *is* time, and self-consciousness is *in* time.

14. The self is more favourably placed as the future. This is because the self and the self-consciousness cannot completely co-exist together otherwise the self would be completely absorbed by itself meaning that all that exists is self-consciousness and no self. This would be fatal to the self, because self-consciousness, as the nominally abstracted succession of it-self, is what the self is placed within. Therefore, the self prevents its own destruction by preventing self-consciousness from becoming fully conscious of its complete self, by restricting self-consciousness to the present and past realms of the tensed idea of time. Thus self-consciousness can never become fully conscious of itself as the future. This further explains why, although there is a logically distinct perception of tenseless succession, the self, as tenseless succession, seems fully integrated into the successive perceptions. Thus, the self *is* partly the future, and the self-consciousness is restricted *within* the past and present. This bars our self-consciousness from ever having a full completeness with itself, which explains why we seem to “place ourselves” between the present and the future. There is always a bias towards the future.
15. It is possible for perceptions to be regarded *logically* as separate from the self. Yet the succession *is* and *is not* separate from its perceptions constituent depending at what stage of the process of awareness one wishes to focus. In this way, the answer to the Succession Puzzle also solves the Bundle Theory Problem of showing how perceptions can be seen as *logically* separate from the self but as contingently bound together with the

self. Therefore, there is no need to search for a relation between the self and its parts (perceptions) that does not *actually* exist. In opposition to McTaggart's notion of the self, the Humean self can be seen to *logically* have parts of itself in a temporally contiguous relation with the parts of other selves so long as that temporal contiguity is subjective. (See diagrams on p. 67 of thesis)

16. Finally, when remembering^{REM} the perceptions retained by the memory^{RET}, the memory^{REM} deals with perceptions that have already been fully separated by the imagination. Hence, these perceptions already have a quality of force applied to them. The quality of force is initially meant to show how the impression is indeed the actual precursor of the idea. When these retained couplings of perceptions are remembered^{REM}, at this stage, after the tensed idea has been formed, the original forces applied to the perceptions by the imagination now take on the character of pastness and presentness. Therefore, when we remember^{REM} the retained memories^{RET}, we have a direct access to those *past* perceptions which we can nevertheless, *presently*, remember^{REM}.

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